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HEGELIAN FREEDOM AND THE COMMUNITARIAN CRITIQUE OF THE MARKET

by

MATTHEW SCHREPPER

Under the Direction of Sebastian Rand, PhD.

ABSTRACT

Market structures have come to dominate every area of our society, and market logic—in the form of rational choice theory, the law and economics movement, and the like—has equally dominated our thinking about society. In this thesis, I will examine one critique of this state of affairs: that offered by G.W.F. Hegel. I compare Hegel’s critique of the market to the similar critique of modern communitarians like Charles Taylor and Michael Sandel, and argue that Hegel’s distinctive conception of freedom allows him to capture what is right about the modern communitarian view while avoiding most of the common criticisms.

INDEX WORDS: Hegel, political philosophy, communitarianism, markets

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

PR – Elements of the Philosophy of Right

ENC III- Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences, Part III: Philosophy of Spirit

1 INTRODUCTION

We live in an age of the market. Every area of human social life, from health care to education to friendship and romance is increasingly structures in terms of contract and exchange, its participants imagined as self-interested utility maximisers. Our thinking about society, too, has become dominated by the market perspective—which economist Gary Becker called the “economic approach to human behavior”—in the form of rational choice theory, public choice theory, and the law and economics movement among others. This perspective is now the dominant (to many, the only acceptable) approach. Even a Marxist like Jon Elster has felt it necessary to recast Marxism in the terms of the economic approach.

The social and intellectual dominance of this economic approach to human behavior has been subject to a number of different critiques. In this paper, I will focus one version of such critiques: what one might call a “communitarian” critique of the economic approach. This kind of critique, exemplified by Charles Taylor or Michael Sandel, focuses its critique on the destructive effect the economic approach can have on social bonds, communal solidarity, groups, and institutions which bind human beings together. All of these things are in some way necessary for a good life, and so in undermining or destroying them the economic approach undermines or destroys the possibility of a good life.

This communitarian view has itself come under criticism from liberals, who argue that it often fails to respect individual rights or provides support to oppressive or unjust communities. In this paper, I will return to a major inspiration for the modern communitarians—G.W.F. Hegel—to argue that he provides a more successful version of the communitarian critique. I will examine Hegel’s distinctive conception of freedom, which combines a concern for social unity with a respect for individual liberty, and show that this Hegelian freedom furnishes us with a

critique of the economic approach, and the market which is its institutional realization, which captures what is right about the communitarian critique while avoiding the pitfalls.

1.1 The Economic Approach to Human Behavior

Markets have existed in some form or other for thousands of years, and people have attempted to understand the functioning of markets systematically since at least the eighteenth century. What is distinctive about the market and the study of economics over the last century is that they have overrun all boundaries, penetrating every corner of human life. This expansion of the market and market perspective is best characterized by Gary Becker, who defends what he (and I) call the “economic approach to human behavior” (henceforth the economic approach).¹

The economic approach at its core is a particular conception of human beings as purely self-interested utility maximizers. This conception has several components: first, humans are assumed to have a stable and rank-ordered set of preferences. These preferences are assumed to be private—i.e., there are no shared or common goods—and self-regarding—i.e., people have no preferences, positive or negative, about others’ wellbeing. People act reliably and in every part of their lives to maximize the satisfaction of their preferences, which economists call utility. All of these preferences are treated as equivalent: the desire to raise a child, to eat a pizza, and to treat others kindly are all the same kind of thing, viz. preferences. They are also treated as fungible: people are willing to trade the satisfaction of one preference (say, a child) for that of another (like pizza).

Given this conception of humans as selfish utility maximizers with equivalent and fungible preferences, it becomes natural to then treat every area of human life like a market, with

¹ Gary Becker, “The Economic Approach to Human Behavior,” *The Economic Approach to Human Behavior* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976) 3-14.

supply, demand, and prices shifting in relation to one another until an equilibrium is reached (which it is presumed will always happen). So, for example, the birth rate is seen as expressing the equilibrium between the demand for children and the ‘price’ of children, i.e. the cost of having and raising children. A decrease in this ‘price’, (from, say, a new government subsidy) will increase demand for and thus the number of children. Similarly, an increase in punishment for some crime (the ‘price’ of committing the crime) will decrease the demand for and hence incidence of that crime.

It is tempting to respond to the economic approach by pointing out that virtually every assumption enumerated above is false, often obviously so. This is certainly correct, but Becker and other adherents of the economic approach argue that though they may not be strictly true, nevertheless making these assumptions allows us to explain and predict a vast range of human behaviors and aggregate effects which cannot be so explained or predicted by theories which try to take a more nuanced view of human nature. It is not clear that this defense succeeds: the primary purpose of the assumptions is to make it possible make mathematical models of human behavior and interactions, but rendering something legible to mathematical modeling is not necessarily the same thing as explaining it. Meanwhile, economists’ track record at making predictions based on their theories is notoriously mixed.

For our purposes, however, the accuracy of the assumptions underlying the economic approach does not really matter. What concerns us here—what concerned Hegel and the communitarians—is the effect that a widespread acceptance of the economic approach will have on society. Whether or not the economic approach is true in some universal sense, a society whose culture and institutions are shaped by the economic approach will in turn shape the attitudes and behaviors of the individuals living in it. This is not to say that people will be

influenced to such a degree that they act entirely in conformity with the economic approach, but certainly they will act more closely to how the economic approach expects than they would otherwise, and this shift in attitudes and behaviors toward the economic approach will, according to the communitarians, have deleterious effects.² In other words, the communitarian critique of the economic approach is not a theoretical critique of the approach's assumptions or its explanatory force. It is rather an ethical critique of the social consequences of organizing a society around the economic approach.

1.2 The Communitarian Critique: Instrumental and Substantive

The communitarian critique of the economic approach boils down to the view that conceiving of human being as the economic approach does, and organizing society on the basis of that conception, will weaken or outright destroy various social ties and communal bonds which the communitarians see as valuable and important. These ties and bonds require people to recognize certain social obligations to one another and to various groups of which they are a part. These social obligations are not consistent with a conception of people as purely self-interested utility-maximizers, so to the extent that conception becomes widespread, it undermines those obligations.

Consider, for example, one kind of social obligation: patriotism, a commitment to actively sustaining and defending one's nation, even at the cost of one's own private interests. This can range from paying taxes to dying in war. It may seem that patriotism can be justified consistently with the economic approach, on pure cost-benefit rationality: there is no ethical

² For evidence that economics as a discipline shapes how markets work in practice, see Michael Callon, ed., *Laws of the Market* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998); and Donald Mackenzie, Fubian Muniesa, and Lucia Siu, eds. *Do Economists Make Markets? On the Performativity of Economics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007).

obligation to obey or support the nation, but it is rational for everyone to do so regardless, because the safe and effective pursuit of whatever one's preferences happen to be is only possible in a secure and well-governed nation, and a secure and well-governed nation is only possible if citizens generally obey the law and otherwise support the nation's activities. There is thus a cost-benefit justification for people to fulfill certain social obligations (to pay taxes, obey the law, perhaps participate in the political process, etc.). Even by its own lights, however, this cost-benefit justification has serious problems. First, while the nation's security and functioning requires that citizens generally obey and otherwise support it, it does not require that every citizen always do so; it requires only that most citizens usually do. If individual citizens are solely motivated by individual cost-benefit considerations, they will be strongly tempted to free ride, enjoying the benefits while others pay the costs, quite possibly leading to a tragedy of the commons where no one pays the costs. Secondly, sometimes the functioning of the state requires sacrifices so extreme (like the sacrifice of one's life) that no cost-benefit calculation could possibly justify them. So it seems that, if we want the individual goods that a secure and functioning nation bring, then we must be more than instrumentally committed to the state; we must be committed to sustaining and defending the state at the expense of our own interests.

Given the failure of a purely cost-benefit justification of patriotism, it seems we must develop a theory of an ethical obligation to take its place. There are two different ways to conceive of this obligation, which I will call the instrumental view and the substantive view. The instrumental view builds on the cost-benefit approach: the state is necessary to realize various individual goods, but a non-instrumental commitment by all citizens to obeying and supporting the state is necessary for the state to function. In other words, this is a kind of second-order instrumentalism: an instrumental justification for a non-instrumental commitment to fulfilling

one's social obligations. This kind of argument is prominently defended by Quentin Skinner³ and in some places Charles Taylor.⁴

On the substantive view, by contrast, the good that the state is essential to realize, on which our obligations to the state rest, is not some good for the individual like freedom, security, or wealth. Rather, on this view patriotism is justified because, as members of the state, individuals are real parts of a collective which shapes and sustains them, and so the good of the whole (i.e. the state) is good for the individual precisely because they are a part of it. One should support the state (the substantive view likely requires more than mere obedience) then, because to do so is good for its own sake: what is good for the state is good for the individual.⁵

As the inspiration for many contemporary forms of communitarianism, Hegel is usually taken to advocate either the instrumental or the substantive view. A careful consideration of Hegel's actual view on patriotism and our obligations to the state, however, will allow us not only to understand these two positions better but reveal that Hegel really holds a third, yet unexplored position. This consideration will center on different understandings of what Hegel means by freedom. Freedom for Hegel is the core political good, and our obligation to the state is grounded on the fact that the state is necessary for the realization of freedom. Thus, whether Hegel's view is instrumental or substantive depends on which notion of freedom he holds. If freedom according to Hegel is a fundamentally individual good, which the state is a means of ensuring and protecting, then Hegel's view is instrumental. Conversely, if freedom is

³ Quentin Skinner, "The Paradoxes of Liberty," in Sterling McMurrin, ed. *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values Volume VIII* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 225-50.

⁴ Charles Taylor, "Cross-Purposes: The Liberal-Communitarian Debate," in Derek Matravers and Jonathan Pike, eds., *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

⁵ For an example of this view, see Alasdair MacIntyre, "Is Patriotism a Virtue?" in Derek Matravers and Jonathan Pike, eds., *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

fundamentally not an individual property but only truly realized by the state itself, as a whole, then Hegel's view is substantive.

Most commentators have tended to interpret Hegelian freedom in one of those two ways, and thus to put Hegel into either the instrumental or substantive camp. I will argue, however, that each of these interpretations, while capturing something important and true about Hegel's work, also misses something equally important. In truth Hegel holds neither the instrumental nor substantive view; he transcends this distinction and provides us with a new way of understanding freedom, the state, and our social obligations.

2 HEGELIAN FREEDOM

2.1 The Instrumental View in Hegel

One prominent instrumental interpretation of Hegel's political philosophy is offered by Andrew Buchwalter. In "Hegel's Concept of Virtue," Buchwalter provides an instrumental reading of Hegel's critique of bourgeois self-interested obedience to the state—what Hegel calls "rectitude"—in favor of a more republican account of patriotic civic virtue. "Unlike the bourgeois," Buchwalter writes, "the patriot does not view political community as a means to private ends." The patriot is instead committed to "the public interest as an end in itself." "At the same time, however," this commitment "flows from reflection on the conditions for personal well-being." The things the patriot values as an individual—her rights and liberties, her property, her safety, in sum her "autonomous personality"—are only possible "in the context of a lawfully ordered community...for rights themselves have no meaning outside a developed system of rational institutions." This developed system of rational institutions is the condition of the individual's autonomous personality. But the continued existence and stability of this system is not independent of the individual's activity: "a functioning system" is only possible if "individuals work to establish and maintain the viability of such institutions." On Buchwalter's view, Hegel thinks "public engagement can no longer be...understood as a telos of individual fulfillment." Instead, "public commitment is now to be justified" by its necessity for establishing and sustaining "the conditions of individualism." We have in Buchwalter's reading of Hegel a fundamentally instrumental account of the grounds of social obligation. "The bourgeois and the patriot both accept public obligations on grounds of rational self-interest," Buchwalter concludes, "but only the patriot has 'wisdom'".⁶

⁶Andrew Buchwalter, "Hegel's Concept of Virtue", *Political Theory* 20.4 (Nov 1992) 561-64.

This reading of Hegel is not wrong, in that each of its claims is, taken individually, true. Taken as a whole, however, it is incomplete in a way that is misleading about the fundamental nature and purpose of Hegel's project. It is certainly true that for Hegel the state establishes the "conditions of individualism," and that rights and individual freedom are only possible or even conceivable in the context of a system of rationally ordered institutions. He is also clear that these institutions must be sustained by the commitment and activity of the individual members. "Concrete freedom," Hegel writes, "requires that personal individuality and its particular interests...gain recognition of their right" as well as that individuals "knowingly and willingly acknowledge [the] universal interest...and actively pursue it as their ultimate end" (PR 260). For example, discussing the payment of taxes, Hegel writes that most people see taxation as a hostile imposition "prejudicial to their own interest," but "however true this may appear, the particularity of their own ends cannot be satisfied without the universal, and a country in which no taxes were paid" would not be able to protect or advance individual interests. Thus, when "I further the universal...this in turn furthers my end" (PR 184Z).

However, if this is the whole story of Hegel's grounding of social obligations, it seems that much of what Hegel himself says about his own political philosophy is untrue. It is hard to see how the state can be an "absolute unmoved end in itself" if its ultimate justification is that it is a condition of individualism, or how Buchwalter's instrumental account is reconcilable with Hegel's statement that "union as such is the true content and end, and the destiny of individuals" (PR 258, Z). Moreover, while Buchwalter is right that in a sense the Philosophy of Right is structured as "a defense of *Sittlichkeit* based on a regressive analysis of the presuppositions underlying modern abstract right," this way of characterizing the project seems to run counter to Hegel's claim that the correct viewpoint on ethics is one which "starts from

substantiality,” the collective, social viewpoint of Spirit, as the other viewpoint which “moves upward from individuality...excludes spirit” (PR 156Z).

Hence Buchwalter’s account, while not incorrect, is misleading because it presents a partial view of how Hegel thinks about the relation between individual freedom and our social obligations. While Hegel does seem to ground individuals’ obligations to the social order on the social order’s status as a condition for individual rights, he also seems to ground individual rights in their status as conditions for a stable social order. On several occasions Hegel appears to offer an instrumental justification of individual rights, where these rights are necessary for a strong and stable state. The modern state “has strength and depth,” according to Hegel, “because it allows the principle of subjectivity to attain fulfillment” (PR 260). “The stability of the state consists in the identity” of particular and universal interests: if individuals find that “their welfare is deficient, if their subjective ends are not satisfied, and they do not find that the state as such is the means to this satisfaction, the state itself stands on insecure footing” (PR 265Z). Finally, individual rights also play an important role in the *Bildung* of individuals, in forming them into the kind of people who can play their part in the larger social order. The personal freedoms of the market teach people to take interests other than their own into account; representation in a legislature teaches them to deliberate rationally about the universal good, and so on. Thus not only is the state justified as the condition of individualism, but also individualism is justified as the condition for the state: particularity and universality “each...has the other as its condition” (PR 184Z).

2.2 The Substantive View in Hegel

If Buchwalter presents a clear example of an instrumental account of social obligation, Charles Taylor presents a clear case of a substantive account. In contrast to Buchwalter's claim that Hegel grounds public commitment as a means to individual ends, Taylor argues that for Hegel "the demands of reason are that men live...essentially as participants in a larger life,"⁷ in an expressive unity with a greater cosmic order that encompasses not only society but also nature. For Taylor, the basic project of Hegel's ethical and political philosophy is to achieve a unity between this expressive ideal and the Kantian ideal of rational autonomy.

The ideal of expressive unity sees "human life unfolded from some central core—a guiding theme or inspiration," which constitutes the unity of every aspect of a human individual, and which humans seek to express in both their individual activity and their larger culture. Humans "reach their highest fulfillment in such expressive activity," but "men are expressive beings in virtue of belonging to a culture, and a culture is sustained, nourished and handed down in a community."⁸ Achieving the expressive unity that is the central purpose of human life, then, requires involvement in and commitment to one's community, which "has...on its own level an expressive unity" as well. The true expression of the unity of a human life thus requires an individual to be involved in expressing the larger unity of her community. For Hegel and his contemporaries the exemplary culture for this expressive unity was the ancient Greeks. However, this ancient expressive unity was deficient because it was based on something given and contingent, a natural and intuitive sense of the specific structures, duties, and roles of their

⁷ Charles Taylor, *Hegel*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 373.

⁸ Charles Taylor, *Hegel and Modern Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 2.

society as reflecting the natural cosmic order, and “the Hegelian notion of Spirit as freedom cannot accommodate anything merely given.”⁹

What Hegel tries to do, according to Taylor, is to recreate a Greek-style expressive unity but base it on the modern Kantian idea of the rational, self-defining human subject.¹⁰ For Kant, the central attribute of human beings is rational autonomy: that they are subject only to those laws that they rationally impose on themselves. The problem with the Kantian ideal, according to Hegel, is that it is vacuous: it cannot on its own generate any actual content, any specific duties, let alone a conception of a just or rational social order. What is needed is a way to understand rational autonomy which is able to generate determinate content.

According to Taylor, Hegel accomplishes this by shifting the subject of reason from the individual human being to Spirit, *Geist*: “Hegel...believed himself to have shown that man reaches his basic identity in seeing himself as a vehicle of *Geist*...the will whose autonomy men must realize is not that of man alone but *Geist*,” that “cosmic spirit which posits the universe.”¹¹ This change in the subject of autonomy escapes the emptiness problem because, while for an individual human any determinate ground for action must involve something external and thus be heteronomous, this is not the case for *Geist*, whose “content is the Idea which produces a differentiated world out of itself.”¹² Thus, “human rational will finds a content not by stripping itself of all particularity...but by discovering its links to cosmic reason, and...what aspects of our lives...reflect the truly concrete universal which is the Idea.”¹³

⁹ Taylor, *Hegel* 369

¹⁰ Taylor 370-371

¹¹ Ibid. 373.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Ibid.

This move to make *Geist* rather than individual humans the subject of rational autonomy allows Hegel to derive a concrete account of a rational, just social order, where “the moments of the Concept...all reach full and compatible expression” through the division of society into different levels and institutions.¹⁴ In this way Hegel manages to solve the problems of both the Greek ideal of expressive unity and the Kantian ideal of rational autonomy at one stroke, giving content to rational autonomy and rational grounding to expressive unity.

Whereas Buchwalter interprets Hegel as abandoning the Greek idea that “public engagement” could be the “telos of individual fulfillment,”¹⁵ Taylor argues that Hegel is trying to provide a modern version of this idea, that individual fulfillment can only be achieved through involvement in a larger public life: “the demands of freedom on this reading” require “that society must be such that men relate to it as a larger life in which they are immersed.”¹⁶ This is a substantive account, where social obligations are grounded in the fact that immersion in society is good in itself.

Just as with the instrumental account, there is something basically right about this interpretation of Hegel. And yet there is also something partial and inadequate about it. It does not really reckon with the evidence that Buchwalter draws on, such as the extensive consideration Hegel gives to the way in which the state is valuable because it makes individual rights possible. In fact, Taylor’s account goes so far in centering *Geist* rather than human individuals that it is unclear why, on Taylor’s view, individual freedom should matter at all. Hegel insists that “subjective freedom must be respected” (PR 262Z); if what freedom demands is that humans be immersed in the larger life whose shape is dictated by cosmic reason, why is

¹⁴ Ibid. 374

¹⁵ Buchwalter 563

¹⁶ Op. cit. 374

subjective freedom so important? And ultimately, while Hegel does seem to want in some way to combine Kantian autonomy with some sort of expressive unity, he does not seem to identify the subject of rational autonomy with *Geist*. In fact, he mostly associates rational autonomy with subjective freedom, the subject of which is most certainly the individual human. On Taylor's interpretation, the unity of the substantial and the subjective is accomplished by turning the subjective into the substantial, interpreting the subject of reason as the same collective *Geist* which defines the substance. But this solution misses the true point of what Hegel is trying to do, viz., achieve a unity between the *individual* subject, in all its radical Kantian freedom, with the demands of ethical substantiality, and Taylor's account fails to do justice to this Hegelian goal. What is needed, then, if such a thing is possible, is a way of understanding our social obligations as grounded in the individual subjective will without reducing these obligations to mere instruments for other individual goods.

2.3 Freedom: Weakly or Strongly Holistic?

As mentioned above, at the core of the disagreement between the instrumental and substantive interpretations of Hegel are two different understandings of what he means by freedom. Freedom is the paramount social good for Hegel: as "right is the existence of freedom," the most fundamental characteristic of a just or good society is that it be free. It is furthermore clear that Hegel believes that freedom is only possible in the context of a society with a rational state. But there are two different ways to interpret this claim. The instrumental interpretation holds that freedom is an individual property—only individuals can correctly be described as free or unfree—but that individuals can only be free if they live in a rational state. The substantive interpretation holds that freedom that freedom is a collective property: that only a state can truly be free, and this collective social freedom of the state cannot be reduced to the freedom of the

individuals within the state. The instrumental view holds the former, and the substantive view the latter, interpretation of freedom.

Central to the difference between these two interpretations is the distinction between what Frederick Neuhouser calls “weakly holistic” and “strongly holistic” properties. A weakly holistic property is one that can be ascribed to individuals, but one “that each possesses only when joined together with others...it pertains to the parts of a composite entity only by virtue” of their being parts of a whole.¹⁷ A strongly holistic property is one that can only be ascribed to a whole, and not to its parts. The instrumental view takes Hegelian freedom to be a weakly holistic property; the substantive view sees it as a strongly holistic property. In order to discern where Hegel can be placed with regards to the instrumental/substantive divide, then, we must determine what kind of property Hegel understands freedom to be.

Methodological individualists might be inclined to deny that there are any strongly holistic social properties. Some social properties, however, are clearly strongly holistic. We think of countries, for example, as having location, so that I can correctly attribute the property ‘in Europe’ to the country ‘France’. The truth of this claim does not require that every, or even most individual Frenchmen be in Europe at any given time. It may even be possible for every individual Frenchman to be outside Europe, and yet it still to be true that France itself is in Europe.

In other circumstances, a property may exist in both weakly and strongly holistic forms at once. For example, consider a marriage. One might define a good marriage by the weakly holistic good it does for each of the individuals involved: the joy, pleasure, support, etc. that each spouse receives due to being a part of a marriage. But it would not be unreasonable to

¹⁷ Frederick Neuhouser, *Foundations of Hegel’s Social Theory: Actualizing Freedom* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000) 38-39.

consider it a poor marriage if the spouses were motivated purely by the good it brought them as individuals: the bond between spouses should be deeper than that, and should be valued for its own sake. As an extreme case, one can imagine a marriage of convenience, perhaps arranged for tax or immigration purposes, without any emotional or romantic bond between the spouses. Such a marriage may be good for each of the individuals party to it, but it would not be a good marriage. Moreover, there is an expectation that an individual should be willing to sacrifice some of her own individual interests, not just for the good of the other person, but for the good of the marriage itself—i.e. for the strongly holistic good of the married couple as a group—and in fact it seems entirely possible for *both* spouses to do so, something that is inconceivable on the atomist conception. There is, then, a collective good here which cannot be reduced to the goods of the individual members of the collective.

At the same time, however, it is not as if there is no relationship between the collective good of the marriage and the individual goods of the spouses. It is obvious that a marriage in which one (or both) of the spouses did not receive many or any individual benefits—was miserable, lonely, or abused—would not be a good marriage. The collective good of the group depends on the goods of the individuals even though it cannot be reduced to them. All collectives are made up of individuals, and so any strongly holistic property of a collective must in some way refer to the individual members—must have its existence in and through individuals, as Hegel would say. But as the marriage example shows, this does not mean that every strongly holistic property is reducible to weakly holistic properties. Some strongly holistic properties may be merely dependent on individual weakly holistic properties without being reducible to them.

It is fairly clear that Hegel must think of freedom as being this kind of strongly holistic property: that freedom is a property which properly applies to the state and cannot be reduced

without remainder to the freedom of individuals. It is equally clear, however, as Buchwalter argues, that weakly holistic individual freedom is centrally important to Hegel's political philosophy, and that the *Philosophy of Right* is indeed (in part) an exercise in discovering the "preconditions of individualism." As Frederick Neuhouser argues, Hegel defends the state on the grounds of both weakly and strongly holistic freedom.¹⁸

While Neuhouser is convincing that both these kinds of freedom are operative in Hegel, Hegel himself does not make this distinction, considering both kinds under the single term freedom. What, then, is the relationship between these two (quite different) conceptions of freedom such that Hegel thinks they are really just aspects of the same concept? The obvious answer is that it is a dependence relation, as in the marriage example above: collective freedom is strongly holistic and cannot be reduced to individual freedom, but the existence of collective freedom does depend on the weakly holistic freedom of the individual members of the collective. This dependence is certainly part of the relation, but Hegel makes a bolder claim: he argues that ultimately there is no distinction between collective and individual freedom at all. "The freedom of the self-consciousness," he writes, "is absolutely identical with substantial universality" (Enc. III 552R).

2.4 Hegelian Freedom

What would it mean for there be no distinction between individual and collective freedom? Well, let us consider another property whose status as weakly or strongly holistic is difficult to determine: the property of being democratic. At first glance this property might appear to clearly be a strongly holistic property—an individual cannot be democratic, only groups can. This is true, but many liberal political philosophers have tended to define democracy

¹⁸ Neuhouser 39-41.

by reducing it to a set of weakly holistic individual properties, namely the possession of certain rights. These rights, what Rawls calls the political liberties, include the right to vote, to run for office, to speak and assemble on matters of public interest, and so on. For thinkers like Rawls the possession of political liberties is the definition of democracy; the question of whether a state is democratic can be reduced to the question of whether individual citizens possess political liberties.¹⁹

This attempted reduction of strongly holistic democracy to weakly holistic individual political liberties runs aground, however, as Rawls was well aware. The problem is that we can imagine—in fact, we can observe—societies in which individuals are granted formal political liberties but which nevertheless cannot rightly be called democratic. Elections are held in places like Iran and Russia, and yet these are clearly not truly democratic. And while one could quibble that residents of those countries do not possess the full range of political liberties, it is not difficult to imagine a society where the full range of formal political liberties is available, and yet the possession of these liberties does not translate into meaningful influence on public policy or state decision-making. It would be wrong—it would do violence to what we mean by ‘democratic’—to call such a state democratic.

Rawls acknowledges this problem, which is why he claims that a democracy requires not only that citizens possess political liberties, but that these liberties have what he calls a “fair value.”²⁰ That is, citizens, regardless of their social or economic standing, must be able to exercise roughly equal influence over the decisions of the state in order for the political liberties to be of value. The inclusion of this requirement, however, removes us from the realm of weak holism and returns us to strongly holistic properties. For all that Rawls discusses “fair-valued

¹⁹ John Rawls, *Justice as Fairness: A Restatement* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001), 42-48.

²⁰ Rawls 147-50.

political liberties” as if they are something ascribable to individuals, ultimately what it means for the political liberties to have a fair value is for the state itself to have certain strongly holistic properties: properties that make it open to the influence of ordinary citizens. I will not attempt to determine here what these properties might be; there are many proposals. Perhaps the state must possess a certain structure, involving separation of powers or something of the kind. Perhaps society must possess a certain degree of economic equality (as Rawls thought) or social cohesion. The point is that whatever specific properties are required, they can only be defined in terms of the state (and more broadly, the society) as a whole, and cannot be reduced to weakly holistic properties of individuals.

Let me be clear about the conceptual path I have just outlined. Rawls proposes a definition of the social property ‘democratic’ that is weakly holistic: the possession by all individual citizens of political liberties. But, on further examination, Rawls concludes that in order to be really meaningful—in order to fully capture what we actually mean by ‘democratic’—the political liberties must be supplemented by ‘fair value,’ that is by a guarantee of actual political influence. This shift may seem to be a move from one weakly holistic property to another, from formal political liberties to effective political influence, and it is, but there is more to it than that. The property of possessing political influence is weakly holistic; but it also contains within it unavoidable reference to strongly holistic properties of the state and society. In order to possess political influence one must be part of a state of a certain kind, a kind which can only be defined in a strongly holistic way. Democracy, then, is a property that is both weakly and strongly holistic, at once.

My proposal is that freedom, for Hegel, is similar to democracy in this way. It is both a weakly holistic and a strongly holistic property, not separately, but at the same time. It is

possible to define freedom as a weakly holistic property of individuals, whether in Lockean terms as some set of rights, or in Kantian terms as radical autonomy, or through some combination. But in order to be meaningful, this weakly holistic version of freedom is not enough: in order to be truly free, we must enjoy weakly holistic freedom in the context of a certain kind of social order. This idea ultimately rests on what Taylor elsewhere calls “the social thesis,” the thesis that “the free individual or autonomous individual can only achieve and maintain his identity in a certain type of culture.”²¹ But this is less radical and extensive a thesis than Hegel’s, for Taylor simply claims that certain human capacities (critical reasoning, primarily) can only be practically developed in the context of a certain kind of society, while Hegel claims that pretty much all of what we would consider ‘being human’ is not only not possible but also not even properly conceivable outside of a social context. Human individuals are necessarily social: a human being with goals and interests, who reasons and deliberates and chooses, who is capable of happiness or misery, who is self-aware and self-interpreting, can only exist in a social context, as all of those attributes can only be conceived of in an intersubjective way. Society is the “essence” or “final goal” of human individuals because it is only in a society that they can be fully human individuals. Just as an attempt to meaningfully define democracy in terms of weakly holistic individual properties inevitably led us back to the characteristics of the society in question, so does a meaningful conception of individual freedom intrinsically refer us to the nature of the social order as a whole.

At the same time, in order meaningfully to define the strongly holistic characteristics of a free state, we must include certain attributes which will return us to individual, weakly holistic freedom. Strongly holistic freedom can be understood in terms of

²¹ Charles Taylor, “Atomism,” *Communitarianism and Individualism*, ed. Shlomo Avineri and Avner de-Shalit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992) 31.

being a self-determining whole: an entity which is not dependent or determined by anything outside itself.²² This property is strongly holistic, as it cannot possibly be applied to individuals; as Taylor puts it, “society is the minimum self-sufficient human reality.”²³ However, the state only exists as a self-determining whole in and through individuals: the state has its “existence in the self-consciousness of the individual, in the individual’s knowledge and activity” (PR 257). But for it to be true that the state is the product of the individual’s knowledge and activity, each individual must be able to see herself (correctly) as making an important contribution to the determination and subsistence of the social order, so that this order is (at least in part) a product of the individual will. There must be a role for every individual to play in shaping and maintaining society (although these roles need not be equal in importance or status). Moreover, the individual must see both the social order and her role within it as things that she wills; it cannot be that an individual feels compelled to help sustain an order she sees as alien to her identity, interests, and desires.

One society that Hegel thinks achieved this kind of relationship between individual and society is ancient Greece, and in particular the “beautiful democracy” of ancient Athens (PR 279Z). But this relationship was ultimately based on a natural fit between the Athenian citizen and the Athenian state; the division of society into different roles was taken as natural rather than the willed product of any kind of social decision making. “They regarded nature as a power which proclaimed and expressed...what was good for human beings” (PR 279Z). The Athenian system was thus not truly self-determining, as it was grounded on what the Greeks themselves understood to be the external facts of nature: “self-consciousness had not yet arrived at the abstraction of subjectivity” (Ibid.).

²² See Neuhauser *op. cit.* 48-50.

²³ Taylor *Hegel* 378

In order for the state to truly realize strongly holistic freedom, then, the unity of the state and the individual must not be based on any merely given, natural fit between them. In order to be both truly self-determining and stable over time, the state must also secure the rational allegiance of its citizens. A truly strongly holistically free state must create and sustain conditions that allow individuals to develop and exercise the capacity to reason and deliberate about the system and their place within it, and the system must be such that when they do so they conclude that, in their context and historical situation, it is right and just, a product of their will. In order to achieve this, what Hegel calls “the right of subjectivity” must be respected. People, in so far as it is consistent with the other demands of ethical life, must be allowed free choice of what roles they will play in society, of what profession they pursue, of what person they will marry. They must be allowed and encouraged to observe and (to a limited extent) participate in public deliberations about matters of political concern. They must be able to pursue their material interest, and must see the requirements of the social order as consistent with this pursuit. They must see the state’s interest as in their individual interest, in order for the state’s interest (i.e. freedom) to be fully realized. In other words, while Kantian individual autonomy on its own cannot generate any determinate content, the content that is determined must still be consistent with individual autonomy.

So it turns out that in order fully to define the concept of strongly holistic freedom, we must return to weakly holistic individual freedom, just as in order to define weakly holistic freedom we had to turn to the freedom of the state. We can talk about freedom in strongly holistic terms, as being a fully self-determining social whole, and we can talk about freedom in weakly holistic terms, in terms of the individual’s radical autonomy. But each of these kinds of freedom is really just an abstract and one-sided *moment* of freedom; it captures

only a part of the concept of freedom. Fully and properly understood, freedom is both weakly and strongly holistic, it unites them into a single overarching concept.

3 THE HEGELIAN CRITIQUE OF THE ECONOMIC APPROACH

3.1 Hegel as Instrumental and Substantive

To return to the issue of the grounding of our social obligations, and whether this grounding is to be instrumental or substantive, we can see that Hegel allows us to reframe the issue. We need not choose whether the such obligations are a means for realizing individual (weakly holistic) goods or are the realization of a collective (strongly holistic) good in their own right: they are and must be both. The state cannot be a means for individual freedom unless it also realizes strongly holistic freedom, and it cannot realize strongly holistic freedom without being a means for individual freedom. As Hegel puts it, “the freedom of the self-consciousness that is for itself is identical” with “the Idea of substantial ethical life” (Enc. III 552R).

Hegel has thus transcended the instrumental/substantive distinction. It is true, as Taylor argued, that freedom for Hegel is the immersion in a larger life, a social order which is more truly free than any individual can be. And yet at the same time what that larger life fundamentally is, is the set of practices and institutions which make free individual existence possible. The strongly holistic freedom of the state is brought about not by abandoning the individual human perspective for that of a greater cosmic spirit but by realizing that a truly autonomous human individual is only possible when the individual is involved in a certain kind of social order, and the right kind of social order is only possible with autonomous individuals. The perspective of spirit emerges from the individual perspective when reasoning autonomously; in Hegel’s terms the substantial will (i.e. the will of the free social whole) is the rational will because it is what the individual must will, when engaging in proper autonomous reason (Enc. III 485). Equally, while Buchwalter is right that Hegel in a sense grounds the state in the fact that it establishes the preconditions of individual freedom, it is equally true that he grounds individual

freedom on its being a condition of a stable and successful state. Involvement in the ethical life of the state is substantively valuable for its own sake, but true ethical life is one where individual freedom is fully established and recognized, and only in ethical life can such establishment and recognition take place. Hegel's view is both substantive and instrumental at once.

3.2 Hegelian Freedom in the Market

From this perspective of freedom as both weakly and strongly holistic, we can see why the market would be both appealing and troubling to Hegel. On the one hand, the market as understood by classical political economists like Adam Smith is a mechanism for creating a kind of unity between the individual interests and that of society as a whole. The market is an arena where individuals are free to pursue their particular interests, and yet in this very pursuit they also act in the general interests of all. "In furthering my end" in the market, "I further the universal, and this in turn furthers my end" (PR 184Z).

However, this version of the unity of particular and universal, of individual and society, has significant problems. Most notably, the fact that the process of market competition is ultimately in the interest of all is, in a sense, hidden from participants in the process. It is not obvious that the outcomes of market processes will be in the interests of everyone, as these processes are complex and multivariate. Even more crucially, however, no one involved wills that the outcomes be so generally beneficial. Each market actor acts only out of "subjective selfishness" (PR 199), and it is only a sort of happy accident that this redounds to the good of all. Even in the ideal circumstance where market results are to the good of all, and it is clear to everyone that they are to the good of all, this fact can only be seen by participants as a contingent result, and not as a result of their (or anyone's) will. It could have been otherwise, and one cannot trust that it will not in the future be otherwise. As a consequence, the market cannot

appear to its participants as, and thus cannot be, a harmonious social whole where the interest of every individual is made compatible with the interests of all. From the perspective of a self-interested market actor, the perspective of the economic approach, other people appear only as limits on one's freedom and the pursuit of one's self-interest, competitions in the marketplace will appear as zero-sum conflicts, and market outcomes will appear as the result of capricious and alien market forces, outside anyone's control.

This perspective is not compatible with Hegelian freedom as I have laid it out. Recall that Hegelian freedom requires not only that individuals enjoy, but that they know they enjoy, weakly holistic freedom. But under raw market conditions people cannot see themselves as having individual, weakly holistic freedom, as they will see their freedom bounded by others and their lives ordered by the whims of the market and brute luck. Recall further that Hegelian freedom requires that individuals know they enjoy strongly holistic freedom. But under raw market conditions there also cannot be strongly holistic freedom, as a society riven by market conflicts and market competition cannot be seen as a rationally ordered, self-determining whole. While it is true that in the market the individual "...in providing for himself...is also acting for others," this "unconscious necessity is not enough;" the unity and interdependence with others must become "a knowing and thinking part of ethical life" (PR 255Z).

And there is another problem. A market where all participants acted only on self-interest unbounded by any other norms or commitments could not actually function for long. The fact is that any market relies on people to abide by norms of fair dealing, adhering to contracts, and so on, in order to work. Enforcement bodies like Hegel's administration of justice can deal with occasional lapses or cheating, but they cannot succeed in the face of widespread noncompliance, especially if these bodies are themselves seen as self-interested actors out only

for their own good, which is exactly how the economic approach conceives them. On its own terms, then, the market is not self-sustaining: the perspective it encourages in its participants will lead to its collapse. If we are to successfully achieve the market's own purported goal, then, the market and its self-interested perspective must be embedded within a deeper set of commitments and norms, without which it cannot function.

In other words, Hegel's analysis allows us to see how the economic approach sets itself up to fail. There are two principal justifications for the market based on the economic approach: first, that it best realizes freedom in the limited sense that it allows individuals to pursue their preferences unencumbered; second, that it best realizes each individual's interests, in the sense that it maximizes their chances of realizing their preferences. Viewed purely from the perspective of the economic approach, however, the market cannot actually do either of these things. Even in the purest market, individuals will face constant obstacles to the realization of their preferences, usually in the form of other individuals trying to realize their preferences. An individual who saw herself in the terms of the economic approach could not see herself as free in the economic approach's own sense of freedom, precisely because she holds to the economic approach (a similar criticism could be made of any individual account of freedom; this is why we need strongly holistic freedom in the first place). Partly because of this problem, and partly because, as discussed above, a market where individuals are purely self-interested cannot function, the market cannot succeed at realizing the interests of its participants either. The economic approach is thus internally contradictory: it renders itself incapable of fulfilling its purposes as it itself understands them.

It is clear, then, that while the market is a necessity for Hegelian freedom, a market society—a society where the institutional structure and logic of the market is the central

organizing principle of that society—must be avoided. The limited “particular self-consciousness” must be “raised to its universality” (PR 258). The pursuit of material self-interest must be placed within the context of a set of ethical commitments which both limit it and provide its proper ethical justification; the competition between individuals with apparently conflicting interests must take place against a background of deeper unity which makes possible legitimate competition in the first place—which allows one to distinguish, for example, between striking a hard bargain and cheating, which a purely self-interested perspective cannot. In other words, the market must be embedded in a larger and fundamentally non-market social form which is at once both its limit and its ground.

This role is played in part by the corporations, which provide a way, internal to civil society, for an individual to recognize that “he belongs to a whole...and that he has an interest in, and endeavors to promote, the less selfish end of this whole” (PR 253). The corporation allows individuals to participate in the market without being committed to their pure material self-interest. However, the corporations are not a complete solution, as they are partial and limited. While their ends are less selfish than that of an individual, they are still “limited and finite” (PR 256) and so it is still possible for corporations to pursue their self-interest at the expense of others and thus “decline into a miserable guild system” (PR 255Z). What is needed is an “end which is universal in and for itself,” or in other words, the state, which is the market and the corporations’ “true ground” (PR 256).

This argument is distinct from another, superficially similar argument which is more familiar in modern political discourse. It is often pointed out that the market, unregulated and left to its own devices, is prone to crises, monopolies, extreme inequalities and other problems, and is as Hegel puts it “a spectacle of extravagance and misery” (185). Because these

issues are largely the result of collective action problems inherent in market processes, some sort of externally imposed regulation is necessary in order for market processes to effectively promote the material self-interest of participants.

Hegel certainly endorses this kind of argument. What he calls the “police” are meant precisely to deal with this kind of “permissible arbitrariness of rightful actions” which nevertheless can have damaging effects (232). This is what Lisa Herzog calls Hegel’s “economic” way of taming the market, as opposed to the “sociological” taming which works through the corporations and the state.²⁴ But it is not even really a way of taming the market. This kind of regulation to correct for or prevent market failures is entirely justifiable on the basis of individual material self-interest; adherents of the economic approach can and sometimes do endorse it. While the police might restrict the actions of individual people, it does not restrict the market as such, and in fact strengthens the market by preventing crisis or collapse. The “principle” of the police is still “governed by the particular will,” and it can do nothing about the deeper problems which I discussed above.

Hegel’s resistance to social contract theory becomes clearer in light of this analysis. In social contract theory the state is justified ultimately on the basis of individual self-interest. But if “the interest of individuals as such” is “the ultimate end for which they are united,” then this unity cannot overcome the self-interest of members, and thus cannot solve the problem with markets which it is the state’s purpose to solve (258R). If the state is conceived as fundamentally a protector of individual interests, then “membership of the state is an optional matter;” that is, there is no reason for one to abide by the state’s requirements as soon as those requirements conflict with one’s immediate self-interest.

²⁴ Lisa Herzog, “Two Ways of Taming the Market: Why Hegel Needs the Police and Corporations,” in *Hegel and Capitalism*, ed. Andrew Buchwalter (Albany, New York: SUNY Press, 2015), 147-158.

It should be noted that it is not clear whether this argument against social contract theory really applies to social contract theory as such (though it may apply to some versions). While it is true that social contract theory grounds the state ultimately in individual self-interest, that does not mean that it must conceive of the state as primarily concerned with protecting individual interests. At least some versions of social contract theory, most notably Rousseau's, seem more akin to the instrumental view discussed above. In other words, a social contract theory can provide an instrumental justification for a state that is not itself merely instrumental; social contract theory can defend a state that does more than merely protect individual interests precisely because doing so is the best way to protect those interests. As we have seen, offering such a second-order instrumental justification of the state is in part what Hegel himself is doing.

Even if it is not a necessary part of social contract theory, however, the view Hegel is criticizing here is widely held, and not just by the obvious libertarians like Robert Nozick or members of the so-called "law and economics" movement. Even critics of the market today tend to be trapped in what Herzog calls "economic" criticisms which do not go beyond the perspective of material self-interest. It is one of the chief advantages of Hegel's work on this subject that he is able to take aboard, so to speak, this kind of economic criticism of the market without getting trapped in the perspective of the economic approach, and so retaining the ability to make deeper, ethical criticisms as well.

3.3 Hegel and the Communitarians

A major criticism of the communitarian critique of the economic approach, as advanced by contemporary figures inspired by Hegel, is that, having defended the value of community and social unity in the face of the dissolving force of the market, they find it difficult to distinguish

between admirable and deplorable kinds of community.²⁵ The communitarian logic appears to find any kind of community which restrains the market to be valuable, even if that community is oppressive or unjust in other ways. Thus, some communitarians have defended various inegalitarian or regressive cultural practices on these grounds. Most notoriously, Michael Walzer once suggested that the Indian caste system might be a defensible communitarian practice,²⁶ and Stephen Marglin has defended the exclusion of menstruating women from the workplace as a way of embedding the market in larger social structures.²⁷

I take it as inarguable that such conclusions are unacceptable. Even those communitarians who avoid such unfortunate claims, however, suffer from a similar problem. MacIntyre, for example, argues that the morality we learn is “never morality as such, but always the highly specific morality of a highly specific social order.”²⁸ Michael Sandel makes a similar point, that people are necessarily involved in “constitutive communities,” communities which fundamentally constitute our identities, and which we therefore cannot help but be committed to.²⁹ If this is true, however, then it is hard to see how one could conclude that one’s own society’s fundamental norms were wrong or unjust. And if different societies have conflicting norms, as they often do, we seem to be stuck with cultural relativism: if a caste system seems

²⁵ For criticisms along these lines, see Amy Guttmann, “Communitarian Critics of Liberalism,” in Derek Matravers and Jonathan Pike, eds., *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Alan Patten, “The Republican Critique of Liberalism,” in Colin Farrelly, ed. *Contemporary Political Theory: A Reader* (London: Sage Publications, 2004); Martha Nussbaum, “Human Capabilities, Female Human Beings,” in Martha Nussbaum and Jonathan Glover, ed., *Women, Culture, and Development: A Study of Human Capabilities* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Nancy Fraser, “Between Marketization and Social Protection: Resolving the Feminist Ambivalence” in *Fortunes of Feminism: From State-Managed Capitalism to Neoliberal Crisis* (London: Verso Press, 2013).

²⁶ Michael Walzer *Spheres of Justice: A Defense of Pluralism and Equality* (New York: Basic Books, 1983) 313.

²⁷ Stephen Marglin “Losing Touch: The Cultural Conditions of Worker Accommodation and Resistance,” in Frederique Apffel Marglin and Stephen Marglin, *Dominating Knowledge: Development, Culture, and Resistance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

²⁸ MacIntyre 9.

²⁹ Michael Sandel, “The Procedural Republic and the Unencumbered Self,” in Derek Matravers and Jonathan Pike, eds., *Debates in Contemporary Political Philosophy: An Anthology* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

unacceptable to us, that is only because of the morality of our social system, which provides no ground for the morality of a different social system. But this kind of relativism would seem to undermine the critique of the economic approach which the communitarians want to make.

This dilemma leaves the critic of the economic approach in a difficult position: to maintain that communal bonds are valuable (whether instrumentally or substantively) while also finding a way to distinguish between more or less just or desirable kinds of community, which the value of communal bonds in itself cannot do. What is needed, in other words, is to find a way to introduce typically liberal values of equality and individual rights back into the communitarian ethos, without compromising the communitarian rejection of unbridled markets and the economic approach. We need, in Fraser's words, a framework which "avoids reductive economism...[and] avoids romanticizing society," and which "aims to overcome forms of domination rooted in both."³⁰

I think Hegel is able to provide us with the conceptual resources to accomplish this task. This is not to say that Hegel's own specific vision of society is preferable to those of the contemporary communitarians; quite the contrary. Certainly his support for the complete exclusion of women from all public life is worse than anything Marglin or Walzer have ever endorsed. However, Hegel's distinctive conception of freedom, combining weakly and strongly holistic elements, provides a compelling and particularly well-integrated account of the need for both strong communal ties and individual rights in a free and healthy society, and how the need for each of these is both precondition and consequence of the need for the other. In this way, Hegel gives us the best of both worlds: able to avoid the problems with individualism and the economic approach without falling prey to the problems with communitarianism.

³⁰ Fraser 231.

One might respond that we can solve this problem without resorting to Hegel, by merely endorsing both individual rights and communal ties separately, as two different components of a good society. This does not really solve the problem, however, but merely pushes it up a level. Sometimes individual rights and communal ties will come into conflict: if we support each as separately valuable, how are we to adjudicate between them? A Hegelian approach avoids this difficulty. As we have seen, individual freedom is only really possible in the context of a certain kind of society, one that is collectively free in a strongly holistic sense. But a society that is truly collectively free is one that grounds and realizes individual freedom. We can accept this general principle without committing ourselves to Hegel's specific political views. Of course, it also cannot on its own resolve any particular instance of this kind of conflict, but at least it ensures we are asking the right questions: does this instance of individual action undermine itself by undermining collective freedom? Or does a stable, collectively free social order require that it be allowed?

4 CONCLUSION

I began this paper with a discussion of how the market has overflowed all boundaries and come to dominate every aspect of contemporary social life. The economic approach to human behavior, which sees people as nothing but self-interested utility maximisers, has so thoroughly colonized our common sense that it is very difficult for even those who lament its influence to escape its perspective or provide an alternative. Some critics offer an instrumental critique of the economic approach as self-undermining when not accompanied by deeper unifying norms and commitments. Others offer a substantive critique, that the economic approach dissolves bonds between people which are inherently valuable. And yet these critics have struggled to articulate an understanding of these communal bonds, norms, and commitments which would solve the problems of the economic approach, preserve the individual freedom and prosperity which markets are capable of providing, and avoid leaving room for oppressive or otherwise undesirable communities.

Hegel, and in particular Hegel's conception of freedom, provides an account which accomplishes all of these things. Hegel shows us that a complete and satisfactory account of individual freedom must involve membership in a particular kind of self-determining social order undergirded by a rational social unity. At the same time, a complete and satisfactory account of this self-determining social order must incorporate individual freedom for its members. Whether one begins with the individualist perspective of the instrumental critique, or the communal perspective of the substantive critique, each ultimately is revealed to lead to and require the other. The Hegelian conception of freedom gives us the conceptual resources to resist the onslaught of the economic approach without giving up what is valuable about markets and without having to make an uneasy peace with oppressive kinds of communal ties.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss in detail the specific political and policy consequences of this Hegelian view. However, I will make a few brief remarks on the subject in closing. Hegel understands keenly the central importance of the state in shaping the norms, attitudes, behaviors, and self-conceptions of citizens. In recent decades, especially (but not only) in the United States, the state has been at the forefront of the advance of the economic approach. It has gone to great lengths to create and prop up markets when a non-market approach would be both better in virtually every respect (in health care). It has applied incentives, debt financing, and jobs-focused rhetoric and policies to education, making it nearly impossible to approach education for anything other materially self-interested reasons. It has transformed universal and direct provision of public goods into means-tested market-based vehicles like tax credits and 401(k)s. Whatever justification there may or may not be for any of these things in isolation, together they amount to a systematic destruction of any part of society not organized by market logics, and the forceful application of such logic onto what remains. If we are to reorient our politics around Hegelian freedom, at minimum the state must stop serving as the advance guard of the market in this fashion. The first plank of any Hegelian political platform must be for the state to resume its rightful place as what constrains and controls the market, rather than the other way around.

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