

HUMANITY, FREEDOM AND SOCIO-POLITICAL COMMUNITY IN HEGEL

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ABSTRACT

The central question that Hegel's social-political philosophy aims to answer is the problem of the self-determining subject and the ethico-social being. Hegel argues that the self-determining subjectivity necessarily requires an idea of the universal collective existence which rests on the conception of the universal subject as an internally differentiated unity. In the subjective exposition, Hegel shows how self-consciousness finds its truth in another self-consciousness and comes to find its essence as universal self-consciousness. As such, this is the unity of the subject with the object and identity with the other. This identification provides the universal objective substance on which human individuals recognize each other as free independent beings and acquire rationality and freedom as their universal essence. In the objective justification, Hegel examines the actualization of this concept of the self-determining free will into the ethical-social world. The ethical-social institutions and practices as the actualization of the universal essence make it possible for human individuals to reconcile their subjective/particular freedom with the collective/universal freedom. This article critically examines how and why in Hegel's social and political philosophy the self-determining individual subject is at the same time and necessarily the ethico-social being.

Key Words: Hegel, Reason, Freedom, Mutual Recognition, Socio-political Community, Self-Determining Individuality

HEGEL'DE İNSANLIK, ÖZGÜRLÜK VE SOSYO-POLİTİK TOPLULUK SORUNU

ÖZET

Hegel'in sosyal ve siyasal felsefesi, öz-belirlenime sahip tekil öznellik ile etik-sosyal/kolektif bütünlük sorunsalında temellenir. Hegel özerk/özgür tekil öznellik fikrinin ancak organik bir şekilde vücuda gelen bir varlık olarak küllü özne, bir diğer deyişle, evrensel kolektif bütün/öz fikri için-

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de geliştirilebileceğini savunur. Nitekim Hegel, öznel gerekçelendirmede, ben-bilinci, karşılıklı tanıma ve akıl/ruh kavramları aracılığıyla öz-bilincin hakikatini nasıl bir başka öz-bilinçte bulduğunu ve gerçeklik ve ötekiyle özdeşleştiğini inceler. Bu özdeşleşmenin öz-bilinçlerin birbirlerini özgür-özerk tekil varlıklar olarak tanıması ve böylece evrensel rasyonel ve özgür doğalarını gerçekleştirmelerini sağladığını savunur. Hegel, nesnel çözümlemede ise, rasyonel-özgür tekil öznenin etik-sosyal varlık alanında vücuda gelişini temellendirir. Buna göre evrensel özün belirlenimi olarak etik-sosyal kurum ve pratikler, insan teklerinin öznel/tikel özgürlüklerini kolektif/küllü özgürlükle bütünleştirmesini mümkün kılar. Bu çalışma, Hegel'in insanlık, özgürlük ve sosyo-politik topluluk fikrini ihtiva eden sosyal ve siyasal felsefesinde özerk/özgür tekil öznenin nasıl ve niçin aynı zamanda etik-sosyal bir varlık olduğunu ayrıntılarıyla tartışacaktır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hegel, Akıl, Özgürlük, Karşılıklı Tanıma, Sosyo-politik Topluluk, Özerk Bireysel Öznelik

Introduction: The Problem of the Self-Determining Individuality and Ethico-Social Being

G.W. Hegel developed his philosophico-political system during a historical period in which the conceptions of subjectivity and individual freedom were emerging as the organizing principle of European historico-social world. There were both philosophical-intellectual milieu (social contractivism, Kantian tradition etc.) and socio-economic transformations (capitalism and civil society) that underpinned this conception of self-determining individuality. However, there were also counter-intellectual standpoints (such as German romanticism) and socio-political problems and “pathologies” created by this individualistic intellectual orientation and socio-political experience. Hegel’s objective was to reconcile the idea of a self-constituting subject with the modern socio-political world in order that the modern subject “feels at home in the world.” Hegel aimed at constructing a philosophical system which allows the subject to achieve its distinct-particular individuality as a self-legislating concrete and free being in and through the ethical-social objective world. To do so, he accepted not only the modern idea of individual freedom but also the traditional conception of ethical totality in which the conception of self-determining subject could be actual (Honneth, 1995; Taylor, 1977; Plant, 1983; Hardimon, 1994). Thus, Hegel designed his social and political philosophy in order to answer a specific question: *in what sense is a person*

both a member of social-political unity and still a concrete free individual? (Pippin, 2005: p.6).

This central problematic of Hegel's social/political philosophy has been identified and much discussed by Hegelian scholars especially for the last three decades. For this scholarship Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is the statement of his social-political philosophy and contains a definitive tension that is the problem of ethical substance/totality and intersubjectivity. Some scholars such as Thenuissen (1991: p. 3-64) and Honneth (2000: p. 59-60) argue that the overall objective of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* is the elucidation of social relationships/interactions through which individuals become themselves. They also maintain that Hegel's conceptions of freedom and right are only actualized through and in social interactions of self-determining subjects and the ethical-social institutions and practices. However, they believe that this intersubjectivity is repressed in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right* where the ethical substance/whole precedes the individual existence and makes intersubjectivity impossible. Others such as Williams (1997) and Patten (1999: p.121-136) disagree with this argument as they claim that the concepts of mutual recognition and intersubjectivity are the very foundation and the distinguishing feature of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. For these writers, the ethical-social objective institutions and practices are intersubjectively constructed, and their legitimacy and rationality depend on the extent to which they make it possible for human individuals to actualize their essences as self-determining, free and rational subjects and to recognize each other as free self-conscious beings. What is obvious in this debate on the underlying problematic of Hegel's social and political philosophy is how the idea of a concrete free subject could be reconciled with the ethical-social substance. Neither individuality nor an ethical-social whole has priority for Hegel. Rather, his standpoint is based on the unity of independent free individuality and ethical-social collectivity.

Then the question here is how Hegel develops this standpoint. My assumption is that Hegel's distinctive standpoint comes from his conviction that self-determining individuality categorically requires being a member of a certain ethical-social community in which human subjectivity could gain its universal essence as rationality and freedom. I will argue that this conviction rests on a certain understanding of humanity

and universal subject/self which are established in a monistic ontology. I will claim that Hegel's unique idea of the metaphysical conception of the universal self as the universal-collective substance/objective, which is the condition for individual freedom, makes it possible for him to develop this standpoint. Being a concrete free individual and social-political being are the determinations of the same universal subject at the different level of human existence.

In this article, I will discuss Hegel's this standpoint in three sections. In the first section, I will examine Hegel's metaphysics of the universal subject and identify basic philosophical principles that define Hegel's ontology in order to clarify his idea of humanity and the concept of universal subject. In the second section, I will look at Hegel's phenomenological and subjective assessments of the universal self and humanity as the unity of subjectivity/particularity and objectivity/universality. This discussion will proceed on the discussion of consciousness, self-consciousness and spirit. In the third section, I will elaborate Hegel's idea of the system of right in which his understanding of socio-political community is outlined, and will focus on the *Philosophy of Right* as the articulation of his social-political philosophy. Here, I will examine the concepts of the rational free will/freedom, the system of right and ethical life as the necessary-objective manifestation of his metaphysical conception of self-consciousness.

I-The Metaphysics of the Universal Subject in a Monistic Ontology

In order to understand Hegel's standpoint with regard to the central problematique of modern social and political philosophy, it is necessary to look at his monistic ontology and conception of the universal subject. Because this metaphysical conception of the universal subject/I defined by a monistic ontology makes it possible for Hegel to develop the idea of the unity of the self-determining concrete individuality and the collective existence as ethical-social being. Therefore, in this section, I will first outline Hegel's ontology, namely his understanding of being and reality. Second I will briefly discuss Hegel's conception of the universal self as the constitutive principle of his philosophy of spirit.

The organizing and definitive concept of Hegel's ontology is the Idea, the Absolute and reason all of which basically refer to the same

phenomenon that is the essential uniting and animating principle of reality and being as an organic totality. The Absolute is “the whole of substance and its modes, as the unity of the infinite and finite” (Beiser: 1998, p.7). There are two essential aspects of the Absolute that must be pointed out. First, the Absolute is an independent whole, the components of which have been formed in such a way that they generate a coherent structure/totality in which each component has a distinct existence. Second, as an organic unity, it is a self-generating and self-organizing whole (Beiser, 1998: p. 6-10; Beiser, 2005). Hegel’s conception of the Absolute, therefore, has a distinguishing characteristic which is self-generating and self-realizing organic structure as an independent whole. In the following passage Hegel (2003: p.11) gives a general definition of the Absolute:

“The truth is the whole. The whole, however, is merely the essential nature reaching its completeness through the process of its own development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a result, that only at the end is it what is in very truth; and just in that consists its nature, which is to be actual, subject, or self-becoming, self-development.”

The Absolute, initially in itself, has to objectify itself in order to be for itself. This means that the Absolute reveals itself in its otherness and determination in such a way that it becomes objective for itself. Only through this process can the Absolute gain its truth (Hegel, 1979: p.25-27). Since this is a self-revealing process, the objective world as the other is the determination of the Absolute. It manifests itself in its otherness through which it returns to itself as self-consciousness or Hegel puts it as Geist. Consequently, as the consummation of his ontology the Idea is “the self-differentiating universal which is with and for itself in its difference” (Hegel, 1979: p.51).

This idea of the Absolute as the self-differentiating unity is the reason why Horstmann (2006: p.105) thinks that Hegel has a monistic ontology which is based on the assumption of a reasonable unity of thought and reality. For Horstmann, this is a monism of reason because the concept of reason is the constituting principle of reality and thought or to put it another way the essence of the Absolute is reason. He distinguishes three basic premises of Hegel’s ontology which underlie metaphysical foundations of Hegel’s philosophical system consisting of his science of logic and the philosophies of nature and spirit (Hegel, 1979: p.25-37). First

of all, reason is the primary and constituting structure of reality which is the foundation for all things that are real. As such, reality as a totality is a reasonable unity. Second, this primary structure of reality as reason is defined by a differentiated unity of being and thinking. "...everything taken to be real is only real inasmuch as it can be comprehended as the actualization of some specific structural elements of reason" (Hortsmann, 1998: p.265). Being is only comprehended by reason and in turn reason has thinking or being. Reality as a necessary structure of things in a unified totality refers to their "essential reasonableness". Consequently reason is the only and ultimate reality. Third, the unified structure generated by reason forms reality and its objectivity in a teleological process and hence this process is self-knowledge of reason. To put it another way, the concept of reason determines the process of the self-realization of the Absolute and constitutes the conceptual and material elements on and by which the process develops. Therefore reality is the process through which reason externalizes, realizes and knows itself in the objective world which is nothing but its other. Accordingly, it is a self-recognizing process (Hortsmann, 1998: p.265).

The important aspect of the Hegel's conception of the Absolute is that as a self-generating totality it is not only the essence of reality but also reality is its self-determination. This suggests that the Absolute is not only substance nor subject but the unity of its substance and its subjectivity. Hegel (2003: p.9; 1979: p.59, 63-65) says "...everything depends on grasping and expressing the ultimate truth not as Substance but as Subject as well." To understand the Absolute as subject and spirit is the most crucial thing for Hegel and thereby for his system. What does this mean exactly? This means that the Absolute as reason is the essential nature of its essence, reality and being. However it is only actual and real and its essence and its being essence of reality make only sense through a self-positing and self-manifesting process in which it as subject posits its other from itself and it manifests itself in its otherness through which it generates its modes of determination. Consequently reality is "this process of self-reinstating self-identity, of reflecting into its own self in and from its other..." (Hegel, 2003: p.10).

Reality is the process of the self-mediating Absolute through its determinations the otherness of which springs from the Absolute itself.

Through encountering with its other, which is a moment of the process of self-generating, is the Absolute consciousness and thereby actual and real. Therefore, spirit becomes its object “for it consists in the process of becoming an other to itself, i.e. an object for its own self, and in transcending this otherness” (Hegel, 2003: p.41). If we put this in different way, through its self-realization in its otherness by returning to itself the Absolute is *spirit or subjectivity*. “The divine Idea is just this self-release, the expulsion of this other out of itself, and the acceptance of it again, in order to constitute subjectivity and spirit” (Hegel, 1970: p.205). This also implies that the Absolute as the subject or spirit has to embody itself in the natural and human world in “its manifold forms” (Plant, 1997: p.32-35).

It is worthwhile to quote a significant passage from the *Phenomenology of Mind* in which it is not only clear to see the claim for the self-realization process of the Absolute in a reasonable unity of reality but also how Hegel uses the concepts of Absolute, spirit and subject, which are central to understand his whole philosophical system.

“That truth is only realized in the form of system, that substance is essentially subject, is expressed in the idea which represents the Absolute as Spirit (Geist)...Spirit is alone reality. It is the inner being of the world, that which essentially is, and per se; it assumes objective, determinate form and enters into relations with itself- it is externality (otherness), and exists for self; yet, in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself- it is self-contained and self-complete, in itself and for itself at once. This self-containedness, however, is first something known by us, it is implicit in its nature (an sich); it is Substance spiritual. It has to become self-contained for itself, on its own account; it must be knowledge of Spirit, and must be consciousness of Spirit. This means, it must be presented to itself as an object, but at the same time straightaway annul and transcend this objective form; it must be its own object in which it finds itself reflected.” (Hegel, 2003: p.13-14)

What should be emphasized again here is Hegel’s argument that the Absolute is also subject as spirit which manifests itself in its object in order to be for itself, namely the process of self-positing and self-realization. As Taylor (1977: pp.81-89) argues, this is the self-positing spirit. Taylor grounds Hegel’s notion of spirit as the subject on the two essential components which together generate what he calls the expressivist theory. According to the first component, which springs from Aristotelian categories, spirit or the subject has a certain form to realize; secondly it

reflects on this form as the expression of nothing but itself in such a way that it comes to know something about itself. Therefore, both principles together refer to the self-realizing and positing spirit. This self-positing subject embodies itself in the natural form and spiritual human existence in such a way that it differentiates itself in its otherness through which it becomes conscious of itself (Hegel, 1970: p.204). This is also related to what has been said above paragraphs that reality is a self-differentiated unity of the Absolute as reason in its object. This self-positing process of the subject is the necessary act of the constitutive structure of reason, which has to objectify itself in order to be for itself. Therefore its content and form are rational as well (Hegel, 1979: p.55). As Hegel suggested, spirit as the subject is first in its implicit form. In order to be explicit for itself it has to be object to itself. It must be embodied in the objective spheres so that it becomes aware of itself. Consequently, self-positing process is also the self-differentiation of the subject as reason in the objective spheres through which it becomes explicit for itself and knows itself, and thereby becomes self-consciousness.

There are three main points that must be underlined regarding the self-positing spirit or the subject. First, spirit or the subject necessarily objectifies itself in the other. Its underlying essence, which is subject to nothing but itself, requires this self-objectification (Hegel, 1979: p.19). It is important to note that there is no externality or foreign enforcement in this manifestation. Its necessity is coming from itself. It requires this in order to be for itself, it desires to see, realize and know what it is in itself. This objectification is, Taylor (1977: p.91) argues, “the realization of the conditions of existence of *Geist* and the expression, a statement of what *Geist* is”. Therefore, its self-manifestation is its necessary but natural continuation in the different categories of being and reality. It is a natural impulse to direct itself to reach a certain form which organically and originally exists for itself.

Second, the self-positing spirit as the subject experiences a rational process, it develops in accordance with its underlying essence as reason and thereby freedom. The manifestation of spirit in its object is nothing but reason itself. This underlying principle of reality penetrates every object in which it posits itself. The reality of a thing depends on whether it corresponds to its notion which generates from the self-manifestation

of reason as the necessary process of its essence. In this sense that every concrete actuality is a completed purpose defined by its notion is rational (Hegel, 2003: p.12). Third, the essential principle of this self-realization-externalization process is a unity with its other or identity with its difference. There is a unity of the subject and object of the self-realization of the universal self/subject. The universal subject distinguishes from itself its object. Thus, it creates its subject and object (difference). However, it transcends this otherness and returns back to itself (identity). As Hegel (2003: p.13) puts:

“It assumes objective, determinate form and enters into relations with itself- it is externality (otherness), and exists for self; yet, in this determination, and in its otherness, it is still one with itself- it is self-contained and self-complete, in itself and for itself at once”

This self-differentiating and positing spirit in its unity with its determination/other is the way that thinking spirit knows itself as the I. This concept of spirit, as has been clear, is the unity of substance and subject (Marx, 1974: pp.44-49, 54-57). The universal I, therefore, is the finite spirit through which infinite spirit realizes itself and becomes self-consciousness and in turn it is the basis, substance and mirror image of this finite spirit as the universal subject. The universal I is the instantiation and authentication of the ideality of spirit as it is revealed in its self-positing process. “As thought, the I is spirit, in the form of universality of self-existent, actually free mind; as the I, in thinking, grasps its material, the latter becomes...” universal and loses its independent existence (Marx, 1974: p.58). Moreover, as the result of the process of returning into unity with itself from its otherness, the I is infinity, ideality and universality (Hegel, 1979: p.39).

For Hortsmann (2006), this is Hegel’s metaphysical conception of self-consciousness which is the I or the subject as an internally differentiated unity in which identity with difference is possible. For this conception, the universal I as the subject differentiates from itself not only its subject but also its object. Put this another way it posits itself both as its subject and object. In this positing or differentiation it is in unity with the other or it is “being with itself in its differentiation” (Hegel, 1979: p.39). Most crucially, this metaphysical conception of self-consciousness, namely this universal I/subject as spirit in Hegel’s term, is the objective and rational

pre-condition of empirical and phenomenological self-consciousness. That is to say this conception of the universal subject as self-differentiated unity is the metaphysical basis and the constituting concept of Hegel's philosophy of spirit which primarily corresponds to the subjective and objective human existence (Horstmann, 2006; de Laurantis, 2005).

Hegel delineates his ontology primarily in his science of logic as a logical structural form, in which he investigates the essential and necessary organization of reason as the underlying structure of being and reality (Horstmann, 2006). Here the Absolute is the Idea in itself, it is implicit and in abstract conceptual form. Furthermore he discusses the self-realization of the Absolute or Idea in physical and non-physical forms, namely nature and spirit. In his philosophy of nature, that the Absolute is in externality is nature and it is a self-alienated spirit. In his philosophy of spirit, the Absolute is actual self-conscious spirit (Hegel, 1979: pp.25-27). This means that the underlying principles of his ontology as pointed out above are also the constituting categories of the human spiritual existence as he discussed under the three sub-titles: subjective, objective and absolute spirit (Hegel, 1979: pp. 65-77). In relation to the subject-matter of this article it could be argued that it is analogous to his philosophy of subjective and objective spirit in which he elaborates the relevant issues and concepts with regard to his understanding of humanity and ethico-social community. More specifically, this conception of self-differentiating universal subject is the underlying essence of humanity and the foundation of the human universal/collective social existence. Hegel depicts this as the subjective (as self-relation in itself) and objective (as actuality in the object) forms of the human existence. It is these subjective and objective spirit in which this article is interested. Consequently, the conditions of the possibility of mutual recognition, universal self-consciousness and human ethical-social world, which are the subject matter of Hegel's social and political philosophy, depend on the idea of subject which is the universal I as the internally differentiated unity of the concept.

What I am suggesting is that we could interpret Hegel's discussion of consciousness, mutual recognition, universal self-consciousness, spirit and the system of right as the self-manifestation and positing of the universal I. Through self-consciousness, mutual recognition and universal self-consciousness, the universal I as the subject finds its existence and

objectivity in its individual and collective forms. To put it another way, the I externalizes itself in the other as its object and through its object it finds its subjectivity just like the Absolute finds its subjectivity in spirit as discussed above. Metaphysical self-consciousness manifests and realizes itself as collectivity (identity) on the basis of the universal substance and as individuality (difference) on the basis of its individual determination in such a way that both identity-difference and collectivity-individuality are united. Thus, universal self-consciousness and thereby finite spirit bring about the concepts of ethical substance and free will at the same time. More precisely, through this double process of realization, namely identity with difference in the internally differentiated unity, Hegel reaches the idea of ethical substance and free thinking will. For him, this represents both the collective/universal and individual/particular dimensions of the I. They are the foundational principles of his assessment of the objective spirit in which the individuality/subjectivity and collectivity/universality of the self-conscious subject co-exist in ethical life as the actualization of the unity of universal and particular freedom.

II- A Phenomenological/Subjective Exposition of the Unity of the Universal Subject/Self in its Otherness

Hegel examines and justifies this concept of the universal I/subject as internally differentiated unity in two parallel discussions: phenomenological/subjective exposition in the *Phenomenology of Mind* and the *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* and secondly objective expression in the *Philosophy of Right*. In the following two sub-sections, I will demonstrate that Hegel's idea of the universal I as spirit and subject defined by his monistic ontology could be the foundation of his conceptions of the self-conscious free individuality and ethical-social substance. In order to do that, I will look at the subjective dimension of this idea by investigating the concepts of consciousness, self-consciousness, and spirit as free will. With this discussion, I aim to show how Hegel reconciles the conception of the concrete self-determining individuality with the universal/collective substance as the foundation of ethical-social being in phenomenological and subjective form. I will argue that this assessment of Hegel's subjective spirit must be considered as an implicit statement of his social-political philosophy or objective spirit as he elaborates in the *Philosophy of Right*.

Hegel starts his phenomenological narrative with spirit as consciousness. Consciousness in general is the basis of thinking being. It is initially about the problem of knowledge which is the cognition of the object as its subject. In this sense, it is a relation between the subject of knowledge and the object of knowledge. In this stage of consciousness, the subjective certainty of the I as consciousness needs to gain its objectivity by “retaining no limitation deriving from the object” and the object must be transfigured and negated by the subject so that it can belong to the subject. Accordingly, the goal of general consciousness is to make the object identical to its essence in that it can succeed in transforming its subjective self-certainty into truth (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.13-14). Through this experience, which is a process of the experience of different forms of consciousness, the problem of consciousness as having a general object becomes the problem of self-consciousness and thereby spirit. To put this differently, the problem of knowledge as first it appears is actually problem of self-knowledge (Marx, 1974: pp.8-11,46-48,54-61; Shlar, 1976: pp.1-56). As a problem of self-knowledge, it turns out that there is a unity between the subject and the object in such way that the subject is reconciled with the object through which the I comes to realize that the objective (ethico-social) world is nothing but itself. That it finds its truth in it means that its concept actualizes its essence in the objective world whereby it finds itself, it becomes for itself and thereby it is self-knowledge. Secondly, it will have proved that its very individuality is actually its very universality/collectivity. This means that an individual self-consciousness finds its freedom and rationality in universal self-consciousness and ethical substance. Thus, the concrete free individuality is only comprehensible in the ethical-social totality. This is the gist of Hegel’s discussion of phenomenology and psychology of subjective spirit which consists of three stages and moments: consciousness as such, self-consciousness, reason or the notion of mind. I will first look at consciousness and self-consciousness and second discuss reason or/and the notion of mind in the next sub-section.

A-The Condition of the Possibility of Individual Freedom: Mutual Recognition and Universal Self-Consciousness

In Hegel’s narrative, consciousness as such has also three stages (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.19-37). In its immediate form it is *sensuous consciousness*.

For it, the object has an unmediated certainty and the general object is an existing/independent thing and external to consciousness. Consciousness sees the object in its singularity in that the object is determined “as spatial and temporal singularity, here and now.” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.21). Since the sensuous object of consciousness is given, contingent and external, it has nothing to do with necessary, eternal and universal. Just because of this it is impossible for consciousness to know its specific essence and its truth claim (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.23). However, the content of the object turns to appear as having many properties and predicates which must be related to one another. Therefore its singularity vanishes in its mediatedness. Thus the general object has changed and sensuous consciousness is transcended by a new form, namely *perception* which “wants to seize the general object not merely in its immediacy, but in the truth of its being mediated, intro-reflected and universal.” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.27). Then the basic feature of perception is to relate the sensuous observation as immediate to a universal as mediated and to conceive the singularity in its connectedness to another and to find relations between things.

However, this simple connection of singularity with universality has in itself many contradictions because of the fact that it does not represent the true unity of singularity and universality, which is only succeeded by a new form of consciousness. This form of consciousness, namely *understanding*, is the one “in which the contradiction is resolved in so far as at this juncture the general object is reduced or raised to the appearance of an inner being-for-self” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.21). This means that consciousness as understanding comes to know the internality of the general which includes the laws as internally differentiated. The essence of the law refers to the “necessary connection between different determinations”. In its internally differentiated nature the subject and the object are not present in such a way that they are independent. Thus the general object has a structure like the ego has. Both of them are self-identical in difference. Consciousness finds its other in the general object. Hegel (1979: Vol.3, p.35) concludes that “in that judges, the ego has a general object from which it is not distinguished. It has itself,- it is self-consciousness.” Consequently, with this new object consciousness transforms itself into a new form which is self-consciousness as “the knowledge of ego, of the truth of what is natural” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.37).

What is overall logic of Hegel's narrative of consciousness as such? For consciousness as such, there are two distinct components. On the one hand, consciousness is aware of an object and on the other hand there is an independent object. The awareness of consciousness is different from its object. This disparity between the knowing and its object, which generates "the problem of consciousness", creates "epistemic dissatisfaction" for consciousness (Chitty, 2007). This dissatisfaction or inner contradiction brings about a drive to gain its truth. For this, as has just been delineated, it has traversed three stages. Consciousness experiences the object firstly in its singularity as immediate and given; secondly in its connectedness to another by universalizing the object and lastly in the law-like essence of the general object in a "dead unity" without understanding the truth of it. The contradiction of consciousness lies in the fact that on the one hand consciousness conceives a categorical independence between the subject and the object, on the other hand it comes to realize that there is some kind of identity between them. At the end of these three stages, consciousness comes to conceive its object as living being which is capable of self-differentiation in its unity. This means that the I conceives the object as an ego like itself. When the I sees its object as identical to itself, it reflects on it and through this reflection of the object as the ego, the I returns into itself as an object and thereby it is a new form of consciousness which is *self-consciousness*.

As the truth of consciousness self-consciousness is "all consciousness of general object" which means that the I knows the object as its own and finds itself in it. Since self-consciousness itself is its own object, then, there would be no object as distinct from self-consciousness itself. Therefore, "ego=ego expresses self-consciousness" in its "abstract freedom and pure ideality" (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.37). In this form, self-consciousness is abstract. In its abstract form it contains consciousness which is its preceding stage. This means that "it is still burdened with an external object" (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.39). Thus, there is a disunion between consciousness and self-consciousness which brings about a contradiction within self-consciousness. On the one hand, as self-consciousness, it is an infinite certainty of itself as being identical to itself and its object. On the other hand, as consciousness it is mediated by the object which is regarded as an independent other (Hegel, 2007: p.164). This contradiction of self-consciousness has to do with the subject's self-conception as self-

consciousness. It is a contradiction between “first its self-conception as object and second its self-conception as I” (Chitty, 1996: p.189). This contradiction has to be resolved through a double process: the object must be sublated and subjectivized by the I so that the object’s givenness and naturalness could be annuled and thereby the I posits itself identical to the object. Also, self-consciousness has to make explicit what is implicit by giving “content and objectivity to the abstract knowledge of itself” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.39). Thus, self-consciousness conceives the object as identical to and at the same time different from it (Chitty, 2007). This is the universal I as differentiated in its other. For this, self-consciousness has to traverse three stages in Hegel’s narrative: single self-consciousness as desire, recognitive self-consciousness and universal self-consciousness.

Self-consciousness is desire in its immediacy and singularity. In this first stage, self-consciousness constitutes itself as the satisfaction of desire on the basis of self-certainty. This is a belief that the external object does not have a true reality but it is a nullity whose existence depends on the power of the subject. Since self-consciousness as desire implicitly knows itself in the object, this very fact creates a drive in self-consciousness to satisfy its desire through the object which has no power to resist. Thereby self-consciousness objectifies itself for itself by externalizing its subjectivity and positing the object as subjective so that desiring self-consciousness can have some kind of self-integration. Therefore, self-consciousness as desire tries to overcome its immediacy and singularity to consume the dependent object. However self-consciousness remains singular at the end of the process of the satisfaction of its desire because of the negative relation which is based on the destruction of its object. Since its satisfaction is singular, it is temporary and therefore it needs another one. Consequently the satisfaction of desire generates new desire and for self-consciousness this is an endless process. This means that as long as it is desire, self-consciousness as an independent entity cannot negate and overcome its inner contradiction which is its dependence on the object. Its satisfaction will be conditioned by the object.

What is needed is an object which is capable of self-negation. Only another independent self-consciousness as self-negation can make it possible for self-consciousness to negate its own immediacy and singularity. This provides self-consciousness with universality and the identity with its

object. Self-consciousness differentiates the object as free being like itself who can negate itself and thereby self-consciousness sublates its destructive desire and realizes itself as a distinct ego. Consequently, it comes to know the object as a free ego in which self-consciousness finds its knowledge (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp. 43-53). As Hegel (2003: p.103) puts, “self-consciousness attains its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness.” In order to conceive itself as a free independent self-consciousness, it needs another self-consciousness which is free and independent as well. This suggests that the condition of the possibility of the independent free individuality requires the existence of the another independent free individuality. However, this is an implicit insight or unproved conviction which will be brought to light in the next stage of Hegel’s narrative.

With this form, self-consciousness reaches its second stage where it is recognitive self-consciousness. This form of self-consciousness implies transcending its singularity by coming to awareness of the other as an independent I. Both self-consciousnesses are for each other as a distinct free subject. On the one hand, the subject sees the other as identical to itself as they have a universal essence which is common to all self-conscious individuals and this forms a single identity. On the other hand, each self conceives itself as a distinct, impenetrable, self-subsisting and independent being. As such this self-relation and self-dependence constitute difference (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.53-55). Therefore, overall “this is the highest contradiction- the most perfect indifference towards each other, and [yet] perfect unity and identity” (Hegel, 2007: p.187). This might be called as the problem of identity with the other: how is it possible for self-consciousness to conceive the other as both identical to and yet different from itself (Chitty, 2007).

This contradiction of recognizant self-consciousness and the problem of identity with difference is the subject-matter of the process of recognition which starts with a struggle for recognition and ends with universal self-consciousness as the result of mutual recognition. In this process, initially each self stands over to one another as natural and immediate and also they are free. In order that each conceives itself in the other as free, each self-consciousness has to negate its immediacy and corporeity. Through this sublation each gives a determination to their freedom. Therefore, for true freedom, each self-consciousness posits itself in their determinant

existence as being for another. This means that the I is only free when it is recognized by the other as free just like it recognizes the other as such. This mutually recognizing of freedom of the selves is to “unite human beings inwardly.” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.55-56). This means that it is the very essence and condition of the human individual as free being.

For this conception of true freedom as the independent free subject, each self-consciousness has to imperil its life in order to prove its freedom and concrete existence and Hegel calls this a life and death struggle. As a result of this extreme form of struggle for recognition, it might be assumed that the contradiction could be solved by the death of one of the selves but this terminates the very possibility of the solution of the problem of the identity with difference as the main contradiction of recognizant self-consciousness. Hegel concludes that this must not be an option simply because for freedom and recognition, life is required. Hegel states that this death and life struggle only exists in the state of nature in which human being is singular (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.57-59). However, what we are concerned here is recognizant self-consciousness that has already sublated the previous singular stage of self-consciousness. Therefore, it cannot be a solution for the recognizant self-consciousness that needs to be recognized by other free self-consciousness as a free subject.

First outcome of the struggle for recognition, then, is the one-sided recognition which means that one of the selves chooses life over death and accepts the fact that it does not have the recognition of the other as a free being. Consequently, it keeps its singular self-consciousness whereas the other has its recognition. The other is recognized by the defeated self as his superior. This is an unequal relationship between master and servant (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.63). In this relationship, once the will of the servant is transferred to the will of the master, the purpose and content of that will become the will of the servant. The only thing that the master is interested in the servant is the servant’s naturalness which forms the structure of the relationship on the basis of the servant’s labour. First aspect of this relationship is that it is a relationship for need and satisfaction which is dependent on the servant and necessitates “the acquisition of formation of it” so that the relationship as such can continue. Secondly, even if the master transcends its “immediate being-for-itself” through the servant’s services in which the master finds its superiority, this is only possible

through a medium which is not the master himself but the servant. In this sense, it is dependent on the servant. Moreover, although the servant is not recognized by the master, Hegel argues, the servant through its service and labour, which is for the benefits of another, becomes the master of himself by giving up its dependence on its singularity and natural desire. Therefore while the master seeks to satisfy its immediate and natural will, the servant raises itself above it.

However, the servant is still not in a position to actualize its freedom only through the negativity of self-seeking singularity. It has to make sure that the self-seeking singularity of the master has to be negated as well so that it could be recognized by the master. Basically, the servant still requires the recognition of the master. In addition to the necessity of this double negation of the naturality of the both selves, the master has to recognize these negations and thereby to raise itself above its self-seeking singularity (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.63-69). Consequently, what is needed is mutual recognition through which each free self finds itself in the other in such a way that each one recognizes the other as a free self like himself. Through this experience Hegel (2007: pp.194) concludes that self-consciousness moves on to a new form, namely universal self-consciousness which “is the realization of consciousness as self-consciousness, and then the realization of immediate self-consciousness as universal self-consciousness...”

This last stage is the solution of the contradiction of self-consciousness as it has been identified above. The free self-conscious subject conceives the other as identical to and different from the itself. As universal self-consciousness, each self-consciousness “knows itself to be recognized by its free counterpart, and knows that it knows this in so far as it recognizes the other and knows it to be free” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.71). This means that self-consciousness is not any more single self-consciousness that is “devoid of freedom” and there are no two self-seeking self-consciousnesses standover one another. Here self-consciousness sublates its particularity and each self-consciousness is “universal and objective, and possesses the real nature of universality as reciprocity” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.71). There are two fundamental moments of self-consciousness that co-exist in universal self-consciousness within their unity. From the perspective of one moment, there are independent, distinct and free selves. These selves are beyond their singularity and immediacy and they are free both for themselves and

for another. They have determinant existence for themselves. In the second moment, they are identical to one another. Just because each of them is an organic part of a whole as universal self-consciousness in which they share the common ground on that they can find their independence and freedom, just as this common ground or identity can realize or become aware of itself through these free selves. Consequently, the free independent subject acquires its freedom in the other through mutually recognizing interaction by coming to aware of their universal common essence. Hegel (1979: Vol.3, pp.73) puts this clearly in the following passage:

“We have the mighty diremption of spirit into various selves, which in and for themselves and for one another are completely free, independent, absolutely rigid, resistant but which are at the same time identical with another, and hence not independent, absolutely rigid, resistant but confluent as it were.”

With this, self-consciousness finds its universal truth as the universal self-consciousness through mutually recognizing process. There is no single self-determining free subject. Neither there are two distinct free subjects. Instead there is the universal self which differentiates itself in its determinations and is embodied by the distinct free subjects whose freedom are mutually dependent and as such is revealed by the process of mutual recognition. This could be considered as a solution to the problems of the unity of the subject with the object and identity with the other. As Hegel points out, “this universal reflectedness of self-consciousness is the Notion, which since it knows itself to be in its objectivity as subjectivity identical with itself, knows itself to be universal” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp.71). As such Hegel (1979: Vol.3, pp. 71) argues that this form of consciousness as universal self-consciousness is the substance of ethical life and all virtues. This suggests that the idea that the possibility of a concrete free individuality depends on the other free concrete being on the basis of universal self-consciousness is the basis of all collective human existence. Self-consciousness finds itself at home in this objectivity as the universal ethical substance. Then we could argue that through this unity of subjectivity and objectivity, self-consciousness as free being comes to realize itself as an ethical-social being. Because it conceives itself as a concrete independent subject only in the ethical-social objective world defined by universal ethical substance as spirit, which is regarded by self-consciousness as its own essence. Moreover, it is this universal/

ethical substance that makes its subjectivity possible. Universal self-consciousness does not find anything in its ethical-social substance but itself and its subjectivity.

B-The Truth of the Universal Substance and the Concept of Self-Determining Subjectivity: Reason and Spirit

With this universal self-consciousness what we have is the self-differentiated universal I, which is identity with its difference in that the individual and collective subjectivity is reconciled with one another. The universal I is in its independent selves as self-determining universal subjects. However, that universal self-consciousness is the substance of ethical-social objective world and the foundation of the self-determining rational and free subject has not been yet examined explicitly in Hegel's discussion so far. For this, it has to traverse two more stages. As such it is developed in detail in the last part of the subjective spirit, namely reason and spirit. In the following few pages, I will first look at briefly Hegel's assessment of reason and mind/spirit and then will discuss them in connection with universal self-consciousness. By explicating this last form of self-consciousness as reason/spirit, we could reach the justification of the unity of the self-determining free concrete individuality and universal/collective substance as the foundation of ethical-social being.

Universal self-consciousness is the awareness of the unity of identity with the other and self-consciousness is reconciled with its external-objective world as its self-determination. This means that universal self-consciousness has to determine itself from itself in the objective world as the self-actualization of its universal concept. For universal self-consciousness, the objective world is universal like the subject is. It is this objective world in which self-consciousness finds its subjectivity. This means that through this objectivity it gains its subjective consciousness and determination as universal self-consciousness. This is the unity of subjectivity and objectivity which Hegel entitles reason. "The truth constituted by reason is in and for itself, the simple identity of the subjectivity of the Notion with its objectivity and universality" (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p.77). With reason, universal self-consciousness has the certainty of its determinations as the unity of its thought determination and essence of the objects. The objective world includes the universality

and the content of the subject just as universal self-consciousness finds its determinations as objective. Therefore, the determinations of universal I is the determinations of the objective world of the object/other. As Pippin (1998: p.69) puts, “truth of reason” is “the faith that order of knowing and order of being are the same”. If it is the self-certainty of the universal self-consciousness as reality and if the all actuality is nothing but itself, then the problem would be how reason “could develop for itself and from itself the categories by means of which its identity with being is concretely realized” (Pippin, 1998: p.77). Consequently, what is needed is a universal thinking will as self-knowledge of the unity of the subjective and objective which Hegel develops under the title of mind.

For Hegel (1979: Vol.3, p. 81) mind “is absolute self-certainty, knowledge of reason”. Mind/spirit as such is the act of knowing of this infinite universality as truth. It is nothing other than this self-knowledge as the uniting principle of the determination of universal I with the object. With mind the universal I has the truth of itself. It is the certainty of the objectivity of the I’s determinations and thoughts (Hegel, 2007: p. 195). However, in the first instance mind is abstract and formal unity of the subjective and the objective as reason. It needs to negate this immediacy in order to verify its truth. It is to be reconciled to the rationality of the objective through which it attains its truth in the objective world by making the objective its own. It does this by “bringing forth from itself the self-developing and altering determinations of the object, making objectivity subjective and subjectivity objective” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p. 92). With its self-development, mind makes its subjectivity objective and the objective world subjective. Through this development, it attains the freedom of knowledge and it will be recognized as “self-knowing truth”. When it gains this, it is free will or freedom as Hegel calls. This is what I call thinking will as the concept of freedom or free will of the universal I consisting of distinct concrete free individuals, which is the basis of the Hegel’s social-political philosophy as developed in the *Philosophy of Right*.

It might be helpful to look at briefly Hegel’s conception of mind/spirit. Hegel thinks that mind has to traverse three stages or has three moments: theoretical mind as intelligence, practical mind as will and free will/freedom. Theoretical mind or intelligence develops in three stages as well: sensation,

presentation and thought. Through these three stages, it reaches the point at which it knows the world as the determinant which is determined by itself. Hegel (1979: Vol.3, p. 233) summarizes the development of intelligence in the following passages very clearly: “Intelligence has shown itself to us as spirit going into itself out of the object, recollecting itself within the object and recognizing its inwardness to be what is objective.” The content of intelligence is determined by itself and it knows that its content is the determinant of its will. There is no alienation of the knowing subject and the known object, simply because it is the unity of the subjective and objective. The subject knows the object as its determination rather than any external or given entities. This is a process through which spirit knows itself in the object: the knowing-cognizing of the unity of objective and subjective so that it verifies this unity which has been awared only as an abstraction of universal self-consciousness.

Intelligence reaches its consummation, its goal, in this identity of thought with its general object, for it is now in fact what in its immediacy it merely ought to be,- self-knowing truth, self-recognizing reason. Knowledge now constitutes the subjectivity of reason, and objective reason posited as knowledge. This mutual self-penetration of thinking subjectivity and objective reason is the final result of the development of theoretical spirit through the stages of intuition and presentation which precede pure thought (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p. 227).

The second moment of spirit/mind is the practical mind or will which cognizes itself as determined by itself and knowing the objectivity in its subjectivity. As Hegels (1979: Vol.3, p. 229) puts it: “Intelligence, knowing itself to be the determinant of the content, which is determined as its own no less being, is will.” Contrary to intelligence whose development comes from the objective to the subjective, practical mind “goes out into the objectification of its inwardness, which is still burdened with the form of subjectivity” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p. 233). It develops into the three stages: practical feeling, impulses and happiness, the totality of which is free will. By constructing the world out of its will, it provides the independent and determinate being with the true content which is freedom (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p. 233). Accordingly, we have reached the third stage of mind/spirit which is free will. It is the unity of theoretical and practical spirit as discussed above. As such in free will, the contingent and formality

of practical spirit sublates itself and it raises itself into the universal determination of freedom. It is only as free will in that “it *thinks* itself knows this determination to be its Notion, is will as free intelligence, that will has this universal determination as its general object and its purpose” (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, pp. 265-257). Thus it is the content and purpose of freedom which is the underlying principle of spirit. Therefore with free will, Hegel introduces the concept of freedom as rational will which as pointed out above is the distinguishing quality of human spiritual existence. Hegel (1979: Vol.3, p. 267) says “...spirit which knows itself as being free and whose general object is willing as such, i.e. spirit which has its essence as its determination and purpose, is the rational will in general...”

This conception of universal self-consciousness as spirit and reason makes it possible for self-consciousness to conceive itself as a concrete, distinct and independent free individuality (difference) and a member of universal substance through which self-consciousness sees itself identical to another self-consciousness as free being in that it does not see any conflict between these two moments of its universal essence. Instead, self-consciousness comes to realize a structural or categorical necessity for this, namely identity with difference and the unity of its individual and universal/collective essence. It becomes to aware of its freedom only in its identity with the other with whom they do not only share the same universal substance but also they make this concept of universal substance as spirit explicit and actual. Hegel (2003, p. 104) says in his famous passage:

“This absolute substance, which is the unity of the different self-related and self-existent self-consciousness in the perfect freedom and independence of their opposition as component elements of that substance: I that is we, a plurality of selves, and we that is a single I.” (*I changed ego with self*)

Then if the Hegel’s whole narrative as discussed in this section is taken into consideration, it could be argued that it is the self-realization and self-determining process of the universal self in its unity of the subject and object and its individual and collective existence. As such it is a justification of the self-determining subjectivity with the ethical-social collectivity on the basis of the self-differentiated universal subject. The problem of consciousness, which is “the relation to object” or “mind-world relations”, turns out to be the problem of self-consciousness, that is the self-relation

of self-consciousness to object or “the subject-subject relations”, which proves itself as the problem of the community of recognition of universal self-consciousness in which the concrete free subject is not conflict with its universal/collective substance as *Geist* (Pippin, 1998, pp. 63-71). This means that the individual subjectivity necessarily requires the collective subjectivity as universal self-consciousness which is resulted in by mutual recognition. Human individuals comes to know themselves the concrete, independent free subjects by becoming aware of their universal essence as the result of mutual recognition. As such the conception of self-determining individuality means the ethical-social being in and through the universal/collective existence.

This is why Pippin (1998: p. 78) argues that the exposition of these stages is based on one underlying logic. It is the affirmation of “a mutually recognizing and so mutually reassured social subjectivity.” For Chitty (2007), this is identity with the other or a claim for a collective subjectivity. Chitty thinks that this phenomenological exposition as summarized in this section is a process through which a conscious subject sees the object as identical to and distinct from itself in a monistic whole by mutually recognizing each other as free self-consciousness on the basis of the acknowledgement that they are both belong to the same universal substance. This means that each self-consciousness is not only individual self-determining being but also a member of “a free collective self.” In this sense it is an identitarian claim for a universal/collective self-consciousness rather than individualist one. To put it differently, the possibility of self-determining free individuality requires universal self-consciousness as embodied in the ethical substance in which human individuals determine and recognize themselves as both the free self-determining subjects and the ethical-social beings.

Furthermore, what must be emphasized is Hegel’s justification of the universal self which posits itself in the self-determining free and rational subjects in the universal ethical substance. Also that the mutually necessitated conception of the free concrete individuality and the ethical-social being as the instantiation of the universal self in the universal objective substance is summarized by Hegel’s concept of the thinking free will. However, Hegel points out that this concept of thinking free will is not the absolute spirit as the Idea but it is the concept of the Absolute.

This means that this thinking will as freedom is abstract and it exists as immediate will and its activity is formal. In Hegel's terms, the above discussion is only a phenomenological and subjective. What is needed is the Idea as having actualized itself into the general objectivity. It "only appears thus in will which while it is finite constitutes the activity of developing it and positing its self-unfolding content as determinate being, which as the determinate being of the Idea is actuality, - i.e. in objective spirit" (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p. 267). Entering this realm, which is the sphere of the objective spirit, free/thinking will as universality actualizes its concept. It gives the determinate existence of its concept the unity of which is freedom as the Idea that is the definitive principle of humanity in the form of the unity of the human individuality and collectivity. As such "it determines itself as developing into general objectivity, into legal, ethical and religious as well as scientific actuality" (Hegel, 1979: Vol.3, p. 269). This is the reason why Hegel argues that the concept of freedom is presupposed in the *Philosophy of Right*, and thereby it is the basis of the system of right, that is the subject-matter of the *Philosophy of Right*, as the actualization of freedom.

III- Self-Determining Individuality as Ethico-Social Being: The Instantiation of the Universal Self in Ethical Life

This reconciliation of the subject with the object and the identity with the other in the universal self-consciousness and the universal I as the self-determining, free and rational subject are consummated in the concept of thinking free will as freedom. Before we elaborate the actualization of freedom in the ethical-social world as the unity of human individuality and collectivity, it might be helpful to sum up some of the significant points that have been reached in the previous section. First of all, an individual existence necessarily requires another individual self-consciousness by which a human individual finds its essence through mutually recognizing interactions. The concept of the universal subject and its self-determination in its otherness make this possible by providing human individuals with the universal collective essence and objective existence. Second, the free, rational and self-determining individuality is comprehensible only with the idea of the free, rational and self-determining universal/collective subject as spirit. Third, the concept of human being in itself as the universal self/

subject holds its self-actualization and self-determination as an ethical-social being. In Hegel's terms in order to penetrate the conception of human being in itself, it is necessary to grasp it being for itself as an ethical social being. To put it another way, the human being in itself makes sense only as being for itself: the human being has to be an ethical-social being. In order to be for itself, the human being objectifies and finds its rationality and freedom, that is what the being human is, in the ethical-social existential world which is determined by itself as the actualization and necessary continuation of its very existence as being in itself.

Lastly, we reach the concept of freedom and the thinking will which describe this conception of human being as self-determining entity in the ethical-social world. This means that the whole sphere of the objective or ethical-social world is the determination and realization of freedom/free will (Neuhouser, 2000; Patten, 1999; Franco, 1999; Pippin, 1997). The question behind this assumption is that in which kind of ethical-social structure human beings become self-determining free individuals (Patten, 1999: pp.1-7). Hegel defines this determination/actualization of freedom in the ethical-social world as the *system of right* which is very existence of freedom in the forms of moral, ethical and social institutions and practices. Consequently, it could be argued that Hegel's objective spirit, which means his social and political philosophy as developed in the *Philosophy of Right*, is based on the concept of freedom and its modes/determinations in the ethical/social spheres.

In the following sub-section, I will first look at how Hegel develops his concept of freedom which contains the essential components and determinations of his understanding of ethical-social world. Second, I will show how the individual and collective/social subject of the universal self is actualized and reconciled in the ethical-social sphere in the unity of the particularity/individuality and universality/collectivity. In the end what will have been showed is the main arguments of the preceding section. I must emphasize at this juncture that all I will do in this sub-section is to identify and outline the normative and philosophical principles of Hegel's social and political philosophy without a detailed exposition.

The Actualization of the Self-Determining Universal Will into the Ethico-Social World.

The rational configuration of the free will in its determination/objectification is what Hegel calls *the system of right*. As Hegel (1991: p.60) states, “it is the spirit in its freedom, the highest apex of self-conscious reason, which here gives itself actuality and engenders itself as an existing world.” The aim of the *Philosophy of Right* is to make this self-development of freedom and reason into the system of right comprehensible and intelligible. For Hegel (1991: p.58) therefore the concept of right refers to any existence of freedom. To put it differently right is the actualization/existence of freedom/the rational free will. It is worth noting that Hegel’s concept of right has a broad meaning. It is basically whole dimension of human ethico-social existence, from individual rights to morality, law and custom to ethical life and socio-political structure of the state. With the introduction of the concept of right as the actualized freedom, he will be able to examine and elaborate different forms and determinations of right in the whole spheres of human existence, from individual to the collective forms. Thus, he is able to assess the ethical-social conditions and categories through which the conception of self-determining individuality could be actual. He says “morality, ethics and the interest of the state—each of these is a distinct variety of right, because each of them gives determinate shape and existence to freedom” (Hegel, 1991: p. 59). This means that first every form of right reflects and objectifies the concept of freedom and the rational will and second different components of the system of right emerge from the “different stages in the development of the concept of freedom” (Hegel, 1991: p. 59). With this discussion of the system of right and its unique structure, Hegel constructs a normative-rational framework for his conception of human being as the instantiation of the self-determining universal subject.

In the main body of the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel shows how the system of right consisting of abstract right, morality and ethical life embodies his concept of freedom and to what extent each component reflects and represents the actual/complete freedom as Idea. I will briefly discuss this dialectical development and identify the essential features of the each stage by focusing on the consummation of the process in the standpoint of ethical life. Needless to say, my aim is not going into details of the these three main chapters dealing with the system of right as the actualization of freedom and thinking will in the *Philosophy of Right*. Instead, my goal is to make sense the structural determinations of the

essential components of the concept of freedom/the rational will and to stress how the individualist components of abstract right and morality need to be completed with a concrete ethical-social substance. This provides us with the normative framework of Hegel's conception of socio-political community in which human beings acquire their ethical-social identity within the universal collective substantiality on the basis of mutually recognizing interaction. Therefore, the following brief discussion must be read as Hegel's justification of the possibility of the self-determining free concrete individuality in the ethical-social objective institutions and practices.

In Hegel's exposition first form of the self-determination of the free will is formal right. Its concept is abstract as personality and its existence is the immediate external things. What does this mean exactly? This means that neither does the concept fully realize itself nor is there a condition in which the existence of the concept springs from the self-development of the concept itself, its existence is not determined by its concept. If we remember Hegel's concept of freedom, we could easily see the problematic character of abstract right, namely the deficiency of subjective-reflective and moral determination in the abstract and immediate will of the person. Hegel (1991: p. 69) starts his articulation of this form of right with the person who is only and totally for itself. "The person is the individuality of freedom in pure being-for-itself." As an abstract person, the will can exempt itself from everything determinate but also it is concrete individuality who has certain qualities and determinateness. Therefore, the personality is both finite and infinite, and determinate and indeterminate. This resolving or immediate individuality overcomes this contradiction by externalizing itself in an immediate way. Since the content of its existence is immediate, it has nothing to do with its particular-subjective intent, purpose, moral consideration etc. just as it is indifferent to the other particularities. In this context, its first relation and determination is with nature in external things. It is this first determination/existence of the freedom of personality in the external objective things that Hegel calls property in which the person relates with itself. That relationship by which person as a possessive individual relates itself to others on the basis of property is contract which however presupposes the existence of another wills. The relation of the will with itself through property turns out a relation with other will/s. That there are other bearers of rights in contractual relations requires a principle

which is “respect others as persons”. Thereby, being a person necessitates to recognize and respect others as person.

However, the person is still immediate and has arbitrary will. The common will necessitated by the concept of contract consists of these immediate wills. As such, there will always be possibility for the person not to obey the contract and the common will. The tension between the will in itself as universal and the particular will in its immediate form distinguishing the person from the other generates wrong and crime as the violation of the right. More crucially, the tension lies in the fact that in the external things/property the will is immediate and abstract determinacy and in contractual relationship with the other personalities it is mediated by the common will. This necessarily leads to the concepts of wrong and crime. The person as abstract and immediate is incapable of reflection on the content and existence of its determination. In this sense, it could be said that the person is impotent to relate itself to the others and external world by its subjective-inner and reflective disposition. Therefore wrong cannot be judged by the person, just because it has nothing to do with moral consideration and particular interest and welfare. The punishment as the negation of a wrong needs the rational and universal point of view in order to overcome the immediacy and impartiality of the person, and transforms its existence from the external sphere to internal world in which the will as a subjective and particular wills the universal as such (Hegel, 1991: pp. 65-133). In abstract right, consequently, neither does the person has concrete freedom and is he a self-determining individual nor is the existence of the will, as property, the complete-objective determination of the concrete freedom. What is needed is a new form of self-determining will in its new determination. In Hegel’s exposition, this is the standpoint of morality and the determination of the concept of the will is called subject.

With morality, freedom of the will is no longer in the external things and there is no abstract person that is infinite and universal in itself. Since the will reflects on and negates its immediate determination in the external world and returns into its subjective realm, the will here is the particular subject who is free and universal for itself. For Hegel (1991: p.135) “this reflection of the will into itself and its identity for itself, as opposed to its being-in-itself and immediacy and the determinacies which develop within the latter, determine the person as a subject.” Here the subject

is not only the determinacy of the concept and but also constitutes the existence of the concept. This means that there is a unity of the concept and existence of the Idea which refers to a higher stage of the determination of freedom in the ethical-social institutions and practises. Hegel argues that the will or freedom would be only actual, when it is the subject's will. In this sense the subject has subjective ends, purpose, interest, moral insight etc. An internal, reflective and conscious connection between the subject and the objective ethical-social world has been established in morality. Whatever external factors and determinations are, the subject's judgement is in accordance with its inward conviction. The subjective freedom includes every determination and existence in so far as these things are recognized and conceived by itself as its own. Without recognition and acknowledgement of the will, any existence of freedom as the system of right would be void.

The attitude of the subject is to objectify itself in the object so that it knows itself as identical to its own universality. Accordingly, the moral subject could be taken responsible for everything that has been willed consciously by itself. The moral subject knows itself absolute and pure and sees itself present in everything it does. For this reason, it is abstract and formal. In Hegel's sense, the will of the subject is not identical with the concept of the will in general. The determination of the subjective will, namely the actualization of its subjective purpose through actions, is opposite to the external world as objective. The will is still occupied with the thing that has being in itself. Even if the moral subject objectifies itself in the external existence, it still only belongs to the subjective will itself. However, since the subjective will is united its inward conviction with the objective world, it can not be indifferent to the other's will. Because of the fact that the unity of its subjectivity and the objective existence of the other's will, it has a positive attitude/action to others. In order for the subject to be objective existence for itself, it has to identify itself with the others' subjective wills as well. Therefore, there are two main moments of the moral actions. First, there is a subjective purpose, intention and particular interest behind the subject's insight and actions. Second the subjective action of the moral will also aims to universal ends and value encompassing the other's wills which Hegel calls the concept of good. Therefore, only a conception of the universal good as the unity of the particular will with the concept of the will could be a solution for this

tension of the moral subject (Hegel, 1991: pp. 133-185.).

To sum up, on the one hand, the moral subject has concrete and particular purpose, insight and ends and has to objectify these in the objective world so that it could be identical to its universal concept. This means that the self-perception of the subject has to be reconciled with the objective world. On the other hand, its objectification does not comply with the will's true universality, simply because of the will's content and determination are something subjective, natural and given. It must be noted that Hegel does not reject the involvement of interest, drives, welfare and happiness etc. in the subjective determination. Rather he criticizes that the moral subject takes these as given and natural which means that they are not determined by the rational will itself according to its concept. They have not yet been raised to the level of universality. Therefore, the subject's will is not the rational will that determines its object itself and wills the free will. Good as the truth of the particular will is still abstractly determined and subjective in the moral subject. This means that there is the abstract good and the particular subject who determines arbitrarily the content of the abstract good. This particularized determination (subjective purpose and conviction) of the abstract good constitutes the very contradiction of the moral subject. What is needed is a universal, concrete and rational conception of good the content of which is the concept itself as universality. As such it is the unity of the particularity and universality. For Hegel this concrete living good is possible only in ethical life as the Idea of freedom (Franco, 1999: pp. 207-220).

Before moving on to Hegel's discussion of ethical life, a few words might be helpful to posit the preceding two forms into a broader picture. Abstract right is objectivity without subjectivity and thereby it is the natural will. The person as legal being has an immediate and natural existence just as its actualization in the objective world is external and abstract. That the will as person is individual has objectivity only in property. In this sense, the objective existence of the human individual is only property through which the person finds its essence and gains its freedom. Thereby, that the social world is constituted by this self-perception of the individual and its objective principle, namely property, could be only external, abstract and immediate just as the individual as person is abstract, undetermined

and immediate. However, as the immediate form of human freedom, the person has absolute power over its natural existence and external world (Ritter, 2004: pp. 101-124). As person human individual posits itself as an independent being abstracting from everything. As person the will is subject to only itself, its existence in external world is a challenge to its natural essence and claim for an independent life as having own body and property. In this sense, it is a necessary component of actualized freedom in the ethical-social world in which a human individual determines itself as an ethical-social being. This is the reason why Hegel thinks that personality is the highest achievement of a human being who as being conscious of its subjectivity knows itself only for itself (Hegel, 1991: p. 68).

The moral standpoint is all subjectivity without objectivity and its will is arbitrary. It represents reflection and mediation. Therefore, it has an opposition in itself. As a determined I, the moral subject is opposed to the universal concept. As having subjective interests and ends, the moral will tries to force the objective and universal world to comply with its subjective convictions so that its conception of the determined I as arbitrary will could embody itself in the objective world. For this, the subjective will could be identical to the other's will. This is what constitutes the contradiction and deficiency of the moral subject. Just because it as an particular and subjective will has contingent and natural content which are in conflict to the other's will whose existence requires the universal concept of freedom and good (Franco, 1999: p. 213). The freedom of the moral subject is subjective and arbitrary insofar as its content is determined by the subjective insights and convictions. As such, the external objectification of the freedom remains subjective without the universally determined content. The content of the moral subject's will should be reconciled with the concept itself as universal. In spite of its this deficiency, the subject's moral reflection on the content of its object is however so decisive for the rational will to develop a concrete and determined universal standpoint which could be actual in ethical life. Consequently, in the both forms of right, the will/subject suffers from indeterminacy to which the will cannot fully determine itself in the objective ethical-social world and does not feel at home in such way that it does not find its freedom in unity with the other subjects (Honneth, 2000: pp. 21-37).

In this regard, ethical life is the unity of the subjectivity and objectivity

just like it is the unity of the particularity of the determination and existence of the self-conscious will and universality as ethical substantiality. It is the actualized objective world of freedom in which the self-perception of an individual is identical to the objective existence of the ethical substantiality as universality of the concept. For Hegel (1991: p. 189)

“Since this unity of the concept of the will with its existence, i.e. particular will, is knowledge, consciousness of the difference between these moments of the Idea is present, but in such a way that each of these moments has become for itself the totality of the Idea and has the latter as its foundation and content.”

With ethical life, the concept of the will is identical to its existence. This means that the content of the will is nothing but itself, namely freedom. As such, the will/subject is at home in its determination. This is the actualization of Hegel’s conception of freedom and the rational will into the ethical-social norms, institutions and practices. As Franco (1999: p. 224) nicely puts, the content of the ethical life is “the good, the universal and freedom itself. Ethical life is the consummate objectification and existence of freedom toward which the Philosophy of Right has been developing.”

In this difference within totality, self-conscious individuals find their essence, foundation and end in ethical life just like ethical substance as spirit becomes self-consciousness in and through the ethical-social subjects. Hegel (1991: p. 189) puts this at the very beginning of the chapter of ethical life:

“Ethical life is the Idea of freedom as the living good which has its knowledge and volition in self-consciousness, and its actuality through self-conscious action. Similarly, it is an ethical being that self-consciousness has its motivating end and a foundation which has being in and for itself. Ethical life is accordingly the concept of freedom which has become the existing world and the nature of self-consciousness.”

This early statement actually sums up the key components of the standpoint of ethical life. The gist is the ontologically (categorically) necessitated connection of the idea of a concrete, self-determining individuality and self-sufficient universal substantiality as the foundation of the collective identity. As such, a human individual achieves its independence and self-determinacy through conscious actions by participating into the ethical substantiality in which it finds the universal

good, freedom and reason whereby its will is reconciled with the others. This is the unity with the other as the internally differentiated universal subject as discussed in the second section of this article. In the following few paragraphs, I will briefly explain Hegel's discussion of ethical life as the unity of the individual particularity/subjectivity and the collective universality/objectivity.

The content and objective sphere of the ethical substance is determined and posited by the concept within determinate forms/shapes which are beyond subjective convictions and externality (this was the basic deficiency of the standpoint of morality). These objective existence of the ethical substance takes shapes of laws, norms, practises and institutions which reflect and hold the concrete universal, good and rational as the determination of the Idea. As the objective substance in the determination of the Idea, the ethical-objective sphere is the essence and substance of the individual self-consciousness. It provides the foundation, ends and motivations for the self-consciousness and self-determining individuals. Thus, self-conscious individuals acquire their concrete existence and substantiality in ethical life in such a way that their freedom and actions comply with the universality. This means that the freedom of the rational will can be embodied only in the ethical-objective world in that the person of abstract right and subject of morality becomes not only a concrete self-legislating free individual but also a certain ethical-social being. In this sense it is understandable when Hegel argues that ethical life as the universal substantiality and objective existence precedes the individual. The objective-ethical world has self-sufficient life and this rational system of the objective substance has absolute power to govern the lives of individuals (Hegel, 1991: pp. 189-190).

From the subjective point of view, however, the ethical substance could never be actual without self-conscious individuals. To put it differently, only when the rational-objective system of ethical life is willed, produced and recognized by the self-conscious individuals as the universal and rational, could it have its knowledge and become living good. Furthermore this implies that the objective institutitons and practices are intersubjectively constituted in that each individual actualizes its freedom by recognizing others as free and independent beings through the ethico-social norms, practices and institutions (Williams, 1997: p.109; Patten, 1999: pp. 121-

129; Honneth, 2000: p. 19). More crucially the self-sufficiency and law-like objectivity of ethical life in relation to the subject is the one in which the subject does not feel itself as alien. Rather, “the subject bears spiritual witness to them as to its own essence, in which it has its self-awareness and lives as in its element which is not distinct from itself” (Hegel, 1991: p. 191). The self-conscious individuals cannot see ethical life something external, given or immediate for itself. On the contrary, both in terms of concept/essence and content/existence of ethical life, the moral-social subject sees it as its universal essence and its actualized and realized existence. It is nothing but its actualized and self-determined objective existence.

The subject finds itself in the laws, practices and institutions of the ethical-objective world/socio-political community and through them the human individual determines itself as a rational, concrete and independent subject. Because of this, Hegel argues that the subject acquires its liberation in duties that are the necessary and substantial determinations of the objective-ethical substance. The actuality of the subject in accordance with its duties becomes a habit for the subject who finds its “second nature” in this actuality in the rational system of the determination of the objective-ethical substance. Thus, the opposition between the subject and the ethical substance as the objective disappears. The subject knows its essence and end as the universality and its actions and its actualization in the objective world comply with this universality. To put this differently, the subject determines and realizes its particularity and subjectivity in the objectivity of ethical life as concrete universality. This ethical substance containing self-conscious determinate subjects, that is “self-conscious substantiality”, is the collective existence as spirit of a socio-political community. As such, this unity of the self-determining subject as particular with the universality of the ethical substance of the concept has three moments by which it is embodied and objectifies itself in the socio-political institutions: the family, civil society and the state (Hegel, 1991: pp. 189-198).

Conclusion

Hegel’s social and political philosophy aims at the reconciliation of the idea of the self-determining concrete subject with the modern ethical-social world. His conviction is that the possibility of the self-determining

subject depends on certain ethical-social institutions and practices, namely the family, civil society and the state. Not only is this ethical-social world intersubjectively constituted on the basis of the universal freedom and rationality, but also it makes it possible for human individuals to actualize their universal essence as rationality and freedom through mutually recognizing interactions. The modern institutions and practices, such as property, moral subjectivity, civil society and the state, unite the individual particular and subjective freedom with the universal and objective rationality and freedom. Hegel's justification for placing the ethical-social world at the centre of the actualization of individual freedom is based in the universal substantiality and collective objectivity of the ethical and social world which emerge from the universal self consciousness as spirit.

The objective ethical-social world is nothing but the self-determination and self-objectification of the universal subject in and through which human individuals find their universal essence. A human being thereby gains a concrete and independent existence by participating, constituting and actualizing the universal substance of the ethical-social institutions and practices. It could be argued that without the conception of the universal self-consciousness as the internally differentiated unity and an idea of the universal substance that unites human individuals in their collective and objective existence as the universal will, the idea of the self-determining concrete subject could not be actual. Consequently, the self-determining individuality is in essence the ethico-social being or *vice versa*.

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