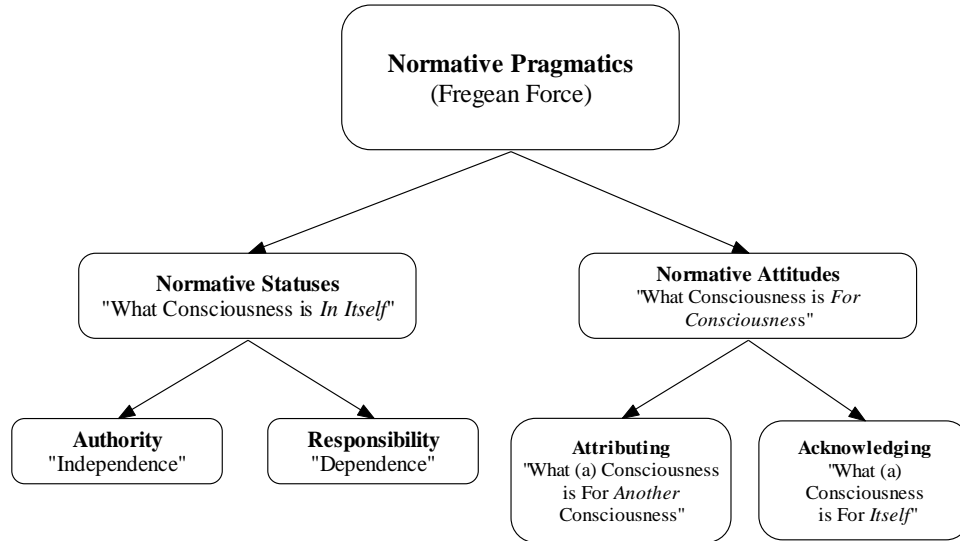


Handout for Week 6 Recognition, Desire, and Mastery

Part I. Normative statuses and attitudes. From Autonomy to Reciprocal Recognition.

A. First Model: Statures and Attitudes



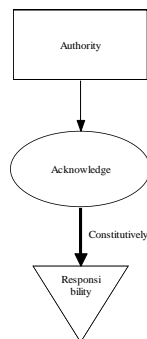
Elements of the model are in bold.

Modeled Hegelian phrases are in quotes.

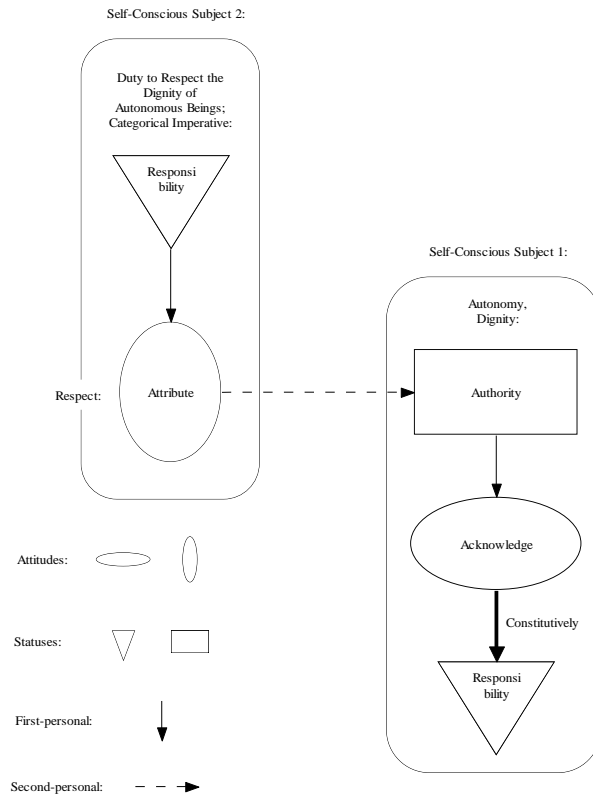
B. From Autonomy to Recognition:

Kant's conception of normative subjects as autonomous is a conception of them as able to *bind* themselves normatively by their attitudes, to *make* themselves responsible (acquire an actual normative **status**) by *taking* themselves to be responsible (adopting a normative **attitude**). The basic Kantian normative status [BKNS] is a complex, attitude-involving status. For it is the authority (the complex status) to adopt a certain kind of attitude: an immediately status-instituting attitude, what I am calling an "immediately constitutive" attitude.

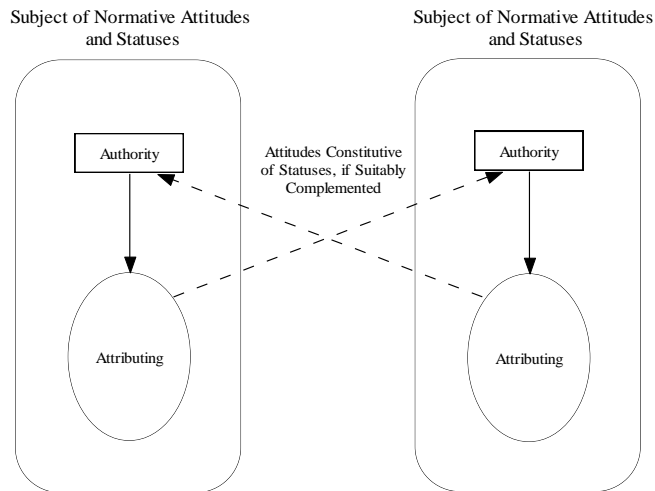
Autonomy:
The Basic Kantian Normative Status



The Social Dimension of the Kantian Autonomy Model



Robust General Recognition is Attributing the Authority to Attribute Authority (and Responsibility)



C. Authority and Responsibility in Reciprocal Recognition:

i) Hegel's bold idea is that when recognitive attitudes take the specific *social* form of *mutual* or *reciprocal recognition*, they institute genuine normative *statuses* of authority and responsibility.

Here are some crucial passages:

Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness. [175]

“Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged....The detailed exposition of the Notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication will present us with **the process of Recognition.**” [PG §178].

“A self-consciousness exists for a self-consciousness. Only so is it in fact self-consciousness; for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness become explicit for it. The 'I' which is the object of its Notion is in fact not 'object'; the object of Desire, however, is only independent, for it is the universal indestructible substance, the fluid self-identical essence. A self-consciousness, in being an object, is just as much 'I' as 'object'. With this, we already have before us the Notion of Spirit. What still lies ahead for consciousness is the experience of what Spirit is—this absolute substance which is the unity of the different independent self-consciousnesses which, in their opposition, enjoy perfect freedom and independence: 'I' that is 'We' and 'We' that is 'I.'” [PG §177].

“But according to the Notion of recognition this [that a self-consciousness' certainty of itself have truth] is possible only when each is for the other what the other is for it, only when each in its own self through its own action, and again through the action of the other, achieves this pure abstraction of being-for-self.” [PG §186].

“Each is for the other the middle term, through which each mediates itself with itself and unites with itself; and each is for itself, and for the other, an immediate being on its own account, which at the same time is such only through this mediation. **They recognize themselves as mutually recognizing one another.**” [PhG 184].

“Thus the movement is simply the double movement of the two self-consciousnesses. Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. Action by one side only would be useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by both.” [PhG 182].

Part II. Desire as Proto-Consciousness

“Self-consciousness is desire” [174].

A. The Triadic Structure of Orectic Awareness:

1. Orectic awareness has a tripartite structure, epitomized by the relations between *hunger*, *eating*, and *food*.
2. The three elements are:
 - a) an *attitude* or desire, e.g. **hunger**,
 - b) a responsive *activity*, e.g. **eating**, and
 - c) a *significance*, e.g. **food**.

The three principal relations are:

- d) The attitude must *motivate* the activity, in the sense of *activating* a (more or less reliable, in a sense determined by the assessments in (f) below) disposition to respond differentially to objects.
- e) Responding to an object by engaging in the activity is taking or treating it in practice *as* having a significance defined by the attitude that motivates the activity. This is the *subjective* significance of the object.
- f) The desiring attitude *assesses* the object, implicitly attributing to it an *objective* significance, accordingly as responding to it by engaging in the activity the attitude motivates does or does not satisfy the desire. If it does not, if what the object was subjectively or *for* the animal does not coincide with what it was objectively, or *in* itself, that is, if the activity was not *successful* in satisfying the motivating desire, then an *error* has been committed. In that case the desire motivates *changing* the reliable differential responsive disposition to engage in the associated activity when activated by the desire and stimulated by a range of objects.

B. On to Recognition

To understand *recognition*, the tripartite structure of orectic awareness must be applied *twice*:

- It is the structure of the whole thing: “Self-consciousness is desire.” [§174]; recognition is a form of orectic awareness.
- The *significance* attributed to an object, what it is *for* the organism exhibiting the orectic awareness in question, is to be orectically aware: to be something things can be something *for*. That is, the *significance* attributed by engaging in a responsive *activity* and assessed by the motivating *attitude* must itself exhibit the tripartite structure of orectic awareness.

The tripartite structure of orectic awareness (TSOA) tells us that the two big questions that must be answered are these:

- What *activity* is it that institutes this significance (namely, having the TSOA)? That is, what is it that one must *do*, how must one *respond* to something, to count thereby as *taking* or *treating* it as exhibiting the TSOA? What is to the TSOA as *eating* is to *food*?
- What *desire* or other *attitude* is it that motivates that *activity* and *assesses* the *success* of taking something *as* having the irectic significance of being a TSOA, i.e. being something things can be something *for*? What is to the TSOA as *hunger* is to *food*?

Two suggestions:

- We may call what I must *do*, the *activity* that I must engage in, in order thereby to be *taking* or *treating* something in practice *as* something things can be something *for*, “recognizing” that other creature. Recognizing others is attributing to them the practical significance of exhibiting the tripartite structure of irectic awareness: taking them to be takers, subjects for whom things can have a practical significance relative to a desire and mediated by an activity.
- The desire or *attitude* that is the third element completing the TSOA whose attitude is recognizing and whose *significance* is exhibiting the TSOA is a *desire for recognition*: the desire that others take or treat one in practice as a taker, as something things can be something *for*, as one whose *attitudes* (irectic or normative) institute of *significances*.

Part III: Mastery

A) The “Struggle Unto Death”

“It is only through staking one's life that freedom is won; only thus is it proved that for self-consciousness, its essential being is not [just] being, not the immediate form in which it appears, not its submergence in the expanse of life, but rather that there is nothing present in it which could not be regarded as vanishing moments, that it is only pure being-for-self.” [PG §187]

The result of the struggle is

...[T]wo opposed shapes of consciousness; one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another. The former is master, the other is servant. [PG 189]

B) The Metaphysical Irony of Mastery, the Paradox of Fate

1. Defining Error of Mastery:

Mastery understands itself as being, in itself, “pure independence”: it conceives itself as exercising *authority unmixed and unmediated by any correlative responsibility*, which is normative “dependence.”

2. The Master's Overgeneralization.

3. The Recognitive Categorical Mistake

The *metaphysical irony* of the sort of self-hood the Master institutes.

This is what in earlier works Hegel calls “the causality of fate.”

The master is the master only insofar as he is recognized *as* the master by the servant.

4. The Pragmatic Categorial Mistake.
5. The Semantic Categorial Mistake.

C) The Structure of Subordination and Obedience: Lordship and Bondage

