

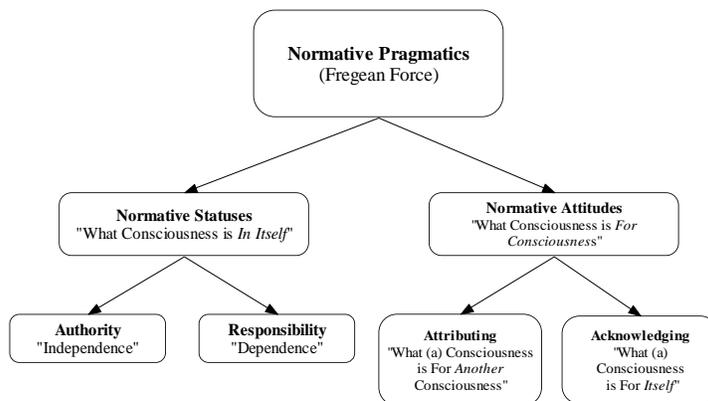
The Fine Structure of Autonomy and Recognition: The Institution of Normative Statuses by Normative Attitudes

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In my regimented idiom, the distinction between normative *statuses* and normative *attitudes* corresponds to Hegel’s distinction between *what consciousness is in itself* and *what consciousness is for consciousness*.

Within the category of normative *statuses*, the distinction *authority* and *responsibility* corresponds to Hegel’s use of the terms “independence” and “dependence” (“Unabhängigkeit”/“Abhängigkeit”) when they are applied to the *subjects* of consciousness rather than the *objects* of consciousness.

Within the category of normative *attitudes* is the further distinction within the category of normative attitudes in terms of the different social perspectives they embody is that between *attributing* a normative status (to another) and *acknowledging* or claiming a normative status (oneself). This is the distinction, within the domain of what consciousness is *for* consciousness, between what a consciousness is for *another* consciousness and what a consciousness is for *itself*.



Elements of the model are in bold.
Modeled Hegelian phrases are in quotes.

Though the concern of the *Self-Consciousness* chapter is ultimately with the *subjects* of normative attitudes and statuses, those attitudes and statuses also have *objects*. On the side of attitudes, what is attributed or acknowledged is just statuses of authority and responsibility. One normative subject, X, can attribute authority or responsibility to another, Y. X is then the *subject* of the attitude, the normative status attributed is the *object* of the attitude, and the subject *to* whom the status is attributed is the *indirect object* or *target* of the attribution.

Kant’s construal of normativity in terms of autonomy is at base the idea that rational beings can *make* themselves responsible (institute a normative status) by *taking* themselves to be responsible (adopting an attitude). His idea (developing Rousseau’s) is that so long as the attribution of responsibility is self-consciously self-directed, that is, so long as it takes the form of *acknowledgment* of oneself *as* responsible, it is *constitutive*, in the sense that adopting that attitude is sufficient, all by itself, to institute the status.

Kant's conception of normative subjects as autonomous, as I am reading it, 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 claim that i) normative attitudes *institute* normative statuses goes beyond the mere claim of ii) attitude-*dependence* of normative statuses. Beyond these two is the claim that iii) at least some normative attitudes are *immediately constitutive* of normative statuses. This sort of *taking* someone to be committed is sufficient for *making* that one *be* committed.

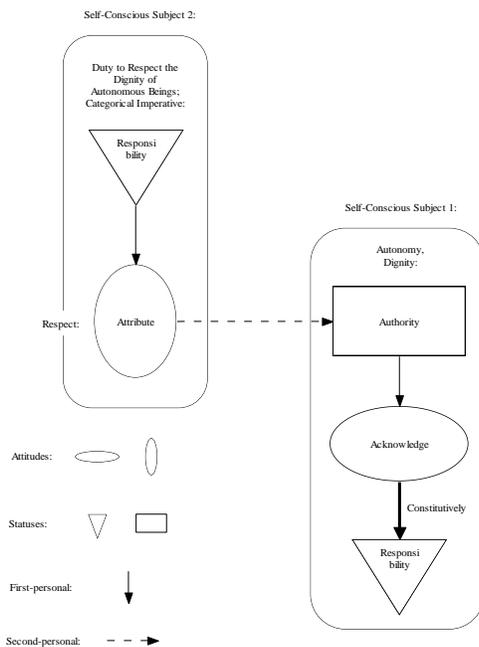
We can think of Hegel's diagnosis of the metaphysical error that manifests itself as forms of self-consciousness understanding itself in the way characteristic of Mastery as having three levels, proceeding from the more to the less abstract.

First, it is characteristic of self-consciousness with the structure of Mastery to understand itself as being, in itself, "pure independence." That is, it conceives itself as exercising authority unmixed and unmediated by any correlative responsibility, which is normative "dependence." Second, as "pure independence," the Master cannot acknowledge the responsibility of his attitudes to normative statuses: the status-dependence of normative attitudes that was, Hegel thinks, a genuine insight of traditional forms of normativity (*Geist*), albeit one that was expressed in deformed, because one-sided, practical conceptions of normativity in terms of the model of subordination and obedience.

Third, the Master has a conception of normative *force*, in Frege's sense of the pragmatic significance of statuses and attitudes—what one is *doing* in becoming authoritative or responsible, and in attributing and exercising authority or attributing and acknowledging responsibility—that leaves no room for the contrast and division of labor between such force and the determinate conceptual *content* of either normative states or attitudes. This is the form of complaint that binds together the treatment of all the forms of self-consciousness conceiving itself according to categories of Mastery. There is no intelligible *semantics* (account of content) that is compatible with the *pragmatics* (account of normative force, status, and attitude) to which they are committed.

Hegel’s recognition model of the institution of normative statuses by normative attitudes articulates the idea that other-regarding attitudes of attributing responsibility and authority (holding other normative subjects responsible, taking them to be authoritative) are equally essential to them really being responsible or authoritative (having the statuses of being committed or entitled) as are self-regarding attitudes of acknowledging those statuses.

**The Social Dimension
of the Kantian Autonomy Model**

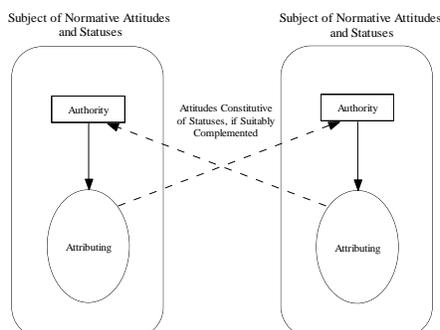


Suppose one accepted the motivations that lead Kant to the conception of the complex of basic attitudes and statuses that is the socially extended BKNS, but thought both that *all* normative statuses are instituted by normative attitudes, and that such institution requires not only the attitude of the subject of the status but also the attitude of some other who attributes it. This latter is the idea that the attitudes of any one individual normative subject can institute normative statuses only when they are *suitably complemented* by the attitudes of others.

Recognition, the recognitive attitude of attributing the authority distinctive of autonomy, is an essential component required to institute that very authority. These are the thoughts that lead from the Kantian model of *individual* autonomous normative subjects as *immediately* instituting their determinate responsibilities by their attitudes of acknowledging them to the Hegelian model of the *social* institution of normative statuses by attitudes of normative subjects that must be *mediated* by each other’s suitably complementary attitudes.

I am understanding Hegel as taking *this* very basic constellation of normative attitudes and statuses to be the underlying metaphysical structure of (genuine) normativity:

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



“Self-consciousness exists *in and for itself*, because and by virtue of its existing in and for itself for an other; which is to say, it exists only as recognized.” [PhG178].

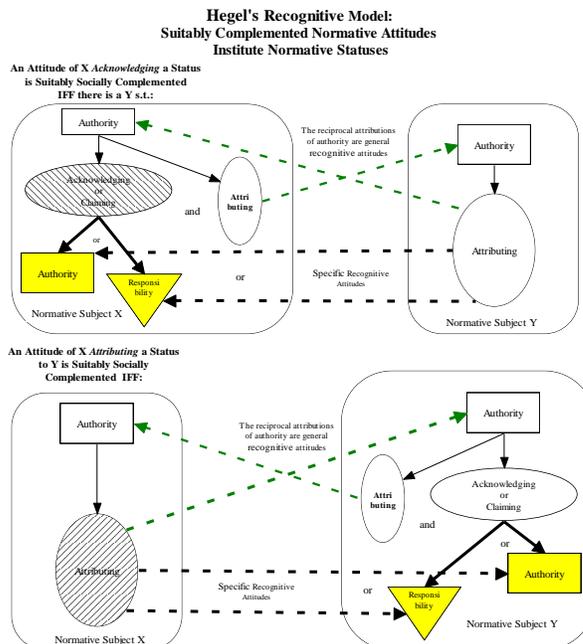
Instituting a self in the sense of something with the status of a normative subject requires cognitive attitudes that are *symmetric, reciprocal, or mutual*.

“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].

Hegel refers to the cognitive community of recognizing-and-recognized individual normative subjects as “Spirit” [Geist]: “...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'. [PhG 177].

As with the Kantian autonomy structure, attributing a responsibility has to be complemented by the acknowledgment of the subject of the responsibility. One only *is* responsible (a status) for what one *acknowledges* responsibility for (an attitude). The status of responsibility, which is virtual in the sense of just being the object of these paired attitudes of attribution and acknowledgment, only becomes actualized—a status outside the attitudes it is an object of—when the status attributed is also acknowledged. This is just the other side of the coin of the requirement that for acknowledging a commitment or responsibility to succeed in instituting that status (for it to be constitutive of the commitment it acknowledges, for it to be a successful undertaking of that commitment, a status) someone else must both be authorized to *hold* the subject responsible (attribute the commitment, an attitude) and must *actually* do so.



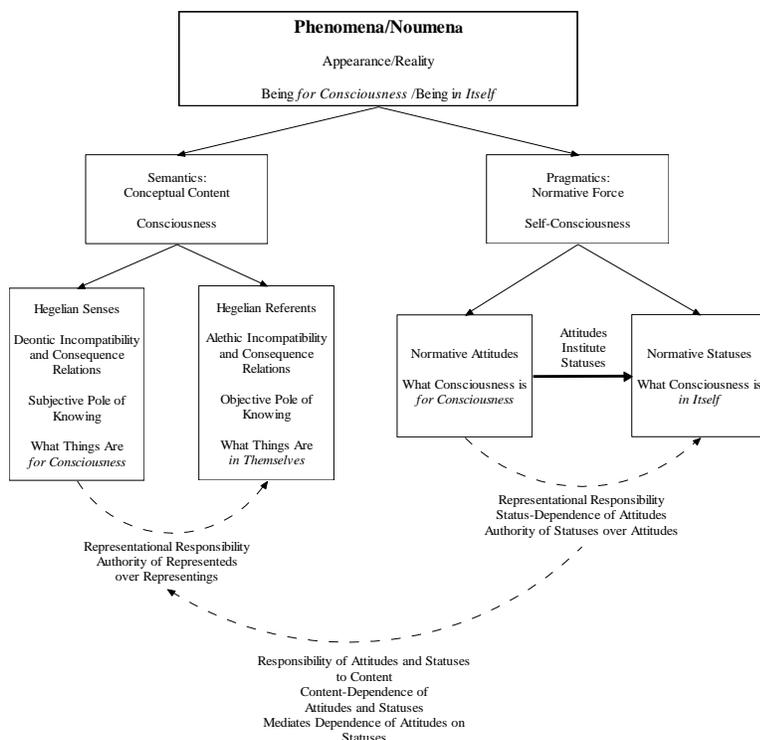
What one sees here is essentially the diagram of the basic Kantian normative status of autonomy. Each subject has the authority to institute normative statuses (including specific ones) by acknowledging them. The big differences are:

- All the normative statuses are instituted by appropriate constellations of normative attitudes—constellations in which they are suitably socially complemented.
- The attribution by others of the authority to adopt constitutive (status-instituting) attitudes, which corresponds to Kantian respect, is an essential element, a *necessary* condition, of the institution of that authority.
- The whole structure of statuses and attitudes, including other-regarding ones, in which the substructure taking the place of the Kantian autonomy structure of statuses and attitudes is embedded, is being taken to be the context *sufficient* for the institution of statuses by attitudes.

According to the model, the *authority* to recognize (which is, *inter alia*, attributed by the attitude of recognition) and the *responsibility* to recognize are two sides of one coin. Attributing recognitive authority implies acknowledging recognitive responsibility.

For the authority attributed by attitudes of general recognition to be the authority to institute statuses by one's attitudes, it must be accompanied by the attribution to *everyone* one recognizes of responsibility to take or treat those statuses in practice *as actual*

To be a self in the full normative sense is to have not only actual normative attitudes, but also actual normative statuses: not only to *take* oneself or others to have authority or be responsible, but actually to *have* authority or *be* responsible. To achieve such a status, a normative subject must participate in a general recognitive dyad: must actually be recognized by someone that subject actually recognizes. For only suitably socially complemented attitudes institute actual statuses



The retrospective, rational-reconstructive *historical* phase of the process of experience, Hegel’s “Erinnerung”, explains how, on the semantic side, objective conceptual contents (referents, noumena) articulated as laws, facts, and objects with properties both are to be understood in terms of and serve as standards for assessments of the correctness of the process of manipulating subjective conceptual contents (senses) by applying rules, propositions, and singular terms and predicates in adopting doxastic attitudes. The *social* character of the recognitive process that institutes both normative subjects and their communities explains, on the pragmatic side, both how normative statures (noumena, what self-conscious subjects are in themselves) are instituted by (and in that strong sense dependent upon) normative attitudes (phenomena, what self-conscious subjects are for themselves) and how those statures have authority over those attitudes in serving as standards for assessment of their correctness. This is the dimension of status-dependence of normative attitudes, the responsibility of those attitudes to (Hegel’s “dependence on”) statures that balances the attitude-dependence of normative statures.

The recognitive model is Hegel’s way of synthesizing two crucial insights. First is what he sees as the founding insight of modernity, the idea that normative statures are attitude-dependent, as boiled down and purified in the Kant-Rousseau idea of autonomy into the idea that at least some normative statures are *instituted* by normative attitudes. The second is what was right about the traditional idea (one-sidedly overemphasized by premodern thought) of the status-dependence of normative attitudes: the idea that our attributions and acknowledgments (or claimings) of responsibility and authority answer for their correctness to facts about what people really are committed and entitled to. The complex social-historical recognitive model of normativity is Hegel’s way of performing the Eiertanz required to make simultaneous sense both of the institution of normative statures by normative attitudes and of the role of normative statures as standards for assessments of the correctness of normative attitudes. At its base is the idea that to undertake a *responsibility* must always also be to acknowledge the *authority* of others to *hold* one responsible—implicitly to attribute that authority. And explicitly to attribute determinately contentful authority to someone is also always to attribute implicit responsibilities defined by that content, administered on its behalf by others to whom one has made oneself responsible by the original assertion of the authority to make oneself responsible.