

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel

Idealist Theory of State Evolution and Actualisation

Hegel's social and political thoughts

- **Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) is one of the greatest systematic thinkers in the history of Western philosophy.**
- **Hegel's social and political thoughts focused on the concepts of freedom, reason, self-consciousness, and recognition.**
- **Hegel devoted himself to establish important connections between the metaphysical or speculative articulation of these ideas and their application to social and political reality.**

Hegel's Main Literary submission

- In 1805, Hegel published his first major work, the Phenomenology of Spirit (*Phänomenologie des Geistes*, 1807)
- Around 1816 Hegel published his Science of Logic (*Wissenschaft der Logik*) in three volumes.
- One year following the defeat of Napoleon at Waterloo (1815), Hegel published his first edition of the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Outline (*Encyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse*, 1817)
- In 1821 he published the Philosophy of Right (*Philosophie des Rechts*), which is the main contribution of Hegel that explicates this ideas.

The Philosophy of Right

- **In the Introduction to this work Hegel explains the concept of will, freedom, and right.**
- **At the very beginning, Hegel states that the idea of right, together with its actualization, is the proper subject of the philosophical science of right.**
- **The free will is the basis and origin of right in the sense that mind or spirit (*Geist*) generally objectifies itself in a system of right**

Hegel's notion of Free Will

- **The free will is the basis and origin of right in the sense that mind or spirit (*Geist*) generally objectifies itself in a system of right, that gives expression to freedom.**
- **According to Hegel this is both the substance and goal of right.**
- **This ethical life in the state consists in the unity of the universal and the subjective will.**

Stages in the development of 'the Idea of the absolutely free will'

- **According to Hegel these stages are Abstract Right, Morality, and Ethical Life.**
- **Under Abstract Right there is Property, Contract, and Wrong;**
- **under Morality falls Purpose and Responsibility, Intention and Welfare, and Good and Conscience;**
- **finally, under Ethical Life comes the Family, Civil Society, and the State.**

The transition in the Logic

The transition in the Logic from universality to particularity to individuality (or concrete universality) is expressed in the social and political context in the conceptual transition from Abstract Right to Morality to Ethical Life.

Objectification of the will in the institutions of the Family, Civil Society, and the State.

- **The moments of universality, particularity, and individuality initially are represented respectively in the institutions of the family, civil society, and the state.**

FAMILY

- **The family is “ethical mind in its natural or immediate phase”**
- **It is characterized by love or the feeling of unity**
- **In family one is not conscious of oneself as an independent person but only as a member of the family unit to which one is bound.**

Civil Society

Civil society comprises an association of individuals considered as self-subsistent and who have no conscious sense of unity of membership but only pursue self-interest, e.g., in satisfying needs, acquiring and protecting property, and in joining organizations for mutual advantage.

POLITICAL STATE

- **Finally, Civil society evolves into a political state**
- **It emphasizes on the importance of the whole or universal good along with the freedom of particularity of individual pursuits.**
- **The political State, as the third moment of Ethical Life, provides a synthesis between the principles governing the Family and those governing Civil Society.**

ULTIMATE DESTINY

Since the state is mind objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual has objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life and the individual's destiny is the living of a universal life, which is actualised in the political state

ACTUALISATION OF POLITICAL STATE: STAGES

- **The immediate actuality of the state as a self-dependent organism, or Constitutional Law;**
- **the relation of states to other states in International Law;**
- **the universal Idea as Mind or Spirit which gives itself actuality in the process of World-History.**