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ON THE ABSOLUTE RATIONAL WILL

(SUBLATION OF HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHY)

IV. On the Absolute Rational Will

The objective idealism - by and large the best achievement of philosophy so far, - makes the principle of thinking "Cognise yourself" a principle of the world. This is absolutely true; we accept it thoroughly. As we have already pointed out, it is a moment of the truly higher principle "Will yourself". Thus the great, true and speculative philosophy of Hegel is entirely retained. The principle of his philosophy is sublated; it is an immanent and perfectly true moment of the absolute. What is refuted is Hegel's claim only that his philosophy and his principle are the highest determinations of the absolute. But precisely in the sublime moment of sublation (or refutation) of a philosophy the absolute begins vigorously and freely to develop its new, higher principle and to create new, unknown until then categories. What was an unrealisable wish of the Will and insoluble mystery of the Spirit, and therefore, was only in itself, now comes out of the darkness of the unknown and becomes for itself; now it becomes well-known as much as it used to be unknown. In no way do we have to invent these categories arbitrarily. They are inherent moments of the absolute. Sublating its previous principle, the latter frees them; it needs them, as it wants to come into absolute possession of itself.

We begin our presentation of these categories with the Absolute Rational Will. No other category has been as neglected as the latter. No other has been so difficult to develop. But at the same time none of the previous principles was under the same infinite necessity to develop it as the newest principle of the absolute – “Will yourself” - is.

It is essential for every new philosophy to take a stand on the previous one, which through the immanent speculative dialectics of its principle develops itself into the new one. Only comparing them are we able to know how tremendously the absolute has advanced in its unfolded development. Hence, we have to point out first and foremost that the principle of the absolute material entelechy, which Hegel failed to formulate, is present at Hegel's philosophy. Admittedly he uses it in his own way. Otherwise, Hegel would not have been the most speculative philosopher of all times. He was fully aware that “In the living organism the final cause is a moulding principle and an energy immanent in the matter, and every member is in its turn a means as well as an end.”¹ But he does not develop this moment, he does not pay close attention to the entelechial nature of the absolute, which is Spirit as much as it is a material Volition and, moreover, is the living and infinitely flexible unity of these two most opposite moments. Thus Hegel's principle “Cognise yourself” and his method - by and large the most speculative we have had so far, - are not speculative enough so as to apprehend the Volition and the concept in their absolute unity, which is as much materialized as actualised. The thought is still not speculative enough in order to unite these infinite opposites and thus to endure their strongest contradiction. Their unity (they are one and the same) could seem mystical and impossible to the thought of the Understanding, but this is the way the absolute works.

Let us examine the determinate way in which Hegel presents this infinitely contradictory unity. We have already seen that Aristotle used to lay stress on the material entelechy, on the active material principle; he expressed the unity of form (which Hegel calls a concept) and matter. Hegel acknowledges this unity, but forgets about it quickly and examines only the Concept, the Thought, the absolute Spirit and its forms – art, religion and

philosophy. Thus his thinking is not entelechial. True, he knows that the actual individual performs his actual activities in a material world, but he takes a keen interest only in the speculative logic of the Absolute and the realization of the principle "Cognise yourself". And yet he reflects in his own way the absolutely important moment that in our practical relations we belong to the material world, we refer to the material and refer to it in a material way. It is precisely due to that moment that the entelechial is present implicitly in his philosophy.

Whatever we do, it invariably happens: every principle of the science of philosophy, which appears in its history, contains more than it expresses explicitly. This "more" is always hidden in the fog of picture thinking. Let us now examine how Hegel's philosophy contains infinitely more than it expresses explicitly. Hegel made "Cognise yourself" a principle of his philosophy; therefore, according to him the Absolute is Spirit and the Absolute Idea is the in-and-for-itself knowing itself truth. Reason rules the world. Hegel says: "To speak of thought or objective thought as the heart and soul of the world, may seem to be ascribing consciousness to the things of nature. We feel certain repugnance against making thought the inward function of things, especially as we speak of thought as marking the divergence of man from nature. It would be necessary, therefore, if we use the term thought at all, to speak of nature as the system of unconscious thought, or, to use Schelling's expression, a petrified intelligence." We see that Hegel, who turns his back on the material actuality of the Absolute, tries to reconcile the thought, the concept with the material actuality: "And in order to prevent misconception, 'thought-form' or 'thought-type' should be substituted for the ambiguous term thought. From what has been said the principles of logic are to be sought in a system of thought-types or fundamental categories, in which the opposition between subjective and objective, in its usual sense vanishes."² It must have been extremely difficult for Hegel to reconcile the self-conscious Reason with the actuality; all the more that he does not and cannot grasp the latter as material entelechy. Thus Hegel calls the energy and the processes of the material entelechy objective determinations of Thought, of objective Reason. His philosophy is only searching for the true and remains in the circle of the

true. Abiding by his principle “Cognise yourself”, he can use only the circle of categories he invented to satisfy the needs of his philosophy and cannot go beyond the bounds of that circle.

And yet Hegel's philosophy method is true. His philosophy is true because he calls the entelechial purpose - i.e. the directed towards itself acting of the absolute material entelechy, - a Concept. Thus, his principle contained the entelechial only in its thinking form, i.e. as alienated from itself material entelechy. His principle presents the self-alienation of the latter from itself; willing to cognise itself as the thinking itself thought the material entelechy necessarily develops its true principle “Cognise yourself”. Hegel was the philosopher who developed the latter superbly and arrived at its highest standpoint; the philosopher's task is to assist the absolute in the process of its self-development. Thus the absolute abandons the matter and the material side of its infinite wealth and alienates itself from itself. In Hegel's philosophy this self-alienation of the material entelechy appears as Concept, Reason, Idea. He says that “By the good the “why” is to be understood, that which is an end in and for itself, which is clearly established in itself, which is on its own account, and through which all else is; the end has the determination of activity, the bringing forth of itself, so that it, as end to itself, is the Idea, the Notion that makes itself objective and, in its objectivity, is identical with itself.”³ Thus only by virtue of the fact that Hegel expresses the entelechial purpose (the practical material Good) as the true, the latter has in itself the moment of actual self-materializing, in a word, the whole wealth of the absolute material entelechy. The matter is abandoned and yet it is implicitly present. Hegel is interested only in cognition of the logical or ideal side of the Absolute. He does not examine the irrational part of the soul, the Volition. He is far from comprehending the purpose as the material entelechy willing itself alone as its supreme Good - the true mover of cognition by and large.

Hegel made “Cognise yourself” a principle of his philosophy. The Absolute is Spirit and the purpose of Reason is the true; beyond question, this is the developed result of his principle. The philosopher who does not put the

Good in the beginning of his philosophy as a principle higher than the one of thinking can only arrive at the idea that the Absolute is Spirit and proclaim that this is the highest determination of the Absolute. The very principle does not allow us to go beyond that determination. In its self-development the Absolute Rational Will occupies that standpoint, but cannot stop at it. It has the urge of Volition to develop itself, to unfold its own content, to enter in possession of the latter and in consequence it overcomes and refutes Hegel's principle, the result being that it contains in itself both Hegel's principle and philosophy as sublated. The Absolute goes beyond its Hegel's circle, in which it is grasped as only Truth and Spirit and posits itself as a living entelechial unity of Spirit and Will. Thus the absolute alienates itself from its Hegel's self-alienation and comes into possession of itself in its material entelechiality.

The defect of Hegel's philosophy is that he does not go beyond the Absolute Idea. His Absolute Idea is not yet the absolute material entelechy. The Absolute Idea is only a moment of the absolute entelechy, which has no reasons to self-alienates itself and for which there is nothing in which it is not at home with itself and for itself. What Hegel calls objective determinations of thought is first and foremost self-organisation of the actual matter, or in other words, actual material processes which for the purposes of pure logic we could really call objective determinations of thought, but it is substantially more important to regard them such as they are on their own account. The ideal is only an abstraction of the material entelechy; it is the latter in its self-alienation as an immaterial form. But the ideal does not and cannot exist without the absolute material entelechy, without the material actual individual activity, without man and his self-consciousness.

It is precisely this materiality that Hegel's Absolute Idea lacks. Not only does the Absolute refer to itself in a material way, but what is more it also takes possessions of itself in its rational materiality. Hegel failed to attain the principle "Will yourself" and comprehend that the Good, the Volition is a higher moment of the Absolute than the true and contains in itself the latter as sublated. This is why Hegel's objective idealism does not acknowledge the

Will as a manifestation of the material entelechy and as a universal category comparable to the categories of the Reason, the Spirit.

Hegel's principle is defective; it lacks the matter, the Volition, and the highest material entelechial Good. On the other hand, all the philosophers who developed the philosophical materialism lacked precisely the principle of objective idealism – “Cognise yourself”. Their materialism was excessively contemplative; it lacked the active side (*actus purus*) of the Absolute, which the idealism developed. Thus, each of these philosophical doctrines is defective; only in their unification and interpenetration they are complementary to one another and can attain the absolute material entelechy. Knowledge has no other purpose but to serve Will's self-possession and self-ruling. Not knowledge but welfare is the higher moment. It is precisely welfare that is the living speculative unity of Thought and Will. Reason and Spirit are subordinate to the Good. That is why Volition is higher than the Concept and has the latter in itself as sublated. The Good, the Volition, is a unity of soul and body, of Spirit and matter. The purpose - the living manifestation of the principle “Will yourself”, - is not without matter; it is materialized and actualised in and through the absolute material entelechy. Possession, entering into self-possession and self-ruling, is a higher purpose, a higher principle than cognition; Will is higher than Spirit and contains in itself the latter as sublated. The whole enormous progress of the world was possible in virtue of the natural sciences and the industry. But the natural sciences have always served the industry because the latter is a manifestation of the living - acting and actual, - material Will to welfare. The purpose of all the revolutions in the world has been to change the concrete material actuality.

“Will yourself” is the truly universal principle; “Cognise yourself” is only a moment subordinate to this truly higher principle. For that reason now we have to regard Hegel's objective determinations of thought such as they are on their own account, namely as material rational Volitions and to cognise the absolute on the basis of its higher principle “Will yourself”. Thus the Concept, the Reason, the Spirit, is not the highest principle of the Absolute but the entelechial Rational Will is. If the Reason, the Spirit, is the form of forms, the

Good is the absolute unity of form and matter. The Volition is higher than the Concept and contains in itself Hegel's Concept as sublated; the latter is the cognised Volition.

The Good, the supreme Good of the absolute material entelechy has in itself Thought and Will as its moments, but so that Will is the higher moment that contains in itself Thought as sublated. The theoretical thinking can imagine itself whatever it wants - this is precisely the absolute bliss of theoretical life, about which Plato and Aristotle talk, but it is the Absolute Rational Will that demands unconditional submission to its severe discipline and insuperably attains to it and keeps within its power all the passing whims of thought, e.g. the empty ideals of adolescence. The practical, the Rational Will as a manifestation of the possessing itself material entelechy is higher in comparison with the only theoretical (Thought, Spirit) and has the latter as its subordinate moment.

Contrary to Hegel, who subordinated the Good to the true, and the Will to intelligence, now the absolute Good in the process of its self-thinking, firstly, comes into possession of itself as the form of forms, cognises itself for itself and attains to the Concept (the self-cognising Volition) and thus it is Absolute Spirit, and secondly, as its highest aim is not self-cognition, but the Good, its welfare, it sublates the Concept. The Volition subordinates its self-conscious form - the Concept, - to itself, seeks advice from it and thus it overcomes its state of only natural Will and enters in possession of itself as self-knowing and self-willing Rational Will. Those who talk about the superiority of Spirit over matter want to live in their castles in the air because they fail to attain to the absolute material entelechy.

Hegel's circle of the Absolute Spirit, the Absolute Idea, expresses the true, but it is only a moment of the material entelechy, which has the truth as one of its moments in the process of its self-taking in possession. It cognises itself, but only to takes possession of itself, to have itself in its totality and rule itself. Thus "Will yourself" sublates "Cognise yourself", the Good (and its Right) sublates the Truth. The true serves the Good and the self-cognising itself true Good enters in possession of itself, carries itself into practice. The

practical Good is a living rational deed; it is the actual, which has in itself the matter and is the absolute material entelechy, which contains in itself the Absolute Idea as sublated, as only one of its moments.

By contrast with Anaxagoras, who used to say that Reason (*vouç*) rules the world, today we say that the entelechial Rational Will - the directed towards itself practical Good, - rules the world. The absolute purpose is as much a Concept as it is Volition. Thus, the Reason and the Will equalize and the idea of the world as entelechial Rational Will replaces Hegel's idea of the world as Reason - theoretical and practical. "Will yourself" is the absolute commandment of the universal Rational Will. In its urge to take possession of itself the material entelechy cognises itself and reaches its absolute goal - to have itself as the self-knowing, self possessing and self-ruling Good; this and this alone is the supreme entelechial Good.

And precisely this is the modern answer of the eternal question: "How and why do we cognise?" But we do not stop here. Today more than ever before we are interested in the question "How and why do we come into possession and rule ourselves?" We say that the absolute is entelechial Rational Will, which insuperably and with infinite energy strives for reaching its goal: namely, to cognise, to possess and rule itself, whereas according to the objective idealism cognition of Truth is the highest act of the Absolute in and through which it posits itself as a self-knowing Absolute Idea. "Will yourself" is a truly higher principle in comparison with the one of the objective idealism and the higher state to which it raises the world is based not only on the thinking itself Thought but also on the willing itself Will, which contains in itself the former as sublated. We set ourselves goals in our lives and strive for reaching them; this is natural. The thinking itself Will is an entelechial material Will; it is absolutely necessarily for the latter to think itself so as to take possession of itself and attain its freedom. By and large philosophy and the other sciences are theoretical self-cognition and self-taking in possession of the Will (it wills that), and every actual activity within the family, the industry and the state is the living process of practical coming of the Rational Will into

self-possession as well as attaining to its highest apex - Political Will, for only the latter is the totally practical universal Rational Will.

Prominent and wonderful people made an enormous contribution to the development of philosophy. Now the Absolute, which invariably reveals itself to itself, has arrived at a higher principle. At last the Rational Will makes itself an object of itself and undertakes its absolute self-entering in possession of itself. The philosophers, who definitely occupy a place of honour in the history of thinking mankind, mainly developed the thinking itself Thought and Hegel's "The Science of Logic" is the highest result of the self-development of Thought. Now the Will directs itself towards itself and strives for its highest development; it knows its Will and wills nothing else but its own absolute taking possession of itself so as to be capable of attaining to its highest End - to rule itself in-and-for-itself.

The material actuality, the entelechy is not only thinking itself Thought, - which the objective idealism proclaimed to be its highest form, - but it is tremendously more. It contains in itself the principle of thinking Volition, which first of all manifests itself as an organic whole that has in itself the urge to come and has come in possession of itself - a living being which has not yet taken possession of itself as a Rational Will. It unconsciously wills to unite with itself in its inorganic other, to appropriate it and take in possession so as to preserve itself and its genus. The living is the first entering in possession of the entelechy, which cannot yet entirely subdue its outer world. It still does not will to know and does not know to will; without cognition the subjectivity cannot yet reach its infinite importance. The absolute entelechy does not stop here. It has the urge to enter in possession of what has already come in possession of itself. It posits itself as intelligent Volition, which wills to cognise and know itself, but only to take itself in possession deeper and to achieve its goal; and precisely the Good, the welfare is that goal. The self-thinking and self-willing Rational Will alone can achieve this highest goal - the Good. Only through its entering in possession of the first entering in possession does the Rational Will of the willing subject come in possession of itself and posits itself as self-possessing and self-ruling Rational Will. Now the subject attains to

true possession of its absolute essence. The independent pure person is a possessing itself entelechial purpose, which freely determines itself in and through itself. Thus it is a free Will, which has itself as its total infinite property. This is the process of self-freeing of the Absolute Rational Will, which is the living process of materializing its Right and for which there is nothing that is not submitted to its own Right.

Possessing the infinite creative energy of the material actuality, the Absolute Rational Will is a process moving on its own and creating all the forms of its self-development; it arrives at the independence and individuation of its creatures, so that in the vegetable, the animal and the thinking-willing soul it is only at different stages of creation of its freedom. Thus the absolute history - the history of the Absolute is creative self-development of the Will to Freedom. The animal is only "Will yourself" without "Cognise yourself." Its activity is still not the free and self-possessing purpose. It still has only other, individual purposes, not general ones. Hegel argues that the animal is the Concept in itself, but that is a poor determination. In comparison with the plant the animal as such is a higher stage of development of the absolute entelechy, and yet in every stage of its development the latter demonstrates the activity of turning its material actuality in "*my*". The subject, the animal consciously feels - feeling is the logic of the animal, - that the surrounding objective world unconditionally belongs to it. Striving for its welfare, it absolutely naturally satisfies the needs of its entelechial purpose in its own - created and caused by the entelechy, - world. But it is only living; its Volition cannot yet attain its purpose in a universal way, i.e. as a Thinking Will. The Will has itself as thinking itself in and through the highest product of its self-organization - the brain. Although the living is devoid of this privilege, it proves that it has its body as its property.

It is absolutely wrong to think that property is only a category, a category of Reason: namely that somebody puts his Will in a given material object. Even the predatory animal and the big fish manifest in the act of eating the lamb or the small fish their right to subdue the world around them, to take possession of it. If they could think, they would create farms and industries, as

well as law and state to defend their property. This, however, is a deed of the Absolute Rational Will, which has in itself the moment of thinking as its necessary moment. The entelechial purpose, the Absolute Will is the universal; as self-knowing entelechial purpose, it is a self-knowing, self-possessing and self-ruling universal. This and this alone is the highest form of Freedom: this in a universal way possessing itself universal, which manifests itself as a principle of individualization and self-possession of the acting material entelechy and as subjective individual Will. Thus the Absolute Rational Will is the living process of attaining itself as absolute self-possession and entering in possession of itself as its own property.

But as far as the pure Rational Volition has developed itself, it is nothing else but the "I" or the free individual person. The Absolute Rational Will as a self-having property is the absolutely rational free, which in and through itself creates its absolute right to defend its Freedom as its supreme Good. The "I" is a manifestation of the Absolute Will of the entelechy, which remains in itself, has itself, belongs to itself and takes possession of itself. Thus the principle "Will yourself" becomes a principle of the world. It attains to a higher circle and opens the door of politovolia - the science and practice of Political Will as the totally practical universal Rational Will, - which contains in itself the science of philosophy as sublated and is absolutely more important than philosophy itself.

NOTES

1. Hegel, LOGIC, Part One of the ENCYCLOPEDIA OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL SCIENCES, 1830, trans. William Wallace, 1873, Ed. J. N. Findlay, 1975, Oxford University Press, paragraph 57, page 89

2. Ibidem, paragraph 24, page 37

3. Hegel, Lectures on the History of Philosophy, volume 1, Greek philosophy to Plato, translated by E. S. Haldane, introduction by Frederick C. Beiser, University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln and London, 1995, pp. 316-317