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The structure of desire and recognition

Self-consciousness and self-constitution

Abstract This article reconstructs Hegel's notion of experience and self-consciousness. It is argued that at the center of Hegel's phenomenology of consciousness is the notion that experience is shaped by identification and sacrifice. Experience is the process of self-constitution and self-transformation of a self-conscious being that risks its own being. The transition from desire to recognition is explicated as a transition from the tripartite structure of want and fulfillment of biological desire to a socially structured recognition that is achieved only in reciprocal recognition, or reflexive recognition. At the center of the Hegelian notion of selfhood is thus the realization that selves are the locus of accountability. To be a self, it is concluded, is to be the subject of normative statuses that refer to commitments; it means to be able to take a normative stand on things, to commit oneself and undertake responsibilities.

Key words commitments · desire · experience · G. W. F. Hegel · identity · recognition · risk · sacrifice · self-consciousness · self-constitution

I The historicity of essentially self-conscious creatures

One of Hegel's big ideas is that creatures with a self-conception are the subjects of developmental processes that exhibit a distinctive structure. Call a creature 'essentially self-conscious' if what it is *for* itself, its self-conception, is an essential element of what it is *in* itself. How something that is essentially self-conscious *appears* to itself is part of what it *really* is. This is not to say that it really *is* just however it appears to itself to be. For all that the definition of an essentially self-conscious being says,

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what such a one is in itself may diverge radically from what it is for itself. It may not in fact be what it takes itself to be. But if it does mistake itself, if its self-conception is in error, that mistake is still an essential feature of what it really is. In this sense, essentially self-conscious creatures are (partially) self-*constituting* creatures. Their self-regarding attitudes are efficacious in a distinctive way.

For such a being can change what it is *in* itself by changing what it is *for* itself. To say of an essentially self-conscious being that what it is for itself is an *essential* element of what it is in itself entails that an alteration in self-*conception* carries with it an alteration in the self of which it is a conception. Essentially self-conscious creatures accordingly enjoy the possibility of a distinctive kind of self-*transformation*: *making* themselves be different by *taking* themselves to be different. Insofar as such a difference in what the essentially self-conscious creature is *in* itself is then reflected in a further difference in what it is *for* itself – perhaps just by in some way acknowledging that it has changed – the original change in self-conception can trigger a cascade. That process whereby what the thing is in itself and what it is for itself reciprocally and sequentially influence one another might or might not converge to a stable equilibrium of self and conception of self.

Because what they are in themselves is at any point the outcome of such a developmental process depending on their attitudes, essentially self-conscious beings do not have *natures*, they have *histories*. Or, put differently, it is their nature to have not just a *past*, but a *history*: a sequence of partially self-constituting self-transformations, mediated at every stage by their self-conceptions, and culminating in their being what they currently are. The only unchanging essence they exhibit is to have what they are in themselves partly determined at every stage by what they are for themselves. Understanding what they are requires looking retrospectively at the process of sequential reciprocal influences of what they at each stage were for themselves and what they at each stage were in themselves, by which they came to be what they now are.

Rehearsing such a historical narrative (Hegel's '*Erinnerung*') is a distinctive way of understanding oneself *as* an essentially historical, because essentially self-conscious, sort of being. To be *for* oneself a historical being is to constitute oneself as *in* oneself a special kind of being: a *self-consciously* historical being. Making explicit to oneself this crucial structural aspect of the metaphysical kind of being one always implicitly has been as essentially self-conscious is itself a structural self-transformation: the achievement of a new kind of self-consciousness. It is a self-transformation generically of this sort that Hegel aims to produce in us his readers by his *Phenomenology*. The kind of self-consciousness it involves is a central element in what he calls 'Absolute Knowing'.

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I suppose that when it is sketched with these broad strokes, this is a reasonably familiar picture. Entitling oneself to talk this way requires doing a good bit of further work, however. Why should we think there are things that answer to the definition of 'essentially self-conscious beings'? What is a self? What is it to have a self-conception – to take oneself to be a self, to be a self to or *for* oneself? For that matter, what is it for *anything* to be something *for* one? And how might the notion of a self-conception, or anything else, being *essential* to what one really is, what one is *in* oneself, be cashed out or explained? Hegel's way of answering these questions, his detailed filling-in and working-out of the relevant concepts, is no less interesting than the general outline of the story about essentially self-conscious, historical beings those details are called on to articulate.

II Identification, risk, and sacrifice

Let me address the last question first. Suppose for the moment that we had at least an initial grasp both on the concept of a *self*, and on what it is to have a self-*conception*, something one is *for* oneself. The story I have just told about essentially self-conscious beings indicates that in order to understand the relationship between selves and self-conceptions, we would need also to understand what it is for some features of a self-conception to be *essential* elements of one's self, that is, what one is *in* oneself, what one *really* is. A self-conception may include many accidental or contingent features – things that just happen to be (taken to be) true of the self in question. The notion of an *essentially self-conscious being* applies only if there are also some things that one takes to be true of oneself such that one's self-conception having those features is essential to one's being the self one is. How are they to be thought of as distinguished from the rest?

Hegel's answer to this question, as I understand it, can be thought of as coming in stages. The first thought is that what it is for some features of one's self-conception to *be* essential is for one to *take* or *treat* them *as* essential. They are constituted as essential by the practical attitude one adopts toward them. The elements of one's self-conception that are essential to one's self (i.e. that one's self-conception has *those* features is essential to what one actually is), we may say, are those that one *identifies* with. Talking this way, essentially self-conscious beings are ones whose *identity*, their status as being what they are *in* themselves, depends in part upon their attitudes of *identification*, their attitudes of identifying with some privileged elements of what they are *for* themselves. Of course, saying this does not represent a significant explanatory advance as long as the concept of the practical attitude of

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identification remains a black box with no more structure visible than its label.

So we should ask: what is it that one must *do* in order properly to be understood as thereby *identifying oneself* with some but perhaps not all elements of one's self-conception? The answer we are given in *Self-Consciousness* is that one identifies with what one is willing to *risk* and *sacrifice* for. Hegel's metonymic image for this point concerns the important case of making the initial transition from being merely a living organism, belonging to the realm of Nature, to being a denizen of the realm of Spirit. The key element in this index case is willingness to risk one's biological life in the service of a commitment – something that goes beyond a mere desire.[1]

> 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. [§187]

By being willing to risk one's life for something, one makes it the case that the life one risks is *not* an essential element of the self one is thereby constituting, while that for which one risks it is. An extreme example is the classical Japanese samurai code of bushido, which required ritual suicide under a daunting variety of circumstances. To be samurai was to identify oneself with the ideal code of conduct. In a situation requiring *seppuku*, either the biological organism or the samurai must be destroyed, for the existence of the one has become incompatible with the existence of the other. Failure to commit biological suicide in such a case would be the suicide of the samurai, who would be survived only by an animal. The animal had been a merely necessary condition of the existence of the samurai (like the presence of oxygen in the atmosphere, which is important to us, but with which we do not just for that reason count as identifying ourselves). No doubt even sincere and committed samurai must have hoped that such situations would not arise. But when and if they did, failure to act appropriately according to samurai practices would make it the case that one never had been a samurai, but only an animal who sometimes aspired to be one. One would thereby demonstrate that one was not, in oneself, what one had taken oneself to be, what one was for oneself. The decision as to whether to risk one's actual life or to surrender the ideal self-conception is a decision about who one is.

I called the sort of example Hegel uses to introduce this thought 'metonymic' because I think that a part is being made to stand for the whole in this image. The point he is after is far broader. For identification in the general sense is a matter of being willing to risk and if need

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be sacrifice something one actually is (in oneself) for something one is merely for oneself, even if what is risked is not life, but only other commitments or entitlements. Hegel's arresting story of the struggle-unto-death offers a vivid image of one important dimension of the transition from Nature to Spirit. But once the realm of Spirit – all of our normatively and conceptually articulated doings – is an up-and-running enterprise, most of what we have to lose, to risk, and to sacrifice is not a matter of biology, but of culture. What we at these subsequent stages in our development are in ourselves is in large part a matter of status, commitment, authority, and responsibility. Rejecting something one already is because it collides with some commitment is identifying with the commitment one endorsed, by sacrificing something else.

So, for instance, risking or sacrificing one's job for a point of moral or political principle is a self-constituting act of identification in the same sense that risking or sacrificing one's life for it is. And acts of identification through risk-or-sacrifice need not be such large-scale, wholesale affairs as these. From the point of view of identification, paying taxes, though seldom a threat to biological endurance (though there is a box labeled 'death and taxes'), does belong together with liability to military service (a risk of a risk of life). Both express one's practical identification, through sacrifice, with the community one thereby defends or supports. Whenever undertaking a new commitment leads to breaking a habit or abandoning a prior intention one is identifying with that commitment, in practical contrast to what is given up. The historical cascade of sequential self-transformations by identification with elements later sacrificed, each stage building on the previous ones, takes place largely in the normative realm opened up by the initial bootstrapping transition from the merely natural.

Indeed, I want to claim that Hegelian *Erfahrung*, the process of experience, ought to be understood as having this shape of identification and sacrifice. It, too, is a process of self-constitution and self-transformation of essentially self-conscious beings. Each acknowledged error calls for an act of self-identification: the endorsement of some of the mutually incompatible commitments one has found oneself with, and the sacrifice of others. Experience is the process whereby subjects define and determine themselves as loci of account, by practically 'repelling' incompatible commitments. (Compare the way objects are determinately identified and individuated by the specific properties they exhibit, and hence the materially incompatible properties they modally exclude – properties themselves determinately contentful in virtue of their relation of exclusive difference from a specific set of materially incompatible properties.[2]) Subjects do that by *changing* their doxastic and inferential commitments: rejecting some, refining others, reciprocally adjusting and balancing what claims are taken to be true, what one is committed to doing,

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and what is taken to follow from what, so as to remove and repair discordances. This is the process by which the always somewhere colliding and competing claims of the mediating authority codified in universals and the immediate authority exercised by particulars are negotiated and adjudicated. It is accordingly the process by and in which conceptual contents develop and are determined.

III Creatures things can be something *for*: desire and the tripartite structure of erotic awareness

The story about essentially self-conscious beings, elaborated in terms of identification through risk-and-sacrifice, is what forged the link between the constitution through development of *selves* and the constitution through development of *conceptual contents* in the process of experience. And that story presupposes a conception of selves, and so of self-conceptions. In order to entitle ourselves to an account of the shape sketched in the previous two sections, we must answer the questions left hanging at the beginning of the previous one: What is a self? What is it to have a self-conception – to take oneself to be a self, to be a self to or *for* oneself? For that matter, what is it for *anything* to be something *for* one?

The first and most basic notion, I think, is *practical classification*. A creature can *take* or *treat* some particular *as* being of a general kind by responding to it in one way rather than another. In this sense, a chunk of iron classifies its environments as being of one of two kinds by rusting in some of them and not in others. The repeatable response-kind, rusting, induces a classification of stimuli, accordingly as they do or do not reliably elicit a response of that kind. Since reliable differential responsive dispositions are ubiquitous in the causal realm, every actual physical object exhibits this sort of behavior. For that reason, this sort of behavioral classification is not by itself a promising candidate as a definition of concepts of *semantic content* or *awareness*; pansemanticism and panpsychism would be immediate, unappealing consequences.

Hegel's alternative way in is to look to the phenomenon of *desire*, as structuring the lives of biological animals. A hungry animal treats something as food by 'falling to without further ado and eating it up', as Hegel says (*Phenomenology* §109). This is clearly a species of the genus of practical classification. The state of desiring, in this case, hunger, induces a two-sorted classification of objects, into those consumption of which would result in satisfying the desire, and the rest. The constellation of *hunger*, *eating*, and *food* has structure beyond that at work in the inorganic case of *rusting* (response) and *wet* (stimulus). What ultimately drives the classification is the difference between hunger's being satisfied

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and its not being satisfied. But the classification of objects by that difference is conditioned on a mediating performance, process, or response. What is classified is objects which *if* responded to by eating *would* satisfy the hunger, and those that do not have that property. Both the role played by the practical activity of the desirer, that is, what it *does* in response to the object, and the hypothetical-dispositional character of the classification in terms of the effect of that doing on the satisfaction of the desire, are important to Hegel's picture.

Desires and the responsive practical performances that subserve them play distinctive roles in the lived life of an animal. They are intelligible in terms of the contributions they make to such functions as its nutrition, reproduction, avoidance of predation, and so on. Because they are, they direct the erotic awareness of the desiring animal to the objects that show up as significant with respect to them in a distinctive way. They underwrite a kind of primitive intentionality whose character shows up in the vocabulary it entitles us to use in describing their behavior. Dennett[3] considers in a related context a laboratory rat who has been conditioned to produce a certain kind of behavior in response to a stimulus of a repeatable kind, say, the sounding of a certain note. We can in principle describe the repeatable response in two different ways: 'The rat walks to the bar, pushes it down with its paw, and sometimes receives a rat-yummy', or 'The rat takes three steps forward, moves its paw down, and sometimes receives a rat-yummy'. Both describe what the rat has done in each of the training trials. What has it been conditioned to do? Which behavior should a reductive behaviorist take it has been inculcated and will be continued? Abstractly, there seems no way to choose between these coextensional specifications of the training. Yet the way in which desiring organisms like rats are directed at desire-satisfying objects via expectations about the results of performances leads us confidently to predict that if the rat is put six steps from the bar, when the note sounds it will walk to the bar and push it down with its paw, *not* walk three steps forward and move its paw down. We do so even in this artificial case for the same reasons that we expect that if we move a bird's nest a few feet further out on a limb while it is away, on its return it will sit in the nest in its new location, rather than on the bare limb in the nest's old location. The bird is 'onto' its nest (to use a locution favored by John McDowell in this context) rather than the location. That is the object that has acquired a practical significance because of the functional role it plays in the animal's desire-satisfying activities. A desire is more than a disposition to act in certain ways, since the activities one is disposed to respond to objects with may or may not satisfy the desire, depending on the character of those objects.

Erotic awareness has a tripartite structure, epitomized by the relations between *hunger*, *eating*, and *food*. Hunger is a desire, a kind of *attitude*.

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It immediately impels hungry animals to respond to some objects by treating them *as* food, that is, by *eating* them. *Food* is accordingly a *significance* that objects can have to animals capable of hunger. It is something things can be *for* desiring animals. *Eating* is the activity of taking or treating something *as* food. It is what one must *do* in order in practice to be attributing to it the desire-relative erotic significance of *food*. *Eating* is the activity that is *instrumentally appropriate* to the desire of *hunger*. It is *subjectively* appropriate, in that it is the activity hungry animals are in fact impelled to by being in the desiring state of hunger. It is *objectively* appropriate in that it is an activity, a way of responding to environing objects, that often (enough) results in the satisfaction of the desire.

This distinction between two sorts of instrumental propriety of activity to desire funds a distinction between *appearance* and *reality* for the objects responded to, between what things are *for* the organism (the erotic significance they are *taken* to have) and what things are *in* themselves (the erotic significance they *actually* have). Anything the animal responds to by eating it is being taken or treated *as* food. But only things that actually relieve its hunger really *are* food. The possibility of these two coming apart is the organic basis for conceptual *experience*, which is the collision of incompatible *commitments*. Even at the level of merely erotic awareness, it can lead to the animal's *doing* things differently, in the sense of altering which objects it responds to by treating them as having the erotic significance generated by that desire. Its dispositions to respond to things differentially as *food*, that is, by *eating* them, can be altered by such practical disappointments. If all goes well with an experiential episode in such a process of learning, the *subjectively* appropriate differential responsive dispositions become more reliable, in the sense of more *objectively* appropriate to the desire that motivates those activities.

IV From desire to recognition: two interpretive challenges

This account of the tripartite structure of erotic awareness offers a reasonably detailed answer to the question: What is it for things to be something *for* a creature? It is a story about a kind of proto-consciousness that is intelligible still in wholly naturalistic terms and yet provides the basic practical elements out of which something recognizable as the sort of theoretical conceptual consciousness discussed in the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* could perhaps be understood to develop. We know that Hegel subscribes to the Kantian claim that there can in principle be no consciousness (properly so described) without *self*-consciousness. So making the step from the erotic awareness of

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animal denizens of the realm of Nature to the conceptual consciousness of knowers and agents who live and move and have their being in the normative realm of Spirit – creatures who have achieved the status of *selves* or *subjects* – requires the advent of self-consciousness. We need to understand what this achievement consists in, and why genuine consciousness requires it. As we will see, what is required to be able to take something to be a *self* is to be able to attribute attitudes that have distinctively *normative* significances: to move from a world of *desires* to a world of *commitments*, *authority*, and *responsibility*.

The account of the tripartite structure of erotic awareness gives us a place to start in addressing this issue. We should apply the answer we have in hand to the question 'What is it for things to be something *for* a creature?' to the more specific case: 'What is it for *selves* to be something things can be for a creature?' That is, what would be required for the erotic significance something had for a desiring animal to be not *food* or *predator*, but *self* or *subject*, in the sense of something things can be something *for*? And second, once we understand what it is to take or treat things as selves or subjects, what must one do to take *oneself* to be a thing of that kind, to take oneself to be a *self*?

The tripartite account of the structure of erotic awareness provides two sorts of resources for answering these questions. First, it tells us something about what a self or subject *is*. It is something things can be something *for*. What it offers is a construal of that status in terms of what it is to be a *desiring* animal, a subject of erotic awareness, an institutor of erotic significances, an assessor of the consilience or disparity of what things are *for* it or subjectively and what they are *in* themselves or objectively, the subject of the experience of *error* and the cyclical feedback process of revision-and-experiment it initiates and guides. This is what a (proto-)self in the sense of a subject of erotic awareness is *in* itself. The question then is what it is for something to be one of those, to have that erotic significance, *for* some (to begin with, some *other*) creature. The second contribution the tripartite structure of erotic awareness makes to understanding the nature and possibility of self-consciousness consists in providing the form of an answer to this more specific question. For it tells us that what we must come up with to understand what it is for something to be accorded this sort of erotic significance by some creature – to be *for* it something things can be something *for* – is twofold: an account of the desire that institutes that erotic significance, and an account of the kind of activity that is instrumentally appropriate to that desire. The latter is an account of what one must *do* in order thereby to count as *taking* some creature as itself a taker, something things can be something for, an instituter of erotic significances.

The philosophical challenge, then, is to see what sort of an account of self-consciousness one can produce by assembling these raw materials:

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applying the tripartite account of erotic awareness to itself. The interpretive challenge is see to what extent one can by doing that explain the index features characteristic of Hegel's distinctive claims about the nature of self-consciousness. Two features of his approach are particularly worthy of attention in this regard, both of them features of his master-concept of *recognition*. First is his view that both self-conscious individual selves and the communities they inhabit (a kind of universal characterizing them) are synthesized by reciprocal recognition among particular participants in the practices of such a recognitive community. Self-consciousness is essentially, and not just accidentally, a *social* achievement. Second, recognition is a *normative* attitude. To recognize someone is to take her to be the subject of normative statuses, that is, of commitments and entitlements, as capable of undertaking responsibilities and exercising authority. This is what it means to say that as reciprocally recognized and recognizing, the creatures in question are *geistig*, spiritual, beings, and no longer merely natural ones. Here are some of the familiar representative passages:

> 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. [§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'. [§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. [§186]

I see two principal philosophical challenges that arise in understanding the discussion of recognition and self-consciousness in these and related passages in the material in *Self-Consciousness* that precedes the discussion of *Herrschaft und Knechtschaft*. First, how are we to understand the transition from the discussion of the concept of *desire* to the discussion of the concept of *recognition*? This corresponds to the shift from consideration

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of particular merely *biological* creatures impelled wholly by *natural impulses*, in relation to their species, on the one hand, to consideration of genuinely *social* self-conscious individuals motivated by normative relations of *authority* and *responsibility* within their communities, on the other. How one understands the relation between these, both conceptually and historically, is evidently of the first importance in understanding what Hegel has to teach us about the normative realm he calls '*Geist*'.

The second issue concerns the formal structure of his account of the synthesis of social substance by relations of reciprocal recognition. To recognize someone is to take or treat that individual in practice as a self: a knowing and acting subject, hence as subject to normative assessment as potentially committed, responsible, authoritative, and so on. The picture that is presented of the sort of community within which fully adequate self-consciousness is achieved is one in which recognition is an equivalence relation: everyone in the community recognizes and is recognized by everyone else ('each is for the other what the other is for it'), and so recognizes everyone recognized by anyone else. Individuals are, roughly, particulars whose exhibition of, characterization by, or participation in, universals is essential to them. In the case of self-conscious individuals, this means that the norms of the community they are members of are essential equally to the individual members and to the community as a whole.[4]

In such an ideal community, each member is to be able to recognize himself *as* a member. To say that is to say that recognition is *reflexive*. Recognition is also to be *symmetric*, that is to say, reciprocal or mutual (Hegel's '*gegenseitig*'). It is this aspect that is lacking in the defective forms of recognition that structure the defective forms of self-consciousness rehearsed in the *Phenomenology*, beginning with the discussion of Mastery. The view appears to be that insofar as recognition is *de facto* not *symmetric*, it cannot be *reflexive*. I cannot be properly self-conscious (recognize myself) except in the context of a recognition structure that is *reciprocal*: insofar as I am recognized by those I recognize. (This is the essence of Hegel's Wittgensteinean view of self-consciousness, which by contrast to a Cartesian view sees it as a *social* achievement, which accordingly takes place in important respects *outside* the self-conscious individual. It is not a kind of inner glow.)

A big question is then: why? Why should it be the case that *reciprocal* (that is, *symmetric*) recognition is a necessary condition of *reflexive* recognition (that is, self-consciousness, awareness of oneself *as* a self).

Here is a thought about the shape of a possible answer. It is a formal fact that *if* a relation is both symmetric and transitive, then it is also reflexive, and hence is an equivalence relation. That is, if $\forall x,y[xRy \rightarrow yRx]$ and $\forall x,y,z[xRy \& yRz \rightarrow xRz]$, then $\forall x[xRx]$. For we can just apply the transitivity condition to the symmetry pairs xRy and yRx to yield xRx.[5] So

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if recognition were (for some reason) *de jure* transitive – if it were part of the nature of recognition that one is committed to recognizing anyone recognized by someone one recognizes – *then* achieving *de facto* symmetry of recognition would suffice for achieving *de facto* reflexivity of recognition. That is, each community member would recognize herself – and in that sense count as self-conscious – so long as everyone was recognized by everyone they recognized, that is, so long as recognition were *reciprocal*. So *one* way to forge the desired connection between social *reciprocity* of recognition and self-consciousness would be to establish that recognition must by its very nature be *transitive*.

In what follows, we will see how the tripartite account of erotic awareness can be used in a natural way to build a notion of *recognition* that satisfies these twin philosophical constraints on the interpretation of Hegel's notion of self-consciousness in terms of recognition. Doing so will both clarify the nature of the transition from *desire* to *recognition*, and explain why *reciprocal* recognition is the key to *self-consciousness*.

V Simple recognition: being something things can be something *for* being something things can be *for* one

We can think of the tripartite structure of erotic awareness as consisting of three elements and three relations among them. The three elements are:

1 an *attitude* (desire), e.g. *hunger*;
2 a responsive *activity*, e.g. *eating*; and
3 a *significance*, e.g. *food*.

The three relations are:

4 The attitude must *motivate* the activity, in the sense of *activating* a (more or less reliable, in a sense determined by the assessments in (6) below) disposition to respond differentially to objects.
5 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.
6 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

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> 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.

What we are now interested in is a more complicated constellation of elements and relations, in which the tripartite structure of erotic awareness enters *twice*. It is, of course, the structure of the whole thing: 'Self-consciousness is desire' [§174], at least in the sense that the most primitive form of self-awareness is to be understood as a development of the basic structure of erotic awareness. But the significance attributed to an object, what it is *for* the organism exhibiting the erotic awareness in question, is to be erotically 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 (item (3) above) must itself exhibit the tripartite structure of erotic awareness. For one to have that significance *for* oneself – not just being *in* oneself something things can be something *for*, but being that *for* oneself as well – that significance must be something things can be or have *for* one.

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

- What *activity* is it that institutes this significance (namely, having the TSEA)? 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 TSEA? What is to the TSEA 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 erotic significance of being a TSEA, i.e. being something things can be something *for*? What is to the TSEA as *hunger* is to *food*?

To begin to address these questions, and to indicate an important point of contact with Hegel's own vocabulary, we may call what I must *do*, the activity, whatever it is, 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. So far, this is just a label for an answer to the first question. Recognizing others is attributing to them the practical significance of exhibiting the tripartite structure of erotic awareness: taking them to be takers, subjects for whom things can have a practical significance relative to a desire and mediated by an activity. What can we then say at this level of abstraction about the desire or *attitude* that is the third element completing the TSEA whose attitude is recognizing and whose significance is exhibiting the TSEA? Hegel's answer is, I think, clear, if surprising: it is *desire for recognition*, the desire that others take or treat one in practice as a taker, as something things can be something *for*, as an instituter of significances.

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If we bracket for the moment the crucial question of *why* a desire to be recognized is the attitude for which recognizing others is the appropriate activity, and so why it institutes the significance of being something things can be something *for* – making that something things can be *for* one, a proto-conception of *selves* – we may ask what would happen if a being with that desire got what it wanted. If the desire for recognition is satisfied by responding to others by recognizing them, then according to the TSEA the subjective significance the recognized ones have *for* the recognition-desirer shows up as being *correct*, as what they objectively are *in* themselves: subjects of significance-instituting attitudes and activities. And what is required for that is just that one be recognized (for that is what it takes to satisfy the desire) by those one recognizes (for that, on the line of thought being considered, is what one must *do* in order, if all goes well, to satisfy the desire). So it follows from the claim that the desire that completes the higher-order TSEA whose activity is recognition and whose instituted significance is exhibiting the TSEA is a desire for recognition that the recognition-desire can be satisfied only by achieving *reciprocal recognition*. On this construal, then, having a practical proto-conception of *selves* – being able to take or treat things as subjects things can be something *for*, recognizing them – and being self-conscious in the sense of *reciprocal* recognition are two aspects of one achievement, two sides of one coin.

In order to give a reading of these claims in terms of the tripartite structure of erotic awareness, the black-box notion of *recognition* must be filled in so as to answer the following three questions.

1 *Recognizing*: What, exactly, is it that one must *do* in order to be recognizing someone? That is, what *is* the activity we have labeled 'recognizing'? How is it that doing that *is* taking or treating someone *as* exhibiting the tripartite structure of erotic awareness? What is the differential responsive disposition that is to be licensed by the instituting attitude?
2 *Being recognized*: Why should the desire to be taken or treated that way oneself, that is, to be recognized, be the one making appropriate that activity, namely, recognizing?
3 *Self-consciousness*: Why does the reciprocal recognition that results when that desire for recognition is satisfied by recognizing someone else amount to *self-consciousness*, in the sense of applying a (proto-) conception of *selves* to oneself?

The challenge is to give an answer to the first question that will entail plausible answers to the other two questions.

The first point to make is that *general* recognition, taking someone to be something things can be something *for*, must be understood in terms of *specific* recognition: taking someone to be something things

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can have a *specific* significance for, say being of kind K (e.g. food, a predator, a potential sexual partner). One takes someone to be a taker in general just in case there are some specific significances, values of K, for which one takes it that that individual is a K-taker, i.e. can take things to be Ks. So it will suffice to answer the questions above for specific recognition, relativized to some instituted significance K things can have for a creature, in order to answer those questions for the more general case.

Specifically recognizing someone as a K-taker requires, according to the tripartite structure of erotic awareness, responding to the other in a way that practically or implicitly attributes both an attitude and an activity related to each other and to the significance K in the three ways specified as (4), (5), and (6) above. This means:

- One must attribute an activity that one takes to be what it is for the other to be responding to something *as* a K.
- One must attribute a desire or other attitude that one takes to *license* or *authorize* responding to things *as* Ks, i.e. by engaging in that activity.
- One must acknowledge in practice a distinction between *correct* and *incorrect* responses of that sort, assessed according to the attributed attitude that authorizes responses of that kind.

My suggestion as to where we start is with the thought that in the most basic case, one can only take another to be a K-taker if one is oneself a K-taker. Taking the other to be a K-taker will then be attributing to him activity of the same sort in which one oneself engages in response to things one (thereby) takes to be Ks. That is, my taking you to be able to treat things as *food* is my taking it that you respond to some things with the same behavior, *eating*, with which I respond to food.

We are now in a position to put in place the keystone piece of this explanatory structure. What the recognizing attributor responds differentially *to* as the success of a desire-authorized responsive activity is the cessation of that activity. Thus no longer being disposed to respond to things by eating things indicates that hunger was satisfied, so the thing previously responded to as food was *in* itself what it was *for* the one recognized as a desirer of food.

What, then, is the differential response that is keyed to this difference in the one being recognized as a K-taker? This is the decisive point. My taking *your* K-response to have been authorized by a K-desire that serves as a standard for the success of your K-taking, and taking that K-response to have been *correct* or *successful* by that standard, is my acknowledging the *authority* of your K-taking, in the practical sense of being disposed *myself* to take *as* a K the thing *you* took to be a K. Taking it that the kind of fruit you ate really was food, in that it satisfied *your*

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hunger, is being disposed to eat that kind of fruit myself when and if *I* am hungry, i.e. have a *desire* of the same kind. This is a second-order disposition, involving a change in my first-order dispositions. My specific K-recognitive response to you is to acquire the disposition: *if* I have the K-desire, *then* I will K-respond to the things to which I (thereby) take you to have *successfully* K-responded. My acknowledging *your* K-desire as *authoritative* in the dual sense of licensing *your* responsive K-activity and serving as a standard of *normative* assessment of its *success* or *correctness* consists in my treating it as *authorizing* my *own* K-takings, should *I* have a K-desire.

So in the first instance, my treating your K-desire as having the normative significance of being authoritative for K-takings is treating it as authoritative for them full stop – not just for *your* K-takings, but for K-takings generally, and so for *mine* in particular. What it is for it to be *K*-takings (and not some other significance or no significance at all that you are practically attributing to things by responding to them in that way) that I *take* your responses to be consists in the fact that it is *my K*-taking responsiveness (and not some other activity) that I am conditionally disposed to extend to the kind of objects that satisfied your desire. The link by which the specifically recognized one's activity is assimilated to that of the recognizer is forged by the *interpersonal* character of the specific authority of the recognized one's successful takings, whose acknowledgment is what specific recognition consists in. The *only* way the recognizer's erotic classifications can be practically mapped onto those of the other so as to be intelligible as implicitly attributing specific desires, significances, and mediating responsive activities exhibiting the tripartite structure of erotic awareness is if the *authority* of the assessments of responsive significance-attribution on the part of the one recognized is acknowledged in practice by the recognizer. So specific recognition involves acknowledging another as having some authority concerning how things are (what things are Ks). When I do that, I treat you as one of *us*, in a primitive normative sense of 'us' – those of us subject to the same norms, the same authority – that is instituted by just such attitudes.

VI Robust recognition: specific recognition of another as a recognizer

Looking back at the most primitive sort of pre-conceptual recognition of others, from the vantage-point of the fully developed conceptually articulated kind, brings into relief the crucial boundary that is being crossed: between the merely *natural* and the incipiently *normative*. In the merely erotically aware animal, *desire* is a state that *motivates* and

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regulates responsive activity *immediately*. It causally activates differential responsive dispositions to engage in activities, and its matter-of-factual satisfaction causes the creature to desist from or persist in them. But the recognizer, who is aware of the creature *as* aware of things, does not *feel* that creature's desires, but only *attributes* them, implicitly and practically, by treating the creature *as* having them. The recognizer accordingly takes up a more distanced, mediated, abstract attitude toward these significance-generating attitudes. The recognized creature's attitudes are seen (treated in practice) as *assessing* the *correctness* of practical responsive classifications, as *licensing* or *authorizing* the responsive activity – in the first instance in the case of the one recognized, but then also on the part of the recognizer who merely attributes the attitude to the other. The relation between the attitude the recognizer attributes and the activity he himself engages in is a *normative* one. Even in the most primitive cases it is intelligible as the acknowledgment of *authority* rather than mere acquiescence in an impulse. In treating the attitudes of the recognized other as having authority for those who do not feel them, the recognizer implicitly accords them a significance beyond that of mere desires: as *normatively* and not merely *immediately* significant attitudes.

The story I have rehearsed about what happens when the tripartite structure of erotic awareness is applied to itself as significance shows how *recognition* develops out of and can be made intelligible in terms of *desire*. But it also shows why just being erotically aware is not enough to give one a conception of a self. That is something one can get only by recognizing others. For the possibility of treating attitudes as having a distinctively *normative* significance opens up in the first instance for the attitudes of *others*, for desires one attributes but does not immediately feel. The claim we have been shaping up to understand is Hegel's central doctrine that self-consciousness consists in reciprocal recognition. It is clear at this point that recognizing others is necessary and sufficient to have a conception of selves or subjects of consciousness. But the relation between that fact and *reciprocity* of recognition as what is required for the participants to count as applying that concept to themselves in the way required for self-consciousness has not yet been made out. To make it out, we can apply the observation made in the previous section that *if* recognition could be shown to be *de jure* transitive, then any case in which it was also *de facto* symmetric (reciprocal) would be one in which it was also *de facto* reflexive. For reflexivity follows from transitivity and symmetry.

Simple recognition is not in the relevant sense transitive. For what I am doing in taking another to be a subject of erotic awareness – namely, simply recognizing that desirer *as* a desirer – is *not* what I take that desirer to be doing. The one simply recognized need not be capable

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of being in its turn a simple recognizer, and so something with even a basic conception of selves. For that we need to go up a level, and consider what it is to take another not just to be erotically aware, but to be aware of others *as* erotically aware. That is, we must consider what it is to recognize another as a simple recognizer, hence as itself the kind of thing for which things can have a specifically *normative* significance. I shall call that practical attitude *robust* recognition. Robust recognition is a kind of simple recognition: simple recognition of someone things can have a specific kind of erotic significance for, namely the significance of being something things can have erotic significances for.

What is important for my story is that robust recognition is transitive. This is clear from the account already offered of recognition in terms of acknowledging the authority of what things are *for* the recognized one. Recognizing someone as a recognizer is acknowledging the authority of his or her recognitions for one's own: recognizing whomever he or she recognizes.

Since it is a kind of simple recognition, the activity element of the erotic structural triad characteristic of robust recognition – what one must *do* to be taking or treating someone *as* (having the significance of) a simple recognizer – is practically to acknowledge *as* authoritative for one's own takings takings of the one being recognized (if they are successful, and within the range of significance of one's simple recognition). In this case, doing that is acknowledging the authority of the recognized one's simple recognitions. Those simple recognitions are themselves a matter of acknowledging the authority of the ground-level erotic takings of the one simply recognized. So what the robust recognizer must *do* to be taking someone as a simple recognizer is to acknowledge as authoritative whatever ground-level takings the one robustly recognized acknowledges as authoritative. And that is to say that the robust recognizer treats as *transitive* the inheritance of authority of ground-level takings that is what simple recognizing consists in.

It might seem that the hierarchy generated by acknowledging different levels of recognition is open-ended: robust recognition is taking to be (simply recognizing as) a simple recognizer, super-robust (say) recognition would be simply recognizing as a robust recognizer, super-duper-robust recognition would be simply recognizing as a super-robust recognizer, and so on. Perhaps surprisingly, the crucial structural features of recognition do not change after we have reached robust recognition. The key point is that robust recognition is a specific instance of simple recognition, i.e. recognition of something as having a special kind of erotic awareness, namely, awareness of something *as* being erotically aware. As we have seen, that is a particular kind of erotic significance things can have. As a result of this fact, the nascent

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recognitional hierarchy could be formulated as: erotic awareness, simple recognition of something as erotically aware, simple recognition of something as simply recognizing, simple recognition of something as a simple recognizer of simple recognizers, and so on. But what one must *do* in order thereby to be simply recognizing someone – the activity (corresponding to *eating* in the paradigmatic erotic desire-activity-significance triad of *hunger, eating, food*) one must engage in to count as taking or treating an organism as (having the significance of being) erotically aware – is to acknowledge the *normative authority* for one's own responses of their takings of things as something. Taking someone to be a simple recognizer is accordingly acknowledging in practice the authority of their takings of someone as an erotic taker, which is acknowledging the authority of their acknowledgings of authority. Whatever ground-level takings of things as something the one being robustly recognized (simply recognized as a simple recognizer) takes to be authoritative the robust recognizer takes therefore to be authoritative. In robustly recognizing you, I must simply recognize whomever you simply recognize.

The effect is to produce the *transitive closure* of the acknowledgment of authority of ground-level takings in which simple recognition consists. By the 'transitive closure' of a relation is meant the relation R' that is generated from R by the two principles: (i) $\forall x \forall y[xRy \rightarrow xR'y]$ and (ii) $\forall x \forall y \forall z[(xRy \,\&\, yRz) \rightarrow xR'z]$. It is an elementary algebraic fact that the transitive closure of the transitive closure of a relation is just the transitive closure of that relation. (Technically: closure operations are idempotent.) All the structural work has been done the first time around. For *a* to recognize *b* in the 'super-robust' way – simply to recognize *b* as a robust recognizer – would commit *a* to acknowledge as authoritative *b*'s simple recognitions of someone *c* as a simple recognizer. *B*'s simple recognition of *c* as a simple recognizer (which is *b*'s robust recognition of *c*), we have seen, consists in *b*'s practical commitment to inherit *c*'s acknowledgments of another's – *d*'s – ground-level takings as authoritative. The effect is then that *a* must likewise be practically committed to inherit *b*'s inherited acknowledgments of those ground-level commitments as authoritative. But this puts *a* in exactly the position *a* would be in if *a* recognized *b robustly*, rather than *super*-robustly. Formally, once one has established that a relation is transitive, that $\forall x \forall y \forall z[(xRy \,\&\, yRz) \rightarrow xRz]$, that has as a consequence (and hence requires nothing else to establish) that $\forall w \forall x \forall y \forall z[(wRx \,\&\, xRy \,\&\, yRz) \rightarrow wRz]$.

Since robust recognition is the transitive closure of simple recognition, there is no difference between simple recognition of someone as a robust recognizer, and robust recognition (simple recognition of someone as a simple recognizer) of someone as a robust recognizer. And robust recognition is transitive: for what one is doing to be robust recognizing, it

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must include commitment to robustly recognize (simply recognize as a simple recognizer) whomever is robustly recognized by those one robustly recognizes. These are facts about the activity pole of the structure of simple and (therefore of) robust recognition. What relates them is that the significance pole of robust recognition is the whole structure of simple recognition – just as the significance pole of simple recognition is the whole triadic structure of ground-level erotic awareness. Indeed, we have seen that the significance pole of ground-level erotic awareness is the crucial element in the activity pole of simple recognition (and therefore of robust recognition). For practical acknowledgment of the authority of the ground-level significances attributed in non-recognitional erotic awareness is what the activity of simple recognizing consists in.

If these are the relations between the *activity* and *significance* poles making up the triadic structure of recognitional awareness, what, then, about the *attitude* or *desire* pole? The story told so far lays it down both that the desire that motivates simple recognizing (and so institutes its characteristic significance) is a *desire for* (simple) *recognition*, and that the only erotic takings on the part of one recognized that a simple recognizer is obliged to acknowledge as authoritative are those that the one recognized takes to be *successful*. So we should ask: which of the recognizings of a simple recognizer should a robust recognizer take to be successful? The answer is: only those that satisfy the relevant desire. That is a desire to be simply recognized, which is to say a desire to have the authority of the simple recognizer's takings acknowledged by another. But that is precisely what a robust recognizer does in simply recognizing anyone as a simple recognizer. So from the point of view of a robust recognizer, *all* the simple recognitions of the one robustly recognized count as successful, and hence as authoritative. There is nothing that could count as taking someone to have a desire to be simply recognized, motivating that one's simple recognitions, which fails to be satisfied.

With this observation, we have reached our explanatory-interpretive goal. For we wanted to know:

1 how *recognition* should be understood to arise out of *desire*,
2 how *normativity* should be understood as an aspect of *recognition*,
3 how *self*-recognition, that is *reflexive* recognition relations, should be understood to require *reciprocal* recognition, that is to say *symmetric* recognition relations, and
4 how *self-consciousness* should be understood to consist in the self-recognition achieved by reciprocal recognition.

The answer to the first question was supplied by seeing how the tripartite structure of erotic awareness could be applied to itself, so that what something was taken or treated in practice *as* was a desiring, significance-instituting creature. The answer to the second was supplied by

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seeing how simple recognizing consists in the recognizer's achieving a mediated, distanced, relation to the immediate felt impulse of the recognized one's desire, in the form of its significance, conditional upon the recognizer's own desires, for the recognizer's own practical awareness. In this way the other's desire is practically acknowledged as *authoritative*, and the other's desire shows up for the recognizer in the shape of the recognizer's *commitment* or *responsibility*. The answer to the third question was supplied by showing how (because of the idempotence of transitive closure operations) the social authority structure constitutive of robust recognition is essentially and in principle, hence unavoidably, *transitive*. For it is a basic algebraic fact that wherever a transitive relation happens to hold *symmetrically*, it is also *reflexive*. It remains only to put these answers together to supply a response to the fourth and final question.

VII Self-consciousness

The connection between robust recognition and *self*-consciousness is as immediate as that between the tripartite structure of erotic awareness and consciousness. For to be a self, a subject, a consciousness – for Hegel as for Kant – is to be the subject of *normative* statuses: not just of desires, but of *commitments*. It is to be able to take a normative stand on things, to commit oneself, undertake responsibilities, exercise authority, assess correctness. Recognition of any kind is taking or treating something *as* such a self or subject of normative statuses and attitudes. It is consciousness *of* something *as* (having the normative significance of) a self or subject. For recognition itself exhibits the tripartite structure of erotic awareness – proto-consciousness. The significance it accords to the one recognized is that of exhibiting that same structure. And adopting that practical attitude toward another is taking or treating its states as having normative significance as authorizing and assessing performances – not merely *producing* them but making them *appropriate*. Eating on the part of the one recognized is now treated as something that involves a *commitment* as to how things are, a commitment that can be *assessed* by both recognized and recognizer (who need not agree) as *correct* or incorrect.

Self-consciousness then consists in applying this practical proto-conception of a self to oneself: recognizing not just others, but oneself. This is *self*-consciousness, or having a self-conception, in a double sense. First, it is a matter of consciousness of something *as* a self: treating it as having that practical significance. Second, it is an application of that conception *to oneself*. Having a self-conception in the first sense consists in a capacity for *recognition*. We might call this a 'conception of selves'.

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For that is what one must be able to *do* in order thereby to be taking or treating something *as* a self, in the sense of a subject of normative statuses of *authoritative* (in the sense of probative, though still provisional and defeasible) *commitments* as to how things are. Having a self-conception in the second sense is a matter of the *reflexive* character of one's recognition: that among those one recognizes is oneself. The lowest grade of self-conception that exhibits these two dimensions would be simple recognition of oneself: being erotically aware of oneself *as* erotically aware of things. We might call this '*simple* self-consciousness'. But the two dimensions are much more tightly bound up with one another if one is aware of oneself *as* able simply to recognize things. In that case, the conception of selves that one applies to oneself is *as* something that has a conception of selves. We might call this '*robust* self-consciousness'.

If *a* robustly recognizes *b*, then *a* acknowledges the (probative, but provisional and defeasible) authority of *b*'s successful simple recognitions. Robust recognition, we have seen, is a kind of simple recognition: simple recognition as able to take others to be simple recognizers. If *b robustly* recognizes someone, then that recognition is *successful* just if it satisfies *b*'s desire for robust recognition. If *b*'s robust recognition of someone is successful in this sense, then in virtue of robustly recognizing *b*, *a* must acknowledge *b*'s robust recognition as authoritative. But since by hypothesis *a does* robustly recognize *b*, *b*'s desire for robust recognition *is* satisfied, so all his robust recognitions are successful (in *a*'s eyes). Thus if it should happen that *b* does *robustly* recognize *a*, then since *a* robustly recognizes *b*, we have a symmetry of robust recognition. Since, as we have seen, robust recognition is transitive, this means that *a* will acknowledge the authority of *b*'s robust recognition of *a*. So *a* counts as robustly recognizing himself. Thus robust self-consciousness is achievable only through *reciprocal* recognition: being robustly recognized by at least some of those one robustly recognizes. This means that a *community* (a kind of universal) is implicitly constituted by one's own robust recognitions, and actually achieved insofar as they are reciprocated. That is the sort of reciprocally recognitive community within which alone genuine (robust) self-consciousness is possible: the '"I" that is "We" and "We" that is "I"'.

VIII Conclusion

I can now bring my story to a quick close. I started it with the concept of *essential* elements of one's self-conception being ones that one *identifies* with, in the sense of being willing to risk or if need be sacrifice for them. One consequence of the transition from desire to commitment within the attitude component of the tripartite structure of erotic

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awareness is that where the activity-motivating character of desire is extinguished with its satisfaction, the activity-licensing character of commitment need not be. In particular, desire for recognition in the form of a commitment to being recognized is a standing, structural element of self-consciousness. It persists even when fulfilled by the achievement of reciprocal recognition that is self-consciousness. Because it persists as part of the necessary background against which any other commitments are adopted and relinquished, being for oneself a recognizer is an *essential* element of one's self-conception. One's identification with it consists practically in the structural impossibility of relinquishing that commitment in favor of others. To be self-conscious *is* to be *essentially* self-conscious: to be *for* oneself, and identify oneself with oneself *as* something that is for oneself, a recognized and recognizing being.

A fuller telling would continue with an account couched in the same basic terms of the specific distorted form of self-consciousness that construes itself under the distinctively modern, alienated category of *independence* that Hegel epitomizes in the form of the 'Master'. It would explain how the self-conception characteristic of Mastery arises from overgeneralizing from its capacity immediately to constitute itself as *essentially* self-conscious – making it so just by taking it so – to yield an ultimately incoherent model of a self-consciousness *all* of whose conceptions are immediately constitutive, thus eliding quite generally the crucial 'distinction that consciousness involves', between what things are *for* it and what they are *in* themselves. And it would explain what Hegel elsewhere calls '*die Wirkung des Schicksals*': the metaphysical irony that undermines the Master's existential commitment to possessing authority without correlative responsibility, to being recognized as authoritative without recognizing anyone as having the authority to do that. But that is a story for another occasion.

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Notes

1 This way of putting things, in terms of commitments rather than desires, will be discussed and justified below.
2 This comparison is developed in 'Holism and Idealism in Hegel's *Phenomenology*', chapter six of Robert B. Brandom, *Tales of the Mighty Dead: Historical Essays in the Metaphysics of Intentionality* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992).
3 Daniel C. Dennett, 'Intentional Systems', reprinted in John Haugeland (ed.) *Mind Design* (Cambridge, MA: Bradford Books, 1981).

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4 Hegel makes claims along these lines in his telegraphic discussion of the relation between self-consciousness and desire. One example is the summary claim that 'the unity of self-consciousness with itself must become essential to self-consciousness, i.e. self-consciousness is *Desire* in general' [§167]. He stresses that '*Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness*' [§175], that is, in another recognized recognizer. 'The satisfaction of Desire is . . . the reflection of self-consciousness into itself, or the certainty that has become truth [that is, what things are *for* it and what things are *in* themselves coincide]. But the truth of this certainty is really a double reflection, the duplication of self-consciousness. Consciousness has for its object one which, of its own self posits its otherness or difference as a nothingness' [§176]. The object is the other one recognizes, who cancels the difference between it and the index consciousness in the sense that it, too, recognizes the other, thereby applying to both the other and itself one universal expressing a respect of similarity or identity: being something things can be something for. 'A self-consciousness exists only *for a self-consciousness*. Only so is it in fact a self-consciousness; for only in this way does the unity of itself in its otherness become explicit for it' [§177]. '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 [*nur als ein Annerkanntes*]. . . . The detailed exposition of the Notion of this spiritual unity in its duplication will present us with the process of Recognition [*Annerkennen*]' [§178].

5 Reflexivity is not redundant in the mathematical definition of equivalence relation because the argument depends on the relation being everywhere-defined, in the sense that that for every x there is *some* y such that xRy, i.e. that everyone *recognizes* someone. Given the philosophical surround, this condition can, I think, be suppressed.

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