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ON THE ABSOLUTE RATIONAL WILL

(SUBLATION OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY)

II. On the Absolute Material Entelechy

We have already seen that Hegel's principle is not the highest one; it is not the ultimate, the absolute determination. It is only a moment subordinate to the higher principle "Will yourself," which Hegel failed to achieve. It is true that Hegel united all the previous philosophies into his philosophy; however, the fact remains that Plato and Aristotle were first and foremost the philosophers whom he deservedly respected and examined with the utmost care. He says: "If we are to renew what is old - and I speak only of the configuration as being old, because the basic import itself is forever young - then perhaps the configuration of the Idea as Plato, and much more deeply Aristotle, gave it to us, is infinitely more worthy of recollection [than any Mysteries]. This is also because the unveiling of the Idea through its adaptation to our intellectual culture is at once not merely an understanding of that Idea, but an advance of science itself."¹ Hegel speaks about Aristotle's philosophy superbly and with great energy; it certainly was one of the most important philosophies in his personal development as a philosopher.

Nevertheless, he failed to take up Aristotle's point of view on entelechy. Abiding by the principle "Cognise yourself", Hegel did succeed in developing the science of philosophy. He raised the latter to the Absolute Idea, which is the highest possible level philosophy can achieve when it is based on that principle. However, he was not fully aware of the significance of Aristotle's

entelechy. Consequently, he did not elevate philosophy to the standpoint of absolute entelechy.

As a matter of fact Hegel's analysis of Aristotle's work *On the soul* in the second volume of his *Lectures on the history of philosophy* misrepresents Aristotle in a sense; he presents us a completely Hegelian Aristotle. Consequently examining *On the soul*, Hegel does not go beyond chapter 7 of the third book. Further, in the following chapters of the third book Aristotle expresses completely different ideas, for which neither was there any place in Hegel's philosophical organisation of the absolute nor was Hegel interested in them. What we have to do now is to undertake a thorough examination of Aristotle's ideas. Without any doubt Aristotle's comprehension of the entelechy is out-of-date but true and nothing else in the world of philosophy can be more challenging and great than following Aristotle's lead. We have to develop this category, to revive it, so as to outweigh and make up for the objective idealism, which developed the concept of the idea and neglected the entelechy in the course of more than 2500 years. To put the concept of entelechy in conformity with the achievements of modern natural history, in conformity with our current knowledge of the laws of the absolute, is the task of our time and this magnificent work of the rational will is to be done. This is the road to the kingdom of absolute entelechy; Hegel failed to discover it.

First of all, let us examine Aristotle's theory of entelechy in more detail. After taking into consideration the opinions of his predecessors in the first book of his work *On the soul*, Aristotle says that "Men associate the soul with and place it in the body, without specifying why this is so, and how the body is conditioned; and yet this would seem to be essential...But these thinkers only try to explain what is the nature of the soul, without adding any details about the body which is to receive it."² But a careful examination of Aristotle's ideas shows that he also divides the soul and the body. It is worth quoting his words: "The soul must be substance in the sense of being the form of a natural body, which potentially has life. And substance in this sense is actuality. The soul, then, is the actuality of the kind of body we have described."³ According to Aristotle the entelechy is some concept or form, not

matter or substratum. He says that the “The soul is in the primary way that by means of which we live, perceive, and think. Hence it will be a kind of principle and form, and not matter or subject.” i.e., substratum. “Substance is so spoken of in three ways, as we have said, and of these cases one is form, another matter, and the third the product of the two; and of these, matter is potentiality and form actuality. And since the product of the two is an ensouled thing, the body is not the actuality of soul, but the latter is the actuality of a certain kind of body. And for this reason those have the right conception who believe that the soul does not exist without a body and yet is not itself a kind of body. For it is not a body, but something which belongs to a body, and for this reason exists in a body, and in a body of such and such a kind.”⁴ All things considered, although he speaks about the soul better than his predecessors, Aristotle does not speak about the absolute unity of soul and body. He divides the soul from the body, examines the soul separately.

Aristotle thinks that the interrelation between the soul and the body is similar to the relation between form and matter; the soul is the entelechy (actuality) of the body, i.e. of the living organic being: “The soul is the cause and first principle of the living body. The words cause and first principle are used in several separate senses. But the soul is equally the cause in each of the three senses which we have distinguished; for it is the cause in the sense of being that from which motion is derived, in the sense of the purpose or final cause, and as being the substance of all bodies that have souls.”⁵ This is not speculative. Now we say that the self-organizing matter puts itself a purpose - a concrete purpose in conformity with the existing circumstances, - and realizes its purpose, materializes it. The actuality of this self-organizing matter is what we call a soul in our everyday lives, but it does not exist out of and beyond the self-organizing matter; it is only one of the moments of the latter.

However, Aristotle's influence upon all the following philosophers was and still is tremendous. Hegel adopted Aristotle's viewpoint totally. Since the knowledge of mankind about organic matter was in the very beginning of its development in the lifetime of Hegel, it was justifiable for him to think so, but it is not any more. Today we cannot be Hegelians anymore. We have to raise

his standpoint to the higher one of the absolute material actuality, in which both moments - matter and actuality, - are absolutely inseparable. Only in the Understanding they are different; Reason apprehends them in their speculative unity.

But first of all, let us continue examining Aristotle and Hegel's points of view: In his whole philosophy Hegel mainly and predominantly deals with the ideal moment, the acting, the actuality. Commenting on Aristotle, he says: "To proceed, there are two leading forms, which Aristotle characterizes as that of potentiality ($\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$) and that of actuality ($\epsilon\nu\epsilon\rho\gamma\epsilon\iota\alpha$); the latter is still more closely characterized as entelechy ($\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon\lambda\epsilon\chi\epsilon\iota\alpha$) or free activity, which has the end ($\tau\omicron$ $\tau\epsilon\lambda\omicron\varsigma$) in itself, and is the realization of this end. The expression $\delta\upsilon\nu\alpha\mu\iota\varsigma$ is with Aristotle the beginning, the implicit, the objective,... the matter, which can take on all forms, without being itself the form-giving principle. It is first in energy or, more concretely, in subjectivity, that he finds the actualising form, the self-relating negativity... Thus according to Aristotle, the essentially absolute substance has potentiality and actuality, form and matter, not separated from one another; for the true objective has most certainly also activity in itself, just as the true subjectivity has also potentiality."⁶ According to both Aristotle and Hegel, the absolute substance does not have form and matter as divided from one another, and yet only the actual is the forming principle; it is a higher principle than matter. This is still a poor determination of the entelechy (the actuality); a determination, which is to be explored in depth and developed.

As modern philosophers have never used and developed the entelechy and thus it has been almost completely forgotten, or at least it is comparably not a very well-known category, I would like to acquaint the reader with this speculative category. The best and fastest way to do that is to go to the sources and quote them in full. Hegel indicates that Aristotle distinguishes different moments in substance: "a. The sensuous perceptible substance is that in which the matter is still distinguished from the efficient form. Hence this substance is finite; for the separation and externality of form and matter are precisely what constitute the nature of the finite... b. A higher kind of

substance, according to Aristotle, is that into which activity enters, which already contains that which is about to be. This is understanding, absolutely determined, whose content is the aim which it realizes through its activity, not merely changing as does the sensuous form. For the soul is essentially actuality, a general determination which posits itself; not only formal activity, whose content comes from somewhere else... c. The highest point is, however, that in which potentiality, activity and actuality are united; the absolute substance which Aristotle defines in general as being the absolute, the unmoved, which yet at the same time moves, and whose essence is pure activity, without having matter. For matter as such is passive and affected by change, consequently it is not simply one with the pure activity of this substance;⁷ it is actuality, pure activity, which has the aim in itself and realizes it.

Although Aristotle disagrees with the opinions of his predecessors, to most of whom the soul is absolutely independent from the body, he does not yet attain the principle of self-organisation of matter. That is why he says: "If then we are to speak of something common to every soul, it will be the first actuality of a natural body which has organs. Hence too we should not ask whether the soul and the body are one, any more than whether the wax and the impression are one, or in general whether the matter of each thing and that of which it is the matter are one. For, while unity and being are so spoken of in many ways, that which is most properly so spoken of is the actuality."⁸ Thus Aristotle does not want to examine how the actuality (εντελεχεια) - the pure absolute form, - is united with matter. This also turned out to be an insoluble problem for Hegel, the greatest philosopher of objective idealism; he did not try to answer the question how the soul is connected with the body. One can doubt whether the very question is correct. It is definitely not speculative enough; it is the product of an analytical kind of thinking, which can divide its object into parts but cannot synthesize them again into a whole.

But it cannot be otherwise for the philosopher who does not premise the principle of the Good, of the self-organisation of matter, and does not take the latter as the absolute basis of philosophy. Hegel expresses only the ideal

moment of the material actuality, instead of regarding the latter namely as a totally creative actual matter. Both Aristotle and Hegel assert that activity (the energy of acting) is the forming principle. It is the higher principle in comparison with the matter; the latter is only the passive substratum, which is formed by the purposeful activity. Aristotle says: “nature is two-fold as matter and form, but since the latter is end, and the rest are on account of the end, this is the final cause.’ (At this point Hegel adds that) ‘For the active form has a content, which, as content of potentiality, contains the means which make their appearance as adapted for an end, i.e. as moments established through the determinate Notion.’”⁹ Hegel admires the speculative Aristotelian Idea: “The meaning of nature is that as something is, it was in the beginning; it means this inward universality and adaptation to end (τελος) that realizes itself; and thus cause and effect are identical, since all individual parts are related to this unity of end.” In the Aristotelian Idea Hegel finds “the whole of the true profound Notion of life, which must be considered as an end in itself - a self-identity that independently impels itself on, and in its manifestation remains identical with its Notion: thus it is the self-effectuating Idea... The self-maintaining activity of life really brings forth this unity in all relationships.”¹⁰ According to Aristotle life is the energy (ενεργεια) that preserves itself as entelechy (εντελεχεια).

But neither Aristotle nor Hegel do not premise and do not attain the idea that the actual matter or the material actuality, - which we call material entelechy, - is absolutely creative and capable of self-development, and possesses its self-forming principle in-and-for-itself. They do not arrive at the principle of vitality of the matter, of the self-organizing matter. Hegel correctly asserts that, in the general and in the whole, what philosophy claims has to be in conformity with the points of view of the general public, but all the more philosophy has to be in conformity with the facts of natural history. Hegel's Idea is the true as such. It is utterly simple and immaterial; Hegel disregards the material aspect of the absolute. He examines only the pure actuality, the pure entelechy without its immanent material nature.

We regard the entelechy as totally material. The Rational Will of the absolute material entelechy illimitably possesses both moments - matter and entelechy, - in their absolute unity, in which they are one and the same so that either of them is unthinkable and impossible to be possessed without its other and matter is as much entelechial as entelechy is material. Matter and entelechy are inalienable moments of the self-possessing Absolute, whose absolute Will cannot be disposed of them by nothing else as it and it alone is the absolute sovereign of the world. This is the reason that, as far as the practical is concerned, the absolute actual matter or the absolute material actuality (εντελεχεια) in the living process of its concrete development is the true way of examining the Absolute.

Both Aristotle and Plato speak about purpose as a directed towards itself activity, but they do not regard the purpose as material activity being in possession of itself, as the material actuality (εντελεχεια) of the supreme principle "Will yourself" of the Absolute, which wills to possess and rules itself. They did not attain to this principle. As for Hegel, abiding by his purely epistemological approach, he examines only the ideal side, only the actuality, the pure activity, *actus purus*; he abstracts the latter from the material entelechy. According to Hegel matter is the purely passive substratum of each alteration, becoming and activity; it is also a moment of the absolute, but Hegel always emphasises only the ideal moment of the absolute. As a matter of fact the pure actuality, the actual, which Hegel presents us as through and through wholly and completely concrete, is essentially one of the moments of the absolute. The absolute is true only as complete unity of matter and actuality (εντελεχεια), which are totally interwoven and either of them without its other is only a mere abstraction of the philosophising mind. The absolute is as much material entelechy as it is entelechial matter.

Never has philosophy spoken like this before. For instance, "Aristotle has declared the chief subject of investigation, or the most essential knowledge to be the knowledge of end; but this is the good in each thing and, generally speaking, the best in the whole of nature,"¹¹ and, despite of the fact that he introduces the principle of individualization in the sense of pure

subjectivity and “makes the Good as the universal end, the substantial foundation,”¹² he does not speak about the self-organizing, self-animating matter and its self-creating actuality. It is true that the good, the purpose is the substantial, but only as the directed towards itself entelechy of the material self-organizing absolute, which wills to cognise itself and actually cognises its willing, its purpose, in order to come into possession of itself. As the directed towards itself material entelechy, the purpose is precisely the process in and through which the material entelechy enters in possession of itself. Purpose is the actuality of the principle of vitality of matter, i.e. of the principle of the Absolute “Will yourself.”

“Will yourself” is the principle of the material entelechy in-and-for-itself getting in possession of what has already come in possession of itself. Thus the Idea, which Hegel raised to the level of being the highest category of cognitive, theoretical philosophy, is not simply sublated by Aristotle's entelechy, but by the absolute material entelechy. The latter contains in itself Hegel's Absolute Idea as one of its moments for there is nothing that the absolute material entelechy is not in-and-for itself. In anything whatever the material entelechy is at home with itself and possesses only itself in-and-for itself.

Now our task is to explain the world on the basis of this new principle; we will discuss it in chapter IV “On the Absolute Rational Will”. But before we go to the next chapter let us examine what else Aristotle and Hegel say about the natural, the living. After determining the soul in three ways, namely as nutrient, as sensitive, and as intelligent, corresponding with plant life, animal life and human life, Aristotle wants first and foremost to talk about the food and the reproduction: “For the ensouled thing maintains its substance and exists as long as it is fed; and it can bring about the generation not of that which is fed, but of something like it; for its substance is already in existence, and nothing generates itself, but rather maintains itself. Hence this first principle of the soul is a potentiality such as to maintain its possessor as such, while food prepares it for activity; for this reason, if deprived of food it cannot exist.”¹³ Hegel applauds Aristotle's conception of nature, stating that it is

“nobler than that of today, for with him the principal point is the determination of end as the inward determinateness of natural things,”¹⁴ that in modern times it was the Kantian philosophy in which “life has there been made an end in itself.”¹⁵ He says that in and through its immanent dialectic the absolute reverts to itself, comes to itself and posits itself as an in-and-for-itself organic whole.

Hegel failed to elevate philosophy to the standpoint of the Absolute Rational Will. He uses all these categories of possession and property - in-and-for-itself, at home with itself, - without noticing that they are immanent determinations of the Absolute Will, thanks to which the living being is in possession of itself and possesses the whole process of its self-development. The development of plants, animals and the human species is only the unfolding of what they already have in themselves. They are the living self-organisation of actual matter, i.e. the development of their material entelechy, which is infinitely more than mere preserving of what has already come into possession of itself. Not only does the material entelechy preserve itself in all the different organic species and possesses itself in them, but it is also substantially creative. It is not only preserving of what has already been created, but it is capable of creating and giving rise to new species time and time again. Philosophy cannot but acknowledge the principle of creativity. Theology has always been in possession of the latter; all theological doctrines talk about the infinite creative power of God. This principle is great and extremely important. The self-organizing power of the absolute material entelechy is unconditionally creative; its complete reality is the living manifestation of different stages of its own development.

NOTES

1. Hegel, THE ENCYCLOPEDIA LOGIC, Part One of the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES, 1830, trans. Geraets, Suchting, Harris, 1991, Hackett Publishing Company, page 17

2. Aristotle, On the soul, with an English translation by W.S. Hett, London, WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD / Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1964, page 43

3. Aristotle, On the soul, with an English translation by W.S. Hett, London, WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD / Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1964, page 69

4. Aristotle, De anima, books II and III, translated with introduction and notes by D.W. Hamlyn, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 13 –14

5. Aristotle, On the soul, with an English translation by W.S. Hett, London, WILLIAM HEINEMANN LTD / Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1964, page 87

6. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, volume 2, Plato and the Platonists, translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1995, pp. 138, 139

7. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, volume 2, Plato and the Platonists, translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1995, pp. 141, 143

8. Aristotle, De anima, books II and III, translated with introduction and notes by D.W. Hamlyn, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, page 9

9. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, volume 2, Plato and the Platonists, translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1995, pp. 160-161

10. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, volume 2, Plato and the Platonists, translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1995, page 159

11. Ibidem, page 135

12. Ibidem, page 140

13. Aristotle, De anima, books II and III, translated with introduction and notes by D.W. Hamlyn, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1993, p. 21

14. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, volume 2, Plato and the Platonists, translated by E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1995, page 157

15. Ibidem, page 160