

# A Study of Human Freedom under the Theory of World History

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## Abstract

In the theory of world history, Hegel regarded the development of "rational consciousness" as the history of the formation of world history and the history of human emancipation. Human emancipation is a process of pure pursuit of "free will" at the cost of human self-sacrifice, while man is only a means and an instrument for "reason" to realize itself. For Marx, on the other hand, world history was driven by the elements of productive forces, division of labor, capital, and general interaction among people, and the original history of national regions began to be transformed into world history. The subject of world history is man, and the realization of human liberation is the ultimate goal of world history. However, at the beginning of the world's history, man was not free and was enslaved by capital because he did not possess the means of production. The overthrow of capital and the free and comprehensive development of man can be achieved only through the development of the productive forces and the action of union among the proletarians.

## Keywords

World History; Freedom; Reason.

## 1. Introduction

Marx gradually formed his own theoretical system in the process of renouncing classical German philosophy, especially Hegelian philosophy. In the theory of world history, Hegel and Marx represent two different paths. Whether it is Hegel or Marx, world history is a necessary link in the value of their respective theoretical systems, a necessary condition to realize the ultimate value of their theories. In Hegel's theory of world history, world history is nothing but the progress of "free" consciousness.[1]The purpose of world history is to realize reason itself. Although he "was the first to try to prove that there is a development, an inner connection in history".[2]In the course of world history, human freedom means the freedom of the will. This kind of "man" is bound to the "absolute spirit" and also is the means and instrument by which reason achieves its own ends. Marx differed from this in that Marx saw the subjectivity and agency of man and his reality. Man is not the means by which reason realizes itself, but the very essence of man is man himself.[3]People should pursue their own liberation and self-worth. In the process of world history, man is not a means of self-manifestation of the "absolute spirit", but a subject of history, a creator of history, who should realize the return of the freedom and full development of his personality in the process of history. The history of the formation of world history is the history of the development of a sense of "freedom", and is the process of which the Absolute Spirit and rationality realizes themselves. World history thus presents itself to us as a process of rationalization. Its universal purpose is the realization of the Absolute Spirit, the realization of its own free consciousness. The course of the formation of world history is closely linked to the course of the development of free will, which is divided into four stages according to the degree of man's awareness of freedom and its realization.

## 2. The Instrumental Man under Absolute Reason in World History

The French Revolution destroyed the monarchy and established a republic. The opening of this new world also affected other countries around it, such as Germany, which was forced to become involved in the modern world. So what Hegel is trying to do is to provide a rational theoretical exposition of the current state of affairs. The task of the philosophy of history is to focus on what is unchanging and timeless in the present, to discover the inner necessity behind historical events, to provide a principled grasp of the emerging nation and to provide theoretical support for the emerging world. The task of the philosophy of history is to focus on what is unchanging and timeless in the present, to discover the inner necessity behind historical events, to provide a principled grasp of the emerging nation and to provide theoretical support for the emerging world. It is in Hegel's theory of world history that the philosophy of history counts as history in the true sense of the word. Previous histories, which are simple records of historical events; which are the subjective will of history compilers transposed into history; or which criticize past historical events in the light of the present, do not make sense and do not solve the problems of a new world such as the one we are facing today. What Hegel wanted to do was to discover the inner necessity behind historical events; and he eventually found this inner necessity in the form of "rationality". Rationalize yourself as your own cause, yourself as your own purpose and motivation. Rationality is the master of the world. "Rationality rules the world, and it rules world history too." [1] The history of the formation of world history is the history of the development of a sense of "freedom". It is also the process by which the absolute spirit realizes and reason realizes itself. World history thus presents itself to us as a process of rationalization. Its universal purpose is the realization of the Absolute Spirit, the realization of its own free consciousness.

The history of the world has been shaped by the development of free will. The course of world history is divided into four stages, according to the degree to which man perceives and realizes his freedom. In the East it was the germ of free will, a "child's age", where the "spirit" was submerged in "nature". At this time only the One is free, the others are not yet aware of their spiritual freedom and lack the primary awareness of the ideal of freedom. In ancient Greece and Rome it was the development of free will, divided between the "age of youth" and the "age of manhood". The former emerges of free will, but is not yet abstracted into something separate and distinct from the "real thing". The latter individuality was able to develop and the universal principle of independence began to be stripped away. In the Germanic world it is ultimately the realization of free will, where the "whole" is free and where the will based on universal principles realizes itself. Although "man as man is free in his own right". [4] This "freedom" is the freedom of consciousness, the freedom of the "spirit". It comes at the cost of personal sacrifice of passion, profit, etc. But throughout the course of history, man has existed as an instrument of "spiritual" realization, as a means, a tool, of free consciousness to realize itself. The driving force behind the formation of world history is rational, but "rationality is cunning, it always stays back, in the background, unmolested and unviolated". [1] Rationality hides behind it, indirectly realising itself through the needs, passions, interests and other purposes of the "personal" instrument. Even when violated, it is the individual who suffers the loss but not the rationality. Thus "they unwittingly become the instruments and organs of that world-spiritual enterprise which is carried on within them". [5] The subjective will of the individual to pursue such ends also becomes the driving force behind the historical form of the world. In the course of history, these individuals have come to be known as the "agents of the world spirit". Their own individual state is of no concern. Their existence will eventually fade away. They sacrifice everything in the service of the "spirit of the world". "And when their purpose is accomplished, they wither and fall away, like empty shells stripped of their fruit." [1] The value and meaning of their personal existence, as in the case of Alexander, Caesar and Napoleon, was

the realisation of the spirit of the world, of the unity of the universal and individual will. The person who achieves this unity is the free person. The scope of this unified activity can only be "national". For the State is the entity through which free will is realised, and without it, man loses the vehicle for the realisation of his freedom. In the state, "freedom" is recognised and takes on an objective form. This objective form is the law. The law is the "true will of the spirit", and also is the objective form of the general will. When the individual will of man is subordinated to the general will of the State as law, the two are united and their own freedom is achieved. But the realisation of free will does not happen overnight. Because the process of achieving unity is a long one, there are possible conflicts within the nation-state and thus many reconciliations have to be experienced. The Germanic world as the final stage differed from the Greek and Roman developments that preceded it in that it developed from the outside in, under the influence of external cultural, religious and political influences. The state was founded under the influence of religion and is therefore more or less influenced by religious ideas. But the original concept of religion was gradually distorted by the influence of man's desire to satisfy his own subjective ends through religion, and there was a conflict with the universal will. It is therefore necessary to reconcile the Reformation and the Constitution, to raise the "subjective spirit of freedom" to a "universal form", to transform the illusion of religion into a trust in one's own actions, and to recognise that one's own selfish desires can be achieved through one's own actions. This reconciles the contradiction between the "selfishness" of reality, the "concept" and the absolute spirit, and achieves the unity of the individual will and the universal concept.

### 3. The Free Man under the Material Foundation in World History

In Marx's theory of world history, world history has not always existed in the past. History as world history is the result. [6] World history is a product of a certain stage of development. Driven by advances in productivity, the refinement of the division of labour, the opening up of capital and general interaction between people, history began to change from ethno-regional to world history. World history is only possible through the establishment of new relations of production and interaction between peoples and nations, thus eliminating the old division of labour, the national divide and the state apparatus. Marx clearly states that what individuals are like depends on the material conditions under which they produce. [3] This means that the state of man in world history depends on the material conditions of the stage of world history, on the actual state of the division of labour and productivity.

In the course of history as a whole, the degree of division of labour at each stage relates to the interrelationship of individuals in terms of the materials, tools and products of their labour. There are different forms of ownership at different stages of the division of labour, and the human condition is different under different forms of ownership. Among the forms of ownership that have emerged in Asia, ancient ownership and Germanic ownership, the interaction between peoples has not yet been truly coherent due to objective conditions such as the slow development of productive forces and the inconvenience of transportation, and is still dominated by the history of ethnic regions. The human being exists in a narrow sphere, primarily a relationship of human dependence on the human being. The general state of affairs between peoples only began to change with the general development of productive forces, the further deepening of the division of labour and the opening up of overseas territories by capital. It is also in this sense that the bourgeoisie's aim of maximising the multiplication of capital became a potential driving force in the formation of world history. This underlying dynamic "made world history for the first time [3] and "resulted in universal interactions based on the interdependence of all humanity." [2] The local and national self-sufficiency and seclusion of the past has been replaced by inter-ethnic interaction and interdependence in all respects. History

then becomes increasingly world history. To a certain extent, world history began in the age of capitalism. Individuals, as their own activities expand into historical activities for the world, are increasingly subject to the domination of forces that are alien to them, to forces that are increasingly expanding and manifest in the final analysis as a world market.]Under capitalist rule, capitalists possess all the means of production and indulge in the pleasures of proliferation that capital brings. The masses, who do not own the means of production, can only depend on the owners of the means of production and sell their labour in exchange for the necessities of life they need. This universal exchange, their interconnectedness, manifests itself as something alien and independent of the person for themselves. So the universal social state of man is therefore the independence of man based on the dependence of things. The capitalist's desire to increase their capital has led to the development of overseas markets and the search for places to supply raw materials and dump their products. The proletarians were also forced to become involved in the world market. "As their own activity expands into world As their own activity expands into world-historical activity, they are increasingly subject to the domination of forces which are alien to them, to forces which are increasingly expanding and which in the final analysis manifest themselves in the world market".[3]On the other hand the means of production are the basis of human production and the physical survival of the proletariat. However, under capitalist ownership, the proletarians do not own any of the means of production, but are forced to sell their labour and become dependent on the capitalists who own the means of production to do a particular job in order to support themselves.

For the proletarians, this particular division of labour is not by choice, but results naturally from the unequal possession of the means of production. Thus the activity of man himself becomes for man an alien and antagonistic force to him, a force that oppresses the proletarian rather than the proletarian harnessing that force. In the process of labour, the proletarian transforms his potential labour into real labour by acting on the object of his labour. But in this process he does not labour freely and consciously; the product he puts into all production, as an alien being, becomes for him an external thing. The relationship between the worker and the product of labour also becomes a heterogeneous objectified relationship. The more the worker produces, the more he himself loses the object. Whatever becomes the product of his labour ceases to be his own. The more products there are, the less he has of his own. This realisation of labour manifests itself in the de-realisation of the worker. The worker ceases to be a human being and becomes a mere corporeal subject. Thus in the conditions of capitalist production, labour also becomes increasingly a dissident force for workers. Increasingly, people are not free to dispose of their own labour, but are increasingly subject to the rule of capital. In a capitalist society all human relations are covered by the rule of "capital". "Their own social movement has the form of a movement of things, not that they control this movement, but that they are controlled by it." [7] The situation of human dependence in the pre-capitalist era thus became one of human dependence on things. This kind of object is a dissident force for man. The relationship between people and their interactions has thus become a relationship based on things. In order to survive, the proletarians are tied to the machine, lose their leisure and are restricted not only in their physical but also in their spiritual development. The bourgeoisie relied on "class power" to overthrow feudal rule and establish the capitalist state, but then "the materialization established through commodity production abolished any kind of individuality" [3], diluting the concept of class and blurring class consciousness. At this stage in history, the proletarians were in a state of physical and mental unfreedom. But in terms of the general historical process, this state of historical stages, full of contradictions, will inevitably lead it to the next stage, when "instead of the old bourgeois society with its classes and class antagonisms, there will be a union where the free development of each individual is the condition for the free development of all." [8] In the association, anyone can have enough free time and "free personality" can be expressed. Thus "it is possible to do this today and that tomorrow according to my own

interests, to hunt in the morning, to fish in the afternoon, to engage in animal husbandry in the evening and to criticise after dinner, so that I am not always a hunter, a fisherman, a shepherd or a critic." [3] Labour is no longer a means to earn a living, but has become a first necessity and a means to realise one's own values.

#### 4. The Path to the Ideal State

By constructing a theory of world history, Marx explored future trends in the context of the historical process in general. The future, the "third stage", is one of "freedom", freedom of individuality, freedom in all its dimensions. It is a multifaceted freedom of individuality based on material and spirituality, including not only the dependence on "material" capital in the capitalist state, but also freedom of thought and consciousness. This freedom is a state of being that is free from personal attachment and from the dependence of man on "things". The general course of history has been progressive, as has been the case with the formation of world history. Nature is not the subject of history; man is the subject of history, and the subject of world history, and man is limited by the objective conditions of history, but drives the evolution of the historical process. It is therefore important to recover man's subjectivity in the history of the world and to achieve his self-emancipation. "The emancipation of man is not only the measure by which history becomes world history, but the very core of its evolution into world history is the emancipation of man." [8] The self-emancipation of man was achieved together with the complete transformation of history into world history, a long historical process in which many factors came together. The degree of emancipation of each individual human being is consistent with the degree of complete transformation of history into world history. The degree of man's self-emancipation corresponds to the degree of realisation of world history. The path to the ideal state of free and comprehensive development of each individual is thus consistent with the complete transformation of history into world history.

In the course of world history itself, driven by the progress of productive forces, the refinement of the division of labour, the development of capital and the general interaction between people, history began to change from a history of national regions to a history of the world. The ultimate emancipation of the human being and the free and comprehensive development of each individual therefore requires the universal development of the productive forces as a prerequisite. It is only with this general development of productivity that universal interaction between people can be established. Universal interaction between people facilitates the formation of world history and the transformation of the 'territorial individual' into the 'world-historical, empirically universal individual'. Instead, it is necessary to follow the process of historical development, develop the productive forces, achieve a high level of development of the productive forces, and use the highly developed productive forces to drive the liberation of human relations in the production process and achieve universal interaction between human beings. On the other hand, the degree of emancipation of each individual human being is consistent with the degree to which history is completely transformed into world history. World history is thus shaped in relation to the degree of emancipation of the individual. The emancipation of the single individual is the emancipation of human relations, the emancipation of politics. Thus "Proletarians of the world. Unite! [3] " In the course of world history, the successive emergence of the First and Second Internationals is evidence of joint action. With joint action, mutual help of the national proletariat also became possible. In bourgeois society only a part of the population is "free", but this "freedom" is still bound by "capital". The emancipation of every human being requires the elimination of capital, the use of capital's own contradictory character, and ultimately the "use of capital itself to eliminate capital", freeing man from his dependence on capital. Marx and Engels clearly pointed out that the united proletarians "must first of all achieve political domination, rise to the rank of a nation, organize

themselves as a nation[2]". Through "united action, or at least the united action of the civilised nations,"[2] they carry out the proletarian revolution, using the power of the class struggle to break through the conditions of the nation-state as capitalism, to destroy the existing capitalist nation-state and build a true community."It is only in the community that the individual is given the means to develop his or her talents fully, that is to say, it is only in the community that there can be individual freedom ."[3]

Thus, one can see the similarities but not the similarities between Hegel's and Marx's theories of world history with regard to the question of human freedom. Hegel saw the history of the development of "rational consciousness" as the history of the world, as the history of the "emancipation of man". Human emancipation is a pure pursuit of 'freedom'.Hegel's ultimate solution was the Reformation, a process of continuous improvement of the content and form of the law within the state to achieve the unity of objective 'ideas' and subjective will, indirectly contributing to the realisation of human freedom. This freedom is a freedom of the will and comes at the expense of the individual himself. For Hegel, the state is the entity through which free will is achieved, and without it, man cannot achieve freedom. Humans are "free by nature". This is a primitive 'natural state' and does not look at the actual social state in which man is always under a 'constrained and free arrangement'. Thus, when it comes to groups of people, the original "natural state" loses its basis in reality and it is difficult to stand, and this "freedom" does not exist. It is only in the state as an entity that the universal will and the individual will can be united, that the contingent individual will and the necessary "idea" can be united, and that man can realise his freedom.Rather than seeing consciousness as the decisive link in the development of history, Marx saw the journey of the transformation of the regional history of peoples into world history as a process of human emancipation. The degree of human emancipation and the degree of transformation of history into world history thus coincide. It is only with the transformation of 'ethno-regional history' into 'world history' that the free emancipation of man is possible and his freedom is realised. This historical transformation will be accompanied by a change from the stage of man's dependence on things to the stage of the full development of his free personality. And the state, as an instrument of class rule to defend its own interests, will die out with it in the course of history.In order to achieve their own emancipation and to maximise their own power, the proletarians can only break through the various restrictions of the capitalist nation-state through united action - the proletarian revolution - to eradicate private ownership, eliminate exploitation, eliminate the state as an instrument of domination and ultimately achieve their own comprehensive development.Capital finally disappears, classes finally die out, history becomes truly world history and everyone is free.

## References

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