The Subjective Component of Social Freedom

Having seen how Rousseau's understanding of political freedom incorporates two main elements—a subjective and an objective component—we are now in a position to begin to articulate Hegel's own conception of social freedom, which, as I have already suggested, possesses a two-part structure similar to Rousseau's. Our return to Hegel's social theory will be facilitated by recalling his claim, introduced at the end of chapter 1, that Sittlichkeit is "the unity of objective freedom . . . and subjective freedom" (§258A), where the former refers to the laws and institutions of the rational social order (§144, E §538) and the latter denotes a certain frame of mind, or disposition (Gestimmung), of social members that is "befitting of freedom" (VPR1, 248).

The basic idea underlying Hegel's bipartite account of social freedom can be given a preliminary formulation by bringing together two thoughts, versions of which we have already encountered in my discussion of Rousseau's conception of political freedom: First, in calling the laws and institutions of Sittlichkeit "objective freedom," Hegel means to claim that there is a sense in which rational laws and institutions objectively embody freedom—that is, they realize a kind of freedom independently of whatever subjective relation (such as affirmation, rejection, or indifference) social members might have to their laws and institutions. On the basis of such a conception, freedom can be said to be realized (to at least a limited sense) simply by virtue of the fact that rational (that is, freedom-procuring) laws and institutions are in place and are sustained over time by their members' participation. As I have suggested previously, one part of Hegel's doctrine of objective freedom derives from a premise he inherits from Rousseau concerning the socially conditioned nature of individuals' freedom. According to this premise, individuals can realize themselves as free only if a variety of social conditions first obtain that make that freedom possible. Thus, one of the important ideas behind Hegel's identification of the laws and institutions of Sittlichkeit with objective freedom is the claim that such laws and institutions bring about and maintain the social conditions necessary for individuals to realize themselves—to acquire a real existence within the world—as bearers of self-determined wills. Matters are complicated, however, by the fact that this account of objective freedom omits a crucial feature of Hegel's doctrine that distinguishes it from his predecessor's: for Hegel rational laws and institutions embody objective freedom not only in the Rousseauian sense that they secure the necessary preconditions of the freedom of individual social members, but also in the sense that together they constitute a social order that, as a whole, approximates the essential properties of a fully self-determining being. (Further discussion of this distinctively Hegelian feature of objective freedom will be postponed until chapter 4.)

The second thought behind Hegel's conception of social freedom is expressed in the demand that objective freedom acquire "an existence in self-consciousness befitting of freedom." The idea here is that members of Sittlichkeit whose behavior conformed to the requirements of rational laws and institutions, but who lacked the appropriate subjective relation to those laws and institutions, would fall short of the ideal of freedom in an important respect. This claim follows from a point about the subjective conditions of self-determined action: individuals who inhabit a rational social world are required (by the sanctioning power of laws and social norms) to determine their actions in accord with the dictates of freedom-procuring laws and institutions, and, insofar as they do so, they enjoy objective freedom in the sense explicated earlier. But the mere fact that individuals conform to the requirements of rational laws and institutions is not sufficient to ensure that their activity is subjectively free—that is, free in the sense in which someone's actions can be said to come from his own will, or to be freely willed (as opposed to involuntary, coerced, or, as Hegel would say, determined by an external other). As just described, the lack of subjective freedom is a situation in which the activity of individuals is subject to principles (embodied in laws and institutions) that remain external to their own wills. Since the social participation of such individuals is determined not by their own wills but by something external to them, their actions in the social world are not,
subjectively speaking, their own. If social members are fully to realize the ideal of self-determination, then, it is not enough that they merely live in accord with principles that make them free from an objective point of view; they must also have a conscious voluntative relation to those principles that makes their social activity subjectively self-determined—that is, they must in some fashion know and will those principles as their own.

If social freedom is the unity of these objective and subjective elements, then individuals can be said to enjoy social freedom when three conditions are met: first, their laws and institutions effectively secure the real social conditions of their own freedom; second, their institutions constitute a "self-determining" social whole; and, third, they have a conscious, voluntative relation to rational laws and institutions that makes their social participation into (subjectively) free activity. If we add to these considerations Hegel's claim (discussed later in the second part of 3) that a will's self-determination is not complete until it successfully translates its ends into reality, we arrive at the following abstract account of what it is for individuals to enjoy social freedom: the socially free individual freely and effectively wills the laws and social institutions that are the real conditions of his or her own freedom and that, taken together, constitute a self-determining social whole. In more Hegelian language, a socially free individual is said to possess a will that "has itself as freedom" as its content, object, and end (§21) and therefore to be an embodiment of the "free will that wills the free will" (§27), or of what Hegel calls the "absolutely free will" (der an und für sich freie Will) (§22A). In the next three chapters I shall attempt to make sense of Hegel's idea that the distinctive freedom realized in the rational social order is to be understood as a unity of objective and subjective freedom. This will require a detailed examination of both components of social freedom with a view to articulating what each of them is and in what sense each can be thought of as a species of freedom. In this chapter I consider the kind of self-consciousness that belongs to socially free individuals, and in the following two I investigate what it means for laws and social institutions to embody objective freedom.

Social Members' Subjective Disposition

According to Hegel, individuals who enjoy social freedom stand in a subjective relation to their social institutions that is "befitting of free..."
Hegel's emphasis on the concept of trust and his insistence that such trust is possible only if individuals see themselves as undifferentiated from their social world appear either to be flatly at odds with the claim that individuals achieve their freedom in Sittlichkeit or else to imply that Hegel holds to that thesis only by doing violence to our common notions of what it means to be free. For if the rational social order requires an identical unity of social members and their institutions, it seems that individuals can achieve social freedom only at the expense of their ability to distance themselves reflectively from social norms and hence only by surrendering their capacity for individual self-determination. In what follows I shall try to dispel the force of these initial impressions by undertaking a detailed analysis of what Hegel takes the subjective disposition of socially free individuals to consist in and how he understands that disposition to be essential to their existence as free, or self-determined, individuals. The first and most important part of this task will be to investigate what it means, on Hegel's view, for individuals to regard themselves as being identically unified with their social institutions.

In the third section of "Sittlichkeit" Hegel spells out the content of the subjective disposition appropriate to free social membership in terms of three distinct elements: socially free individuals are said to be conscious of their identical unity with their social institutions insofar as they regard those institutions as (1) their purpose, or end (Zweck), (2) their essence (Wesen), and (3) the product of their own activity (S257). The first of these elements can be thought of as a kind of voluntative unity, a oneness of wills, that obtains between individuals and their institutions. As we shall see, socially free individuals have wills that are identically unified with their institutions in two senses: they regularly and willingly take the collective ends of social institutions as their own, and they do so not in the sense that they regard their participation in such institutions as merely instrumental to achieving some external good but in the more substantive sense that they take that participation to be valuable for its own sake. The second element, identical unity with respect to "essence," refers to a relation of unity between social members and their institutions at the level of individuals' self-conceptions or, as I shall refer to them later, their practical identities. That is, the practical identities of social members—their understanding of who they are as particular individuals—are (in a sense to be explicated) constituted by and expressed through their social membership. According to the third, socially free individuals regard themselves as identically unified with their social institutions in the sense that they are aware of themselves as the producers (more accurately, the re-producers) of their institutions: they see those institutions as sustained by and therefore dependent on their own collective activity.

Before examining each element of the subjective disposition of free social members, it is important to say a word about the role this account plays in Hegel's theory. The point of the doctrine of subjective freedom is not to claim that individuals ought to adopt a certain attitude toward their institutions regardless of what those institutions are like. The point, rather, is to articulate the kind of conscious relation individuals would have to their social order if the full panoply of freedoms available to the modern world were to be fully realized. In other words, the doctrine of subjective freedom is an account of the disposition social members have when the social order is functioning as it should (and can, in the modern world). Rather than functioning as a set of demands made primarily on individuals, Hegel's account of the subjective disposition of Sittlichkeit yields a set of standards that rational social institutions must measure up to. For, as we shall see in succeeding chapters, one of the questions the doctrine of objective freedom has to answer is, How must institutions be constituted so their members are able to adopt the attitude to them that Hegel regards as constitutive of subjective freedom? In other words, What must be true of the social order if individuals are to regard themselves as identically unified with it?

UNITY OF WILL. The voluntative unity of individuals with their social institutions consists in two distinct, though closely related, phenomena. The first of these Hegel refers to as "the identical unity of the particular will and the universal [or general] will" (VPR2, 124). The identical unity at issue here is, most fundamentally, a harmony in content between the particular wills of individual social members and what Hegel, following Rousseau, calls the "general [or universal] will" of the social institution in question. This kind of voluntative unity obtains when individuals need only pursue their own particular ends in order for the good of the social whole (the ends of the universal will) to be achieved. Hegel's point here has its origins in Adam Smith's understanding of the harmony that exists between individual and collective inter-
ests in a free market economy. Hegel explicitly incorporates Smith's insight into his own account of how particular and universal wills relate to each other within the market-governed relations of civil society: "In furthering my end I further the universal, and this in turn furthers my ends" (§184Z). It is not difficult to see why Hegel was impressed by the kind of relation between individual and collective interests that underlies Smith's account of the market. Such an arrangement (one in which there is a unity of particular and universal wills) makes it possible for the collective good of a social whole to be achieved through the free (uncoerced) activity of its individual members. Since individuals realize the universal will by pursuing their own particular ends, they achieve the ends of the whole by following only their own wills and, hence, freely. Moreover, since the achievement of individuals' particular ends also depends on the flourishing of the whole, the relations between individuals and the collective good within the market economy approximate Hegel's ideal, discussed in chapter 1, of an "interpenetrating unity" of universality and particularity.

Although the harmony of interests that characterizes the market-governed relations of civil society counts as an "identical unity of particular and universal wills" in the broadest sense in which Hegel uses the phrase, there is an important respect in which it falls short of the more thoroughgoing unity of particular and universal wills that figures most prominently in his theory of Sittlichkeit. This point is expressed in Hegel's characterization of civil society as merely a "relative totality" (§184) in which universal and particular wills, although identically unified (in content), remain external to one another. What Hegel has in mind is the fact that in civil society particular wills typically realize the good of the whole only, so to speak, behind the backs of individual members. The particular wills of individuals are in harmony with the universal will independently of any conscious relation, cognitive or voluntative, that individuals might have to the good of the social whole. The situation is different, however, in the two institutions Hegel takes as the paradigmatic instances of ethical social wholes, the family and the state (§142N). The family member differs from the member of civil society in that the former possesses a will that is universal not only objectively but subjectively as well. This means that the family member (when subjectively constituted as such) stands in a conscious relation to the family in its entirety, a relation that involves both a conception of what is good for the family as a whole and an ability to be moved practically by considerations relating to that good, even when doing so conflicts with the particular interests one has as a separate individual.

This way of characterizing the will of a family member raises an important question concerning Hegel's use of the term 'particularity': If the family member wills in accord with its understanding of what is good for the whole, then in what sense is that will also, at the same time, a particular will? In order to get clear on Hegel's concept of particularity, it will be helpful to recall first how Rousseau uses the term 'particular' (or 'private') when characterizing the wills and interests of social members. A particular will, as Rousseau defines it, "tends only toward [one's] particular [or private] advantage" (SC, III.2.v). Particular interests for Rousseau, then, are the interests one has when regarded as a wholly separate individual, unattached to others through sentiment or obligation. On this definition, a particular will is the same thing as a purely self-interested, or egoistic, will. It is important to note that nothing in Rousseau's concept of a particular will implies that the particular will of one individual must differ in content from the particular wills of others. It is perfectly conceivable, for example, that two particular wills might desire the very same piece of food or, more important, that they might seek identical types of self-interested ends, such as freedom and security. In fact, the intelligibility of Rousseau's political project—the very possibility of a social contract, as he conceives it—rests on the assumption that there exist certain particular interests that are both shared by all individuals and most effectively pursued through social cooperation. If there were no such "universal" particular interests—particular interests common to all human beings—there would be no basis for the agreement of unassociated individuals to join forces within society and submit to the dictates of a general will.8

Since Hegel considers the will of a family member to be a particular will (or, more precisely, a will that is at once particular and universal), and since such a will is clearly not purely egoistic, 'particular' must signify something different for Hegel than it does for Rousseau. But if particular interests, for Hegel, are not the interests one has as a separate, unattached individual, what kinds of interests are they? Two points are essential to understanding Hegel's concept of a particular will. First, particularity for Hegel is always associated with the twin ideas of qualitative determinacy and difference from others. To be a particular being in this
sense is to have at least one determinate quality (or "determinate") that is not common to all other beings of the same species and that therefore distinguishes its bearer from (at least some) other members of that species. To call a human will particular, then, is to say that it possesses a determinate content (an end or set of ends) that is not shared by all human wills and that therefore marks it as qualitatively distinct from (at least some) other human wills. This is also to say that the ends of a particular will derive not from some universal feature of human being as such but from the determinate, and therefore distinctive (though not necessarily unique), position that the bearer of that will occupies in the world. The particular ends I embrace as a family member—to care for the particular members of my family in ways appropriate to my particular place within it—distinguish my will not only from the wills of other members of my own family (my end is to care for this family) but also from the wills of the other members of my own family (since I care for this family in accord with my place within it). Given this conception of particularity, it is no longer puzzling how a will could be both particular (having a determinate content that distinguishes it from other wills) and nonegoistic. Moreover, as the example of the family member makes clear, there is nothing in this concept of particularity that precludes a particular will from also being "universal" in one prominent sense of the term (consciously directed at the good of a certain social whole).

The second defining feature of a particular will, the one more important to our purposes here, is that particular wills are attached to the ends through inclination rather than abstract reason (reason that tells us what we ought to do independently of, and possibly in opposition to, what we are inclined to do). This means that individuals have a motivation for acting on their particular ends independently of any reflection on those ends from the standpoint of a purely rational being who abstracts from its particular characteristics, including its particular relations to others. To say that the wills of family members are both particular and universal, then, is to say that family members are subjectively constituted such that they are typically inclined to act in ways that better their family's good as they understand it and that such action for the sake of the whole (or for other members of the group) is experienced by them not as indifferent or contrary to their own good but as intrinsic to it. This kind of unity of particular and universal wills—a feature that distinguishes family members and citizens from members of civil soc-

...could also be described by saying that individual social members consciously embrace the ends of their social institutions as their own.

Thus, as Hegel applies the term to wills and interests, 'particular' does not imply 'egoistic'. At the same time, nothing in the definition of 'particular' excludes the possibility of a particular interest being purely egoistic. A desire to spend the afternoon lying in the sun, for example, is consistent with both of Hegel's criteria for particularity: it distinguishes my will from that of my fellow humans, and I am motivated to seek it not from a disinterested rather than universal reason. In other words, within the particular interests as Hegel defines them, it is necessary to distinguish those that are also particular in Rousseau's sense (purely egoistic, like those that are also "infused with universality" (directed at a nonegoistic end, such as the family's good). When discussing Hegel's theory, I shall reserve the term 'private' to describe interests of the first kind in order to avoid confusing them with those of the second. It is, of course, the latter sort of particular interests that figures crucially in Hegel's account of the subjective disposition of Sittlichkeit, and of how social members can work for the collective good without sacrificing their (subjective) freedom.

The volitional unity of individuals and their social institutions includes a second component that is closely related to, yet conceptually distinct from, the point just discussed: social members who are voluntarily identical with their social institutions regard "the universal interest" of those institutions as "their final end" (Endzweck) (§260). That is, individuals view their membership and participation in the institutions of Sittlichkeit as having an intrinsic value beyond the merely instrumental value they have as means for the attainment of their private ends. Moreover, the collective, or universal, interests served by their social participation are said to be not only final ends but also their "highest," "absolute" ends (§258, E §514). Thus, their activity for those interests not only has for them an intrinsic value; it is also their most highly valued activity. These features of the subjective disposition of social members are most visible in Hegel's description of the family and state, where family members and citizens are said to view both their own activity and their ties to others within those institutions as final ends (VPR1, 252; §260). It is not surprising that the institutions in which individual members consciously embrace the good of the whole as their own (namely, the family and the state) are also institutions in which members see their
participation as having an intrinsic and overriding value. But, according to Hegel, even in civil society, where a conscious concern for the good of the whole is not required, individuals regard their social activity as an important and intrinsic good. Individuals' participation in the economic sphere—which consists, most fundamentally, in their socially productive labor—is clearly of instrumental value to them, insofar as it is a means to the satisfaction of their naturally based needs. Yet it is crucial to Hegel's understanding of civil society as a realm in which social freedom is realized that membership therein has more than a purely instrumental significance for its members. As we shall see in more detail later, socially free individuals are able to experience their activity in civil society (and in the other two spheres as well) as intrinsically valuable and of supreme importance because it is through their socially recognized productive labor that they constitute themselves as beings of standing, both "in their own eyes and in the eyes of others" (§207).

Finally, Hegel's thesis that rational social institutions are characterized by an identical unity of universal and particular wills should not be understood as asserting the implausibly strong claim that members of such institutions maximize their private good—their good as wholly separate individuals—if and only if they carry out their social roles. On the contrary, in performing their roles within the institutions of Sittlichkeit social members are regularly called upon to forgo the pursuit of some of their private ends. Hegel's point, rather, is that members of a rational social world—one in which social freedom is realized—are subjectively constituted so as to be willing to subordinate their private interests to universal ends and to be able to do so not out of selflessness but because they regard their activity on behalf of those universal ends as intrinsic to their own (particular) good. But embracing the good of the whole as their own is a possibility for social members only insofar as they conceive of themselves as something more than discrete, unattached beings whose interests are wholly private. In other words, the voluntative unity at issue here is predicated on individuals having conceptions of themselves as beings for whom membership in the family, civil society, and the state is intrinsic to who they are. This thought leads us directly to the second element of the subjective disposition appropriate to social freedom, the unity between social members and their institutions with respect to their "essence." It is this feature of Hegel's view that enables us to understand how forsaking egoistic ends in favor of the good of the whole can be regarded not as a sacrifice of self but as its very opposite, namely, activity through which social members achieve their selfhood by establishing for themselves identities as determinate (and therefore particular) individuals.

A Unity of Essence. Although the preceding account of the voluntative unity of social members and their institutions articulates the content of Hegel's claim that socially free individuals regard their institutions as their own end, it leaves unanswered the important question of how such a voluntative unity is possible. What is it that allows individuals to embrace the interests of their families and their state as their own? Why do they regard their participation in these institutions, and in civil society, as valuable for its own sake? The answers to these questions are to be found in the second, more fundamental, part of Hegel's account of the subjective disposition of socially free individuals: the voluntative unity of individuals and their social institutions follows from and is made possible by their consciousness of those institutions as identical (or "one") with "their own essence" (E §514).

Four preliminary points about this unity of essence will help bring into focus the phenomenon Hegel has in mind. First, the kind of unity at issue here differs from the voluntative unity discussed earlier in that it concerns not individuals' wills but their "essences," or what I shall call (in the risk of compounding the confusion already caused by Hegel's equivocal talk of identity) their practical identities. So, with respect to their practical identities (a concept that will be explicated straightaway), free social members are said to be one with their institutions. It is important to note that this way of formulating Hegel's position points to what is surely the most difficult interpretive problem associated with the doctrine of the subjective disposition of Sittlichkeit: given the wide variety of meanings 'identity' can have, precisely what sense of the term is at issue here? Clarifying this aspect of Hegel's view will take up a major part of the present chapter, but doing so is necessary if we are to avoid some of the common mistaken (and unattractive) readings of his claim that socially free individuals are, with respect to their essence, "identical with" their social institutions.

The second point helps to clarify the concept of a practical identity by specifying the aspect of social institutions from which individuals' practical identities derive. What social members regard as their own essence
is not, in the first instance, social institutions themselves but the particular roles they occupy within them: members of Sittlichkeit have identities as mothers or fathers, as farmers or teachers, as citizens of this or that land. The third point follows directly from the second: the kind of practical identity at issue here is not a generic or "abstract" universal essence—some essential property we all share as, say, rational beings, or members of the human race—but rather a particular identity that makes social members the particular individuals they are and distinguishes them qualitatively from one another. My positions within the institutions of Sittlichkeit make up my "essence" (or core) as an individual in the sense that my particular roles as mother (of these children), teacher (of this subject), and citizen (of this nation) are fundamental constituents of my identity—constituents that are central to my being the particular individual I take myself to be. It is important to bear in mind, especially in light of widespread misunderstanding of Hegel on this point, that Hegel's emphasis here on the particular identities of social members does not imply that he denies the need for individuals to have identities as abstract, universal beings as well. Both persons and moral subjects, as Hegel defines them, are universal in precisely this sense. The point, rather, is that what is at the core of the kind of self-determination specific to Sittlichkeit are the ways in which individuals, through their social participation, win identities as particular beings. Later I shall expand upon and qualify the claim that the practical identities involved in the subjective dispositions of social members are particular rather than universal. For now, however, it is sufficient to construe Hegel's assertion that socially free individuals regard their families, civil society and the state as their own essence, and hence as undifferentiated from themselves, as expressing the claim that the roles they occupy within these institutions are (in a sense still to be explicated) constitutive of their practical (particular) identities.

The fourth point comes into view by considering Hegel's various formulations of his claim about the practical identities of social members. Individuals are said to "win their substantial self-consciousness" in the institutions of Sittlichkeit (§162), to "arrive at an intuition [Anschauung] of themselves" within their "common social life" (VPR2, 125), and to find their "consciousness and sense of self [Selbstgefühl]" as members of social wholes (§261A). These statements clearly indicate that the practical identities attained within Sittlichkeit are self-conscious identities, identities that necessarily include a self-conception, a conscious understanding of who, fundamentally, one is (as a particular individual). This is not to say, however, that these identities are merely self-conceptions. For through their social membership individuals not only come to conceive of themselves as husbands and plumbers and citizens; they also objectively realize their identities as such, which is to say that their conceptions of who they are are confirmed by their social world and thereby take on an objective—a socially recognized—existence. As is appropriate for an account of the subjective disposition of Sittlichkeit, Hegel's own statements here emphasize the self-conscious element of the identities of social members, but, as we shall see later, his view involves claims about the socially constituted nature of both who they take themselves to be and who in reality they are. Hegel's view that the members of Sittlichkeit regard their social institutions as "their own essence" could be restated, then, as the claim that for socially free individuals membership in the basic social institutions—more precisely, the ensemble of particular roles they occupy within those institutions—is constitutive of their practical, self-conscious identities. This formulation raises an important question that must be considered in some detail if we are to understand Hegel's view: What exactly does it mean to speak of the practical identities of individuals, and in what sense are their social roles constitutive of these identities?

The claim that the roles social members occupy within Sittlichkeit are constitutive of their identities must not be interpreted, as it sometimes has been, to mean that individuals simply are (are nothing more than) the bearers of the particular roles they occupy. It is not Hegel's view that social members are, or ought to be, so closely identified with their roles that they are unable to distance themselves reflectively from their social attachments and question the value of those attachments and the institutions of which they are a part. Although Hegel believes that this was true of the inhabitants of classical antiquity—their relation to their social roles was one of immediated unity—he denies that the identities of individuals in the modern world (beginning, roughly, with the Protestant Reformation) can be reduced without remainder to the social roles they occupy. Indeed, if individuals' social attachments were constitutive of their identities in this strong sense, they could not be said, on Hegel's own terms, to be fully free in those attachments. Or perhaps it is more accurate to say that such individuals would not be free in their so-
cial attachments in the manner appropriate to modern subjects; that is, they would lack the capacity for the kind of self-determination characteristic of moral subjectivity. For, according to Hegel, the will of a modern individual necessarily includes as one of its elements "the is pure reflection into itself" (§5), which is one of the essential features of moral subjectivity. In the case of moral subjects, free willing involves more than simply having (and acting upon) a set of ends; it also presupposes the ability to abstract from any of one's given properties or ends to consider any particular property or end as external to who one is—in order then to reject it or to embrace it as one's own. This is why Hegel thinks of, and explicitly describes, the relation modern individuals typically have to their social institutions as a unity that is mediated by reflection (§147A). While it is not the case that social freedom consists in this ability to distance oneself from one's social roles, the unity between individuals and institutions it involves must nevertheless be compatible with the self-determination appropriate to moral subjectivity. If Hegel's basic project of harmonizing the demands of modern moral subjectivity with the requirements of free social membership is to get off the ground, it must at least be conceptually possible for individuals to enjoy the social freedom characteristic of Sittlichkeit while maintaining their status as moral subjects. But if the social attachments of modern individuals are not constitutive of their identities in the sense considered here, we must find another way of understanding Hegel's assertion that, with respect to their essence, social members are one with their institutions. If it is not the case that individuals are simply identical with (nothing more than the bearer of) their social roles, in what sense are these roles constitutive of their identities?

A second, more natural way of understanding Hegel's view is to take it as a thesis about the social origin of individuals' identities. On this interpretation, the identities of social members are constituted by their social world in the sense that they are the products of that world: their characters and values, their understanding of who they are as individuals, are shaped, if not completely determined, by the ways they are socialized by the institutions in which they are raised. While Hegel believes this to be true of individuals who grow up within the institutions of Sittlichkeit, it is not what is at issue in his claim about the socially constituted nature of their practical identities. The most important part of Hegel's view is a thesis concerning not the origin of social members' practical identities, but their content. The roles that socially free individuals occupy within the institutions of Sittlichkeit are constitutive of their identities in the sense that those roles provide the basic framework in terms of which individuals define themselves. The point is not simply that individuals acquire whatever identities they come to have from the institutions within which they are brought up but that they regard their ongoing participation in their families, in civil society, and in the state as fundamental to who they are.

In what sense, then, are social roles constitutive of the practical identities of free social members? Hegel's claim involves two main points, each of which articulates a distinct sense in which social roles are constitutive of an individual's identity. First, to say that individuals define themselves in terms of their social roles is to say that these roles, and the attachments to others that these entail, furnish social members with the projects and final ends that figure most prominently in their practical engagement with the world. The social roles of socially free individuals are constitutive of their practical identities in the sense that they regard the ends and projects they have by virtue of occupying those roles as their most important, life-defining aims. Those ends and projects are what gives meaning to individuals' lives and makes them worth living, and for this reason they can be said to constitute (make up) the essential core, or substance, of who those individuals are. Their membership in the family, their citizenship, and their roles as productive members of civil society are the sources of what socially free individuals take to be their most important practical commitments and are thus the features of themselves that play the largest part in shaping their activity in the world. This is no doubt what Hegel means when he says that the ends socially free individuals pursue in their social participation are their "highest" final ends, but what about his further claim that those ends are "absolute" (E §514)? In this part of his practical philosophy Hegel frequently associates 'absolute' and 'unconditioned' with the idea of moral duty (§§135, 137, 258). It is plausible, then, to ascribe to him the view that finding one's identity in one's social roles involves regarding the norms associated with those roles as morally binding. Thus, to take the ends I have as a parent or citizen as absolute is to see myself as having an obligation to realize them. The absolute, or obligatory, character of such ends is linked to the fact that I regard my social roles as making up the essential core, or substance, of who I am. Acting in ways that are
contrary to my roles as parent or citizen would represent a reputation of something I take to be essential to who I am and hence a threat to my very being as a self.26

The second respect in which an individual’s social roles are constructive of his practical identity is expressed in the claim that a free society member’s “sense of self”—his “self-feeling” (Selbstgefühl, §261A)—depends in some way on fulfilling his roles. Since ‘sense of self’, as it is used here, is roughly synonymous with ‘self-esteem’,27 this assertion makes a claim about the centrality of individuals’ social participation in their occupying and performing of their particular roles, in establishing for themselves identities as individuals of value or standing. Socially free individuals are said to regard their social membership as fundamental to their own “worth and dignity” (VPR1, 252; §152) and to be motivated to fulfill their roles not out of considerations of “advantage” (Vorteil) but because “they have their dignity” in doing so (§155N). By performing their social roles, and performing them well, they secure the esteem of others and ultimately their self-esteem as well. They achieve, in other words, the recognition of their fellow social members and thereby satisfy an aspiration that Hegel (again, following Rousseau) regards as fundamental to being a self, namely, the aspiration to “be someone,” to count as a being of value both for oneself and for others. To have an identity as a member of a social whole, then, is not only to have a practical commitment to fulfilling one’s roles but also to know one’s social commitments as a substantial source of one’s sense of self, to find in them one’s identity as a self that matters.

The recognition individuals win as members of the institutions of Stättlichkeit is not the only kind of recognition that plays an important role in Hegel’s social and political philosophy. The securing of individuals’ formal rights as persons—the concern of “Abstract Right”—represents another way in which individuals are recognized by their social order as beings of intrinsic worth. But the recognition specific to the theory of Stättlichkeit differs from that accorded to persons in a significant respect: whereas a system of abstract rights recognizes individuals as persons (and hence as abstractly universal beings, formally indistinguishable from all others), membership in Stättlichkeit involves a recognition of individuals’ particularity—of their worth as the particular beings they are. This is most apparent in the family, where the bonds among individuals are rooted in an attachment to others that is highly object-spe

ally, the love family members feel for one another. As the member of a family, one is loved because of the particular individual one is; to experience this love is to have the value of one’s particular qualities affirmed by others or, in Hegelian terms, to achieve recognition as a particular being.28 In civil society, too, social members achieve recognition on the basis of who they are as particular beings rather than as abstract individuals. The identities acquired by members of civil society are particular identities because they derive from, and are defined in terms of, individuals’ exclusive membership in a determinate estate (Stånd), or profession (§207). In order to achieve “recognition and honor” (E§527) as a self-sufficient, productive member of civil society, one must establish oneself as a competent and conscientious practitioner of a socially useful occupation. This, however, is no frivolous undertaking but a lifelong project that involves directing one’s efforts and developing one’s skills in accord with a conception of oneself as exercising a particular vocation—as farmer or teacher or harness maker. An individual comes to have a standing within civil society, then, only by “stepping into a determinate particularity” (§207), that is, only by taking on a determinate and exclusive professional identity that both makes him into a particular someone and distinguishes him from (the majority of) his fellow members of civil society.

Thus far I have emphasized that the practical identities individuals win within Stättlichkeit are particular rather than (abstractly) universal identities. While this point brings out a crucial feature of Hegel’s view, it is also misleading if taken to imply that these identities are merely particular. For, like the case of particular wills discussed earlier, the particular identities of social members can also be said to be infused with a kind of universality; more precisely, they are infused with universality in three different senses of that term. The first and most obvious sense is that, although the identities acquired within Stättlichkeit are particular in the sense that they distinguish individuals qualitatively from one another, they are at the same time “thickly social” in content. This point is brought out nicely by Hegel’s characterization of the subjective disposition appropriate to the family as one in which the family member gains “the self-consciousness of his individuality within this unity . . . , so that he or she exists within it not as a person in his or her own right [für sich] but as a member” (§158).

The thickly social nature of social members’ practical identities shows
itself most plainly in the practical consequences of those identities, that is, in the kinds of actions individuals who have such identities are typically motivated to undertake. As we saw earlier, members of ethical life are characterized by a capacity to subordinate their private interests for collective ends and to do so willingly, without experiencing the social need for such behavior as an external constraint on their wills. They possess, in other words, general, or universal, wills (where "universal" simply means collective or social, in contrast to private or egotistic). For as I suggested earlier, the ability of socially free individuals to have universal wills in this sense is itself grounded in the more fundamental fact that they have practical identities of a certain kind, namely, identities that are universal, or thickly social, in the sense articulated in the preceding quote: they have conceptions of themselves as essentially members of social wholes rather than as separate, self-sufficient individuals.

To say that the particular identities of members of Stiltlichkeit are thickly social is to say, most fundamentally, that they are identities in which the particular relations they have to other concrete individuals play an essential, constitutive role in defining who they are rather than being accidental determinations, external to their self-conceptions. It is jointly pursuing the shared projects that follow only from such relations, and in finding recognition of my worth as a particular being within them, "I win myself"—my "substantial self-consciousness"—through my relations to others, and to be deprived of these relations is to experience oneself as "defective and incomplete" (§§1582, 162). Thick social identities, then, involve substantial bonds to other individuals—both in the sense that they are deep-felt, enduring attachments to others and in the sense that they make up an essential part of the content or substance, of who I take myself to be. Moreover, these social bonds are not attachments to others in the abstract—for example, to all rational beings as such—but are grounded essentially in certain determinate, particular qualities of those to whom one is attached (most obviously their membership in one’s own family, trade, or nation).

Thus, the identities acquired within Stiltlichkeit are of a different kind from those (abstractly universal) identities individuals have as persons or moral subjects. Insofar as I conceive of myself as a person, I think of myself as a sovereign, self-standing unit of free agency, indistinguishable in essence from all other such units. As a person, other individuals enter into my self-conception and my practical undertakings only negatively>

and even then only as abstract beings stripped of their determinate qualities, that is, others have significance for me only as an external limit on my otherwise arbitrarily willed activity and as agents from whom I have the right to demand that, too, refrain from trespassing the boundaries of my own private sphere. My identity as a person implies no positive obligations to others, and the ends I set myself in acting upon that identity need take no account of their needs or well-being. As a moral subject, one’s relations to others enter into one’s self-conception in a more substantive fashion, since the very standpoint and ends the moral subject adopts cannot be formulated without reference to other subjects. For example, relations to others are constitutive of the moral subjects involved in the sense that the good, which the moral will by definition takes as its end (§§131), includes as one of its constitutive elements “universal well-being” (§§130). This means that the moral will, in setting ends for itself in accord with its conception of the good, takes into account the needs and well-being of others. While other individuals have more than a merely negative significance for the moral subject, its self-conception and the relations to others it implies are abstractly universal rather than particular in the sense that they are the same in principle for all rational beings, as opposed to being grounded in particular qualities of the individuals involved.

There is a second sense in which the particular identities individuals win through their membership in the three basic social institutions are fused with universality: although it is possible to characterize social roles in terms so specific that they distinguish their bearers as unique individuals, qualitatively distinct from all others, the fundamental content of those roles does not differ radically from individual to individual, as if they were simply the expressions of caprice or idiosyncracy. Despite an infinite variety among the concrete circumstances that enter into the particular identities acquired within Stiltlichkeit, they are also, at a fundamental level, shared identities that secure a significant degree of commonality among the basic self-conceptions, and hence the substantive interests, of social members. While these identities can be understood so deeply particular in the sense that they can be defined in terms of the distinctive place one occupies (as mother rather than father) within a group of specific, concrete individuals (the Garcias rather than the Chatterjies); they are nevertheless grounded in basic social roles—mother and father, doctor and worker—that also inform the identities of
other social members. Having an identity as the husband of a certain wife or the farmer of a particular tract of land includes not only an awareness of one's uniqueness as an individual but also a view of oneself as exemplifying a general type, as subsumable under the concepts 'husband' and 'farmer'. While such concepts are not universal in the sense applying to all social members as such (and are therefore not "absolutely universal"), they possess a degree of universality that gives a more than merely particular content to the identities individuals attain in ethical life.

Finally, Hegel is committed to maintaining that the particular identities of social members are infused with universality in a further, weightier sense of that term. Although this version of that claim has been less apparent to many of Hegel's interpreters than those discussed previously, it is nevertheless essential to his general philosophical project. That is, the task of providing a philosophical justification of modern social institutions, as Hegel understands it, involves demonstrating that those institutions, including the set of role-centered, particular identities that accompany them, are universal in the sense that they can be shown to be rational from a perspective that has validity not merely for individuals who are already subjectively "at home" in their position within modern ethical life but for all thinkers. Thus, to say that these particular identities are universal in this weightier sense is to say that they are objectively rational or, in other words, that they form an integral part of a social system that, as a whole, satisfies the fundamental demand of universal reason, namely, that freedom (here: freedom of the will) be realized in the world. It is an important feature of Hegel's view that the particular identities acquired within Sittlichkeit need not be subjectively universal in the sense at issue here—they need not be seen as satisfying universal reason by all who have them, nor embraced by them for that reason—in order to be rational in this sense.

3. INSTITUTIONS AS THE PRODUCT OF INDIVIDUALS' ACTIVITY

I shall have less to say about this aspect of social members' unity with their institutions than the previous two, not because it is less important to Hegel's theory, but because it is considerably easier to grasp. By distinguishing this third component of the subjective disposition appropriate to ethical life—social members' consciousness of their institutions as the product of their own activity—Hegel means to draw our attention to two closely related features of the subjective aspect of social freedom. The first of these consists in individuals' awareness that the social world to which they belong depends for its very existence upon their own wills. One of the fundamental facts to be taken account of by a social theory based on freedom is that individuals enter the institutions to which they belong by birth rather than through a free act of will. They neither fashion their basic social institutions from scratch nor even (for the most part) choose which ones they will belong to. On the contrary, social members appear to be more the products than the producers of their institutions, since both who they are and that they are depend upon their belonging to a social world, or to what Hegel (in view of this fact) calls a social "substance." The point being made here, however, is that socially free individuals are not merely accidents of their social substance (E §514) for the reason that the latter, too, depends upon the former for its being (Sein)—that is, the social substance attains a sustained existence only through the collective activity of the individuals who compose it. While the social world is undeniably prior to and independent of the will of any of its individual members, the institutions that make it up cannot be maintained and reproduced without the widespread, voluntary participation of those individuals. It is for this reason that Hegel goes so far as to say of socially free individuals that they are conscious of themselves as "bringing about" their institutions "through their own activity" (E §514) and thereby know those institutions as extensions of themselves, the results of their own (re)productive activity.

The assertion that members of Sittlichkeit are conscious of their institutions as products of their own activity is meant to point to a further satisfaction of the will" enjoyed by social members that Hegel likewise counts as part of their social freedom. This consciousness is said to comprise not only the knowledge that the continued existence of their institutions depends on them but also the perception of those institutions as something achieved in the here and now" (ein erreichtes Diesseits) (E §514), as opposed to an ideal realizable only in some world beyond (einst) their own. Insofar as social members take their institutions as their own ends and participate in the successful reproduction of their social world, their consciousness of the actual existence and flourishing of those institutions serves as a confirmation that the social world they desire to live in is not a utopian dream but an achievable goal and provides them with a satisfaction that comes from seeing their ends realized.
in the world. This consciousness, then, involves their perceiving in the
world that their wills have real effects; it is the knowledge that they
not merely striving, but also effective, wills. Hegel's inclusion of this
point in his account of the subjective disposition appropriate to ethical
life is based on the thought that a will's self-determination is not com-
plete—it has not achieved its satisfaction—unless it has succeeded in
translating its ends into reality (888–9). That Hegel considers this satsfa-
tion to be a component of social freedom shows that the freedom on
which his theory of Sittlichkeit is based is more than simply a capacity
or possibility for action; it also requires that the will's ends be realized, re-
sulting in a kind of harmony between the will and the world. 31

As we shall see in more detail in the following chapter, Hegel's inclu-
sion of this feature among the essential components of the subjective
disposition necessary for social freedom has the effect of requiring it
one of the conditions of "objectively free" social institutions that they be
"substantial" in the sense of self-reproducing—or, as Rawls would say,
that they enjoy a stability over generations. The justification for includ-
ing this consideration in an account of social freedom becomes clearest
when one imagines the situation of social members who willed a set of
institutions that were in fact incapable of having a sustained existence in
the world. (One might think here of inhabitants of the former eastern
car bar who identified with the ends of socialism but had the misfortune
to live in a socialist society whose Stalinist structure, perhaps because it al-
lowed too small a space for the expression of its members' particularities,
made it incapable of being sustained over time by the uncoerced activity
of those members.) Such individuals, unable to find the social world
they will as "something achieved in the here and now," would be denied
one of the fundamental satisfactions to which the will inherently aspires,
that of seeing its ends translated into reality. Having one's will frustrated
in this way represents for Hegel a kind of unfreedom—or, better per-
haps, it represents a failure of the free will to complete itself by giving
real existence (Dasein) to its willed determinations.

The Subjective Disposition of Sittlichkeit as Self-Determination

Having examined the three main components of the subjective disposi-
tion appropriate to ethical life, it is time to consider how this account
figures into Hegel's basic strategy for providing a justification of the in-

sitions of Sittlichkeit on the grounds that they play an essential role in
the realization of freedom. What is it that makes this subjective disposi-
tion "befitting of freedom"? In what sense are individuals who have this
subjective relation to their social institutions free, or self-determined?
The most important part of this task will be to articulate the conception
of freedom that underlies Hegel's view by attempting to lend coherence
in his obscure and divergent remarks on the connection between free-
dom and Sittlichkeit.

In some passages Hegel appears to equate the subjective component
of social freedom with the disposition of social members itself, implying
that the subjective freedom they enjoy as members of Sittlichkeit con-
stitutes simply in a state of consciousness—specifically, in their awareness
of their identical unity (in the senses explicated earlier) with their social
institutions. The clearest instance of this is found in Hegel's treatment of
patriotism, the subjective disposition appropriate to membership in the
state (8268). In this passage Hegel first characterizes patriotism as a spe-
cies of trust, which he defines as "the consciousness that my substantial
and particular interest is contained and preserved in the interest and end
of an 'other' (here the state)." He then goes on to equate this trust itself
with freedom via the claim that through this trust the state "ceases to be
an 'other' for me, and in this consciousness I am free" (emphasis added).
This way of characterizing the freedom social members win through
their subjective disposition is easily recognized as a version of Hegel's
well-known formula, cited in a variety of contexts, that serves as his
most general definition of freedom: freedom, in all of its many Hegelian
uses, is said to be a state of being-with-oneself-in-an-other (Beisich-
sein in einem Anderen) or, more perspicuously perhaps, a being-at-
home-in-an-other. 34 Yet this one-sentence explication of the subjective
component of social freedom is clearly unsatisfactory on its own. Apart
from obvious questions it raises about the plausibility of equating trust
with freedom (an issue to which I return later), it is seriously misleading
if taken for the whole of what there is to say about the freedom social
members win through their subjective dispositions. For if this being-
with-oneself-in-an-other is thought to consist merely in a consciousness
of one's identity with the other—simply in a kind of attitude one has to
the social world—it seems to be more a theoretical stance to the world
than a practical one and, as such, closer in character to the speculative
freedom achieved in philosophical contemplation—in apprehending the
world as a manifestation of one's own (spiritual) nature—than to something recognizable as practical freedom. Yet social freedom, belonging to the realm of what Hegel calls "objective spirit," is clearly meant to be a species of practical freedom—a freedom of the will—and hence a freedom that is essentially bound up with the real, practical activity through which the will realizes its subjective (inner) ends in the objective (social) world (§§88–9). As we shall see later, the attitude of trust social members have to their institutions can indeed be characterized as one form of being-at-home-in-another, and therefore as a kind of freedom, but this attitude itself is derivative of their "being-with-themselves" in their social institutions in a way that is more clearly practical in nature: a being-with-self that individuals achieve only in and through their actual participation in the institutions of *Sittlichkeit*. Social members who have the subjective disposition described above are subjectively free, not simply because they are aware of themselves as one with their social institutions but because they "live within them as within an element undifferentiated from themselves" (§147; emphasis added).

How, then, is the subjective disposition of socially free individuals bound up with their practical freedom? Or, equivalently, in what sense is the social participation of such individuals subjectively free (free-willed) activity? A partial answer to these questions can be formulated in terms that do not appeal to any distinctively Hegelian views about the nature of practical freedom. This formulation is suggested by bringing together two of Hegel's statements concerning the relation between the wills of individuals and their social institutions: while the institutions of *Sittlichkeit* are "ethical powers that govern the life of individuals" (§143), social participants can be said to be subjectively free because, given the appropriate subjective disposition, they "do not perceive [this] universal as a foreign power" (VPR2, 123). This way of conceiving of the subjective aspect of social freedom can be understood as a direct consequence of the voluntative unity (in the sense indicated earlier) that holds between individuals and their social institutions: insofar as there is a unity in content between the particular wills of social members and the general will of the institution as a whole, those members do not perceive the imperatives of social participation as antagonistic to their own wills. Using the same terms Rousseau would employ to characterize the freedom enjoyed by citizens who identify with the general will of their political association, the social participation of members of *Sittlichkeit* can be understood to be free because, in acting in accord with the general will, they are subject to no will other than their own; they are, in effect, determined only by their own wills.

It is clear, however, that Hegel also regards the members of *Sittlichkeit* as subjectively free in a peculiar sense that goes beyond the conception of freedom implicit in the preceding paragraph and distinguishes his social theory from all others, including Rousseau's. This is evidenced by numerous passages, such as the following, in which the freedom of individuals is equated with their achieving "substantial self-consciousness" (§162) or a "sense of self" (§147) through their social participation: "By acting as ethical beings [als Sittliche] humans free themselves. Their living together in *Sittlichkeit* is their liberation; for in that living together they arrive at an intuition [or perception] of themselves" (VPR2, 125).

The connection Hegel asserts here between freedom and "intuiting oneself can only be understood in the context of his thesis, examined earlier concerning the inherently social nature of individuals' particular identities. By participating in the institutions of *Sittlichkeit*, social members arrive at an intuition of themselves; they are able to perceive who they are by looking at their real existence in the world. In other words, social members find in the external, social world a confirmatory reflection of who they take themselves to be, and they are able to do so because it is by participating in that world that they establish objectively realized identities as particular individuals. To describe the identities acquired by social members as objective and real is to say, above all, that they consist in more than merely subjectively held conceptions of who they are; these identities are real because they have taken on an existence in the external world, and they are objective because they hold not only privately for themselves but also for the other subjects who share their world.

The claim that individuals achieve objectively real identities through their social participation includes two theses concerning the connection between identity and social participation that are worth distinguishing. First, social members give objective, real existence to their conceptions of themselves, insofar as they actually pursue and realize the practical projects implied by their self-conceptions. As members of *Sittlichkeit*, they do not merely imagine themselves to be mothers, plumbers, and citizens; they in fact become such beings by carrying out the activities that the roles of mother, plumber, and citizen require. In translating
their conceptions of themselves into the external world, they give obvi-
ous reality to their otherwise merely subjective identities. Thus, the so-
cial participation of the members of Sittlichkeit can be said to have a self-
expressive character, insofar as it is an activity through which they ex-
ternalize, or give expression to, their conceptions of who they are. In-
cluded in this notion of self-expression is the idea that in giving real ex-
istence to their self-conceptions social members inevitably interpret the
social roles they embrace and therefore express them in a way that re-
flects, to a limited extent, their own understanding of what those roles
require of them. Although Hegel himself does not explicitly recognize
this aspect of social members’ self-expressive activity, the need to do so
becomes clear when one considers that social roles are seldom defined in
such detail that they fully determine the particular actions that are sup-
posed to follow from them. Thus, every mother knows that it is her role
as a parent to discipline her children in order to make them capable of
self-restraint as adults, but social expectations alone do not suffice to
 specify which forms of punishment are appropriate or the precise cir-
 cumstances in which disciplinary measures are called for. While social
members define their identities in terms of social roles they do not them-
selves create, executing those roles within the world is less like a me-
chanical translation of norms into action than an interpretive perfor-
mance in which individuals determine their actions in accord with their
own ideas about how best to exemplify the roles they take as their own.

The sense in which individuals objectively realize their identities
through their social participation is not fully captured by the thought of
translating some subjective, or inner, content (a conception of who one
is) into the external world. This point, the second of the two referred to
above, follows from the fact that having an identity as a husband or citi-
zen involves more than successfully carrying out the projects that hus-
bands and citizens are supposed to undertake. Saying that individuals
have their identities in their social roles also implies that when occu-
pying those roles is a substantial source of their sense of self, or their
consciousness of themselves as individuals of value or standing and
achieving this sense of self is dependent on the recognition of one’s fel-
low social members, which itself is won by fulfilling one’s roles well, in-
dividuals’ social activity provides them with a form of self-conscious-
ness, and hence a form of selfhood, they could not have independently
of that social participation. This implies that their practical activi-

When the institutions of Sittlichkeit is not only self-expressive in charac-
ter (the externalization of a subjectively held self-conception) but also
self-constituting in the sense that, more than simply expressing a pre-
的存在 existing self-conception, it serves actually to constitute social
members as selves—that is, as individuals who count as beings of value
not only for others but also for themselves. This is why their labor for
universal ends, rather than being a “selfless” activity, is the very oppo-
site, namely, a form of self-assertion; for it is through such activity that
social members posit, or establish, their identities as particular selves.
Moreover, it is precisely this connection between selfhood and social
membership that allows them to regard their social participation as valu-
able in itself, even as their highest, absolute end.

Thus, Hegel regards individuals’ social participation as subjectively
free not only because their subjective dispositions enable them to em-
brace the general will of the groups to which they belong as their own
and hence to comply willingly with the dictates of their social institu-
tions but also, and more important, because their social activity “comes
from themselves” in the stronger sense that it is through such activity
that they express and constitute their own identities as particular indi-
viduals. How, though, is this to be interpreted as self-determination?

There are, I think, two senses in which the social members Hegel de-
scribes can be characterized as self-determining. First, their practical ac-

For Hegel this social participation of individuals as a form of self-deter-
mination is directly connected to the thought that through such partici-
pation they realize their particular self-conceptions and constitute them-
selves as beings of value. The type of self-determination carried out here

And hence as a kind of self-realization— for it is precisely this activity
that makes one into a determinate self—a particular individual within the real, socially recognized standing in the world. Bringing together the various points made thus far about the freedom social members enjoy through their subjective dispositions, we could say that the social participation of such individuals is free because it is successfully externalized activity, undertaken for its own sake and informed by a conscious, voluntary adoption of universal ends, which, at the same time, is expressive of individuals’ particular identities and a substantial source of their status as selves of recognized value, or standing.

This account of the type of self-determination realized in the subjective disposition of free social members will no doubt give rise to the objection “But that’s not what we normally mean by ‘freedom,’ nor is it the kind of freedom a social theory ought to be most concerned with.” The proper response to this objection is that the doctrine of subjective freedom constitutes only a part of Hegel’s social theory and makes no claim by itself, fully to answer the question “what freedom is” (or what Hegel freedom consists in). Its aim, rather, is to provide an account of a specific type of “self-determination” that individuals are able to achieve as members of a rational social order. If Hegel succeeds, as I believe he does, in bringing to light an important good—a kind of determining oneself—that can be won through certain forms of social participation, then the appropriate response to his view is not to object, “But that’s not what freedom is,” but to ask—as Hegel himself goes on to do—whether this form of self-determination is compatible with the realization of freedom in other, more familiar guises. Demonstrating that social freedom compatible with both personal and moral freedom is one of Hegel’s most urgent theoretical aims, and examining how he does so will be a central task of this book’s final four chapters.

“The True, Ethical Disposition”: Trust

Hegel no doubt intends for us to think of the self-expressive and self-constituting activity of social members as a kind of being-with-one-self-in-an-other. For in their social participation individuals are with themselves-in-an-other in the sense that they enter into practical relations with other social members that are constitutive of their own identity; they are who they are (as particular individuals) only in those relations to others. Having grasped this point, we are in a position to consider the phenomenon, alluded to earlier, that Hegel more explicitly associates with being-with-one-self-in-an-other, namely, the attitude of trust that social free individuals are said to have to their social institutions. In this passage cited earlier Hegel offers a definition of this frame of mind, which he elsewhere calls “the true, ethical disposition” (E §515): “trust which he elsewhere calls “the true, ethical disposition” (E §515): “trust which can pass over into more or less educated insight,” is the consciousness that my substantial and particular interest is contained and preserved in the interest and end of an ‘other’ (here the state) in its relation to me as an individual” (§268). Two aspects of this definition are in need of closer consideration here, the first of which makes reference to the cognitive content of trust, the second to what we might call its subjective form.

In this passage, as in many others (E §515; VPR1, 99), Hegel locates the central feature of trust in its cognitive content, which he specifies as the belief held by social members that their own fundamental interests are inseparably intertwined and in essential harmony with both the ends of their basic social institutions and the fundamental interests of the other individuals to whom they are bonded in those institutions. Thus, trust is essentially nothing other than the enduring confidence individuals have that their institutions are for them a “home”—that is, a social world that is hospitable not only to the attainment of their private ends (such as the needs acquired and satisfied through participation in the market economy) but also to the satisfaction of their “substantial” (fundamental) interest in realizing their freedom and, inseparable from that, their identities as particular beings. It is easy to see, then, that Hegel’s view of trust rests on his account of how social members win their particular identities, since it is the thickly social content of those identities that makes it possible for them to regard the family, civil society, and the state as the arenas within which they realize their deepest aspirations, including the aspiration to be a particular self. Hegel asserts that the attitude of trust itself, and not merely the self-determining activity of individuals, represents a species of freedom because he thinks of the consciousness of being at home within the social world as a kind of satisfaction of the will; it is the enduring assurance that one inhabits a world whose basic framework makes it capable in principle of accommodating one’s most fundamental practical ends. To lack this assurance, or to be convinced of the opposite, is to doubt, or to despair of, the possibility of achieving one’s deepest aspirations in the present world; it is to see that
world as an abiding source of frustration of one's will and hence was subjectively estranged, or alienated, from it.39

The second noteworthy feature of the definition of trust given here is its allusion to what I am calling the subjective form of that attitude. Hegel's parenthetical remark that trust "can pass over into more or less uneducated insight" implies that the essential content of that attitude-belief that one's own basic interests are "contained and preserved" in the ends of one's social institutions—is capable of assuming a variety of subjective forms, ranging from an immediate, unreflective faith in one's social institutions to a fully grounded, philosophical comprehension of their rationality. Although this point is often ignored by interpreters, it is unambiguously asserted in numerous passages (§147A; VPR 112-124), and, more important, it is indispensable to Hegel's basic argument showing that the freedom specific to membership in Stättlichkeit is compatible with the demands of modern (moral) subjectivity, including the requirement that the subject be bound only to principles whose rationality he or she is able to recognize (§132). This common misunderstanding of Hegel's view is surely due in part to the natural tendency to think that trust must be blind or unconditional, and hence an attitude that in its very nature excludes rational reflection. Hegel himself sometimes encourages such misreadings (though less frequently than their prevalence would suggest), especially in those places where he fails to distinguish as clearly as he should between the subjective disposition characteristic of ancien Stättlichkeit, which could be described correctly as simple, unswerving, and immediate, and the disposition most appropriate to modern social membership, which could not.40 Another likely source of confusion is that Hegel often associates trust, even in the case of modern Stättlichkeit, with habit, or with what he refers to as social members' "second nature" (§§151+Z, 268+Z). But the force of Hegel's emphasis on habit is to make a point about how socially free individuals are motivationally constituted—that their desires, dispositions, and values are formed (gebildet) by their upbringing such that their social participation is largely spontaneous, or "comes naturally" to them—not to attest to an incompatibility between rational reflection and free, unalienated social membership. The fact that one is in the habit of walking the streets at night without taking special precautions (to take an example of Hegel's that has lost its resonance for us) does not imply that one would be unable to give a rational justification of that practice if asked, or the

what is most important from the point of view of Hegel's theory of social freedom is the subjective form of trust and the absence of alienation it represents, not the subjective form in which it is present. If what procures the freedom associated with trust is the belief that one's social world is basically hospitable to one's deepest practical aspirations, then the subjective side of social freedom is in no way diminished when that belief is founded on reason rather than on unquestioning faith. This also implies that the belief central to trust can be held in a relatively unreflective form—it can be immediate trust—and still be social freedom (assuming it is at the true belief). A theory of modern ethical life does require, however, that the trust ascribed to social members be capable of being grounded in rational insight and hence that it be able to survive good faith reflection on the merits of existing social institutions. Moreover, in order to accommodate the requirement that moral subjectivity be realizable for all, the rationality of the social world cannot be visible only from the perspective of an esoteric philosophical doctrine accessible only to the few but must in principle allow of being made transparent to the average social member. Thus, it must be possible for individuals who conscientiously reflect on their social world to come to recognize its rationality which is to say that they must be able to arrive at an understanding of the essential roles their institutions play in the realization of freedom. In other words, in order to realize the full range of freedoms available to them as modern subjects, social members not only must have the subjective disposition described in this chapter but also must be in a position to understand what makes it rational for them to have such an attitude to their social order; they must, in other words, be able to grasp the basic elements of Hegel's doctrine of objective freedom, the topic of chapters 4 and 5.
Objective Freedom, Part I: The Self-Determining Social Whole

In the preceding chapter we saw that Hegel locates the subjective component of social freedom in the ability of individuals to identify with their particular social roles and, by extension, with the social institutions within which those roles are defined. The members of Sittlichkeit are able to comply willingly with the basic demands of social institutions—their social participation is their own, freely willed activity—because it is through such participation that they constitute and give expression to their particular identities. But, as the following passage indicates, Hegel’s conception of social freedom is not exhausted by his account of the subjective disposition of social members: “The rights of individuals to their . . . freedom is fulfilled by their belonging to their actuality, for their [subjective] certainty of their freedom has its truth in such objectivity; in the ethical sphere they actually possess their essence, their inner universality” (§153). The claim expressed here is that in order to ascribe social freedom to individuals, it is not sufficient simply to establish that they subjectively identify with a given set of existing institutions. Beyond this subjective “certainty” on the part of social members that their social world constitutes a home, that world must in “truth” be a home, which means, according to this passage, that it must enable its members to realize their true essence—“their inner universality” or, as we shall see later, their practical freedom. This point could also be formulated as the claim that for social freedom to be fully realized, the institutions with which social members subjectively identify must also be objectively worthy of that identification, which is to say that they must meet the criteria Hegel sets out for rational social institutions.

Thus, my present task—one that will occupy me for the next two chapters—is to examine both the content and the philosophical justification of the criteria Hegel employs in evaluating the “inherent” rationality of social institutions. In carrying out this task I shall need to address two sets of questions: First, what general features must characterize a social institution if it is to be considered rational “in itself” (and therefore objectively worthy of being the object of individuals’ subjective identification)? Second, how is the inherent rationality of such institutions related to the freedom of their members? Or, more precisely, why does membership in those institutions constitute an essential part—the “objective component”—of individuals’ social freedom?

The fundamental concept in Hegel’s account of the inherent rationality of social institutions is what he calls “objective freedom” (§258A; EV II, 248; PH, 43/XII, 61). Social institutions are inherently rational and therefore worthy of being the object of individuals’ subjective identification, when they conform (in the ways to be articulated later) to the requirements of objective freedom. The concept of objective freedom was an indispensable part of Hegel’s theory of Sittlichkeit, for it is what enables that theory to provide a more robust justification of social institutions than one grounded simply in the subjective attitudes of its members. If one fails to give the concept of objective freedom its due, Hegel’s argument in defense of a given set of institutions can do no more than point to the fact that the members of those institutions are subjectively constituted so as to be able to identify with them; it remains powerless to explain why, beyond the mere fact of their identification, it is rational for them to do so. In other words, objective freedom is Hegel’s answer to the question: What features of the family, civil society, and the modern state make it rational, or good, that individuals subjectively identify with those institutions (rather than others) and lead their lives within them?

Another way of bringing out the significance of the doctrine of objective freedom is to focus on the kinds of reasons it gives individuals to engage their social institutions. As we saw in chapter 3, Hegel’s account of the subjective component of social freedom located the primary motive to their particular self-conceptions and in constituting them-
selves as beings with a socially recognized worth. In contrast, the doctrine of objective freedom addresses the issue of whether social members also have reasons for endorsing their institutions independently of the fact that they view their membership in their families, civil society, and the state as essential to their own particular identities. Thus, the doctrine of objective freedom figures into Hegel’s claim about the inherent rationality of the institutions of \textit{Sittlichkeit} because it furnishes individuals with reasons for endorsing their institutions that are valid not merely from the perspective of social members who are already subjectively at home in their particular social roles but from the perspective of all thinkers (or, more precisely, from the perspective of all thinkers who take an interest in the realization of freedom, which for Hegel just is the perspective of universal reason). In other words, this part of the theory of \textit{Sittlichkeit} is meant to ensure that social members’ endorsement of their institutions is capable of surviving reflection on those institutions undertaken from the universal perspective—in Hegel’s terms, the “abstractly universal” perspective—that is definitive of moral subjectivity. This means that Hegel’s social theory claims for itself the power to convince even individuals who lack an immediate subjective attachment to their institutions that those institutions are in fact worthy of their endorsement. Such subjectively alienated social members can be reconciled to their social world by being shown that its institutions are inherently rational (or embody objective freedom), which is to say that they play a necessary role (to be further specified later) in the realization of practical freedom.

Although it is clear that Hegel intends to employ a notion of objective freedom that will enable him to claim that rational institutions play a necessary role in the realization of freedom independently of the subjective dispositions of social members, it is not easy to determine what content he gives to that notion. For despite the crucial role this idea plays in his account of \textit{Sittlichkeit}, Hegel only rarely makes explicit use of the term ‘objective freedom’, and where he does, he fails to clarify both what it means and how it functions in his theory. Not surprisingly, Hegel’s obscurity with respect to this fundamental issue has had grave consequences for the philosophical reception of his social theory. Most importantly, it has engendered a nearly universal confusion among interpreters—a confusion that also manifests itself in contemporary attempts to revive the Hegelian doctrine of \textit{Sittlichkeit}—concerning the basic philo-

sophical strategy Hegel means to employ to justify the social institutions he endorses. It is primarily in order to clarify this basic strategy that I turn now to an examination of objective freedom.

The task that faces us is to explicate what it means to say, as Hegel does, that \textit{Sittlichkeit} is “objective freedom” (VPR1, 248). We can begin by noting that the modifier ‘objective’ refers here to three qualities of the freedom under discussion, qualities that correspond to the three senses of objectivity Hegel distinguishes in his introduction to the \textit{Philosophy of Right}. First, objective freedom is real, or true, freedom (§26, α), as opposed to what is merely taken to be freedom. This is not to say that objective freedom is the whole of practical freedom—but rather that it “truly accords with the concept of the [free] will” (§26), or, in less Hegelian language, that it conforms in fact, and not merely in appearance, to what is required in order for practical freedom to be realized. In its second sense, ‘objective’ refers to anything that has an existence in the external world (§26, γ). To use Hegel’s example, a will that achieves its ends by acting in the world makes itself objective in this sense. Objective freedom, then, will be a freedom that exists externally (in existing laws and institutions) rather than merely inwardly (subjectively) in the ( unrealized) wills of agents.

In its third usage, applying the predicate ‘objective’ to a thing signifies that the thing is what it is independently of any consciousness of it as such on the part of subjects (§26, β). In this sense of the term one could say (to borrow an example from Kant) that the laws of nature have an objective causal force, whereas the moral law does not, since its causal force depends on agents’ consciousness of it as a binding law. This third sense of objectivity is both the most important for our purposes and the most difficult to grasp in connection with freedom. To speak of objective freedom in this sense is to imply that there is a kind of freedom that can be ascribed to practical beings independently of any subjective (that is, conscious) relation they might have to whatever is said to constitute their objective freedom. In the context of Hegel’s social theory, the doctrine of objective freedom implies that there is a meaningful, albeit limited, sense in which individuals are free simply in virtue of inhabiting an inherently rational (objectively free) social world, regardless of their subjective relation to the laws and institutions of that world. In other words, a social world that is objectively free secures a kind of freedom.
for its members "whether it is recognized and willed by individuals or not" (§258A).

How, then, are we to understand the contention, fundamental to Hegel's social theory, that rational laws and institutions embody a kind of freedom whose existence is independent of the conscious knowledge and will of social members? It is important to note here that the opening chapters of this book already provide us with the conceptual resources for developing two quite different accounts of objective freedom, one derived from Rousseau's political theory and the other from Hegel's distinctive conception of a self-determined will as one that has a self-sufficient existence and exhibits the organic structure of the Concept. As I argued in chapter 2, Rousseau's doctrine of the general will rests on a conception of freedom that qualifies as objective in the three senses indicated here. This aspect of Rousseau's position is most visible in his claim, implicit in his talk of citizens' being forced to be free, that the effective enforcement of the general will makes individuals politically free (in at least a limited sense) independently of their conscious relation to that will. For Rousseau, political institutions informed by the general will can be taken to embody a sort of objective freedom, insofar as they secure the real conditions necessary for individuals to possess a free will (one that is undetermined by any foreign will). What this means more specifically is that freedom-procuring institutions restructure the natural, prepolitical dependence of individuals in such a way that subordination to the wills of others ceases to be an inescapable consequence of human needlessness. Two general features of objective freedom in its Rousseauian guise are worth highlighting here: first, the objectively free character of rational laws and institutions resides in their status as necessary conditions of freedom; second, the freedom conditioned by such laws and institutions is quite straightforwardly ascribable to the wills of individual social members.

The other way of conceiving of objective freedom is to understand it in terms of the claim, discussed in chapter 1 in conjunction with the strongly holistic interpretation of social freedom, that the institutions of Sittlichkeit, taken as a whole, come closest to embodying the structure of a fully self-determined will. Thus, the family, civil society, and the modern state could be equated with objective freedom because they constitute a system of fully self-sufficient institutions that exhibit the structure of the Concept and is capable of reproducing itself, along with all of the diverse particular qualities essential to its being what it is. On this interpretation, objective freedom would be understood not as a set of conditions that make it possible for freedom to be realized but as an embodiment of a sort of freedom that is thought to reside in the rational, "self-determined" structure of the social world. Contrary to initial appearances, such a reading would still allow for social freedom to be attributed to the individual members of Sittlichkeit, because insofar as they subjectively identified with their social institutions, their social participation would be free in the sense articulated in chapter 3. Moreover, this freedom could be said to be true freedom—more than simply a matter of their subjective "certainty"—because such individuals would identify not with an arbitrary set of institutions but with inherently rational ones, with institutions "made necessary by the idea of freedom" (§146A). The distinctive feature of this interpretation, rather, is that it takes one of social freedom's two components—the objective freedom in terms of which the inherent rationality of social institutions is defined—to consist in a strongly holistic quality, one that is attributable to a system of institutions but not to individuals themselves. In other words, the property of the social world that makes it rational for social members to identify with the institutions of Sittlichkeit (rather than with others) is located in the fact that only those institutions, considered as a whole, approximate Hegel's criteria for a completely self-determined will and are for that reason necessary in order to satisfy the demand that practical freedom be fully realized in the world.7

In which of these two directions are we to proceed, then, in reconstructing Hegel's doctrine of objective freedom? There is no doubt that the relevant texts appear to favor the second of these interpretations. One clear example of this tendency is found in the passage in which Hegel first lays out the distinction between objective freedom and the subjective component of Sittlichkeit: "The rationality of ethical life [das Sittliche] resides in the fact that it is the system of the determinations of the idea. In this way ethical life is freedom, or the will that has being in and for itself as something objective . . . It is because the determinations of ethical life constitute the concept of freedom that they are the substantiality or universal essence of individuals" (§145+Z).8 Although it is beyond dispute that Hegel intends to appeal to his distinctive conception of self-determination in order to give content to the assertion that the institutions of Sittlichkeit embody objective freedom, a compelling
reconstruction of his position along these lines faces a formidable challenge: How is it possible to lend plausibility to the claim that the social world's self-sufficiency and its being structured in accord with the Concept (or "the determinations of the Idea") make it inherently rational and therefore objectively worthy of its members' endorsement? In response to this question it is not sufficient simply to note that Hegel's claim has its source in his peculiar metaphysical views concerning the nature of reason and the structure of reality (Wirklichkeit). The difficulty posed by this conception of objective freedom is not one of locating its source in another part of Hegel's philosophical system but of showing concretely how a claim with obscure metaphysical origins can be fruitfully applied to the problems specific to social theory.

While the Rousseauian conception of objective freedom has the advantage of being the intuitively more plausible alternative, explicit textual evidence that Hegel held such a view is very difficult to find.1 I shall argue here, however, that with respect to the issue of objective freedom, Hegel's account of Sittlichkeit exhibits a much deeper affinity with Rousseau's political theory than is apparent from the surface of his texts. More specifically, I shall argue that Hegel's assertion that the institutions of Sittlichkeit embody objective freedom includes as one of its central components the Rousseauian claim that such institutions, independently of the conscious will or knowledge of their members, secure the conditions necessary for their individual members to acquire self-determined wills. Moreover, the conception of self-determination at issue in this claim is not parasitic on the strongly holistic conception of self-determination discussed previously. That is, the contention that rational social institutions are conditions of individuals' freedom does not simply reduce to the assertion that social members are objectively free because they are part of a "self-determined" social whole. In other words, I shall show that for Hegel the inherent rationality of social institutions resides (at least in part) in the fact that such institutions make it possible for social members to realize the more individualistic forms of freedom, most prominently those associated with personhood and moral subjectivity. This position is implicit in Hegel's statement that personhood and moral subjectivity "cannot exist on their own" but "must have ethical life as their bearer (Träger) and foundation [Grundlage]" (81412). Yet my interpretive claim will be fully convincing only after I have shown in detail that Hegel's accounts of the inherent rationality of the particular institutions that make up ethical life, especially his treatments of the family and civil society, are in fact devoted in large part to the task of demonstrating how those institutions effectively secure the conditions necessary for the freedom of individuals to be realized.

The suggestion that the theory of Sittlichkeit tacitly relies on both conceptions of objective freedom does find some support in my earlier claim (in chapter 1) that one of the aims of the Philosophy of Right is to fulfill the "logical" (or conceptual) task of articulating the content of a coherent and fully adequate conception of practical freedom. Bearing this project in mind, it is possible to see how both of the conceptions of objective freedom I have distinguished here are essential to Hegel's project. First, if practical freedom is to be realized in the world, the social order must be constituted so as to bring about the social conditions required in order for the "lower," more straightforwardly individualistic forms of self-determination (personal and moral freedom) to be realized. (The realization of these conditions constitutes objective freedom in its Rousseauian guise.) But, second, if the conditions of the lower forms of freedom are to come about in a manner that is fully consistent with the ideal of a self-determined will—if practical freedom is to be completely realized—the social order that secures them must itself be a self-determining entity, that is, a living, self-reproducing system that, because structured according to the Concept, exhibits the basic features that any rational (self-determined) entity must possess. (This is the distinctively Hegelian conception of objective freedom.)

The following two chapters will be devoted to filling in the details of my claim that Hegel's defense of the three basic modern social institutions makes use of both conceptions of objective freedom. As we shall see in the remainder of this chapter, Hegel regards those institutions as inherently rational because together they make up a social whole that fully realizes the ideal of self-determination. In chapter 5 I shall explore the claim that a further requirement of inherently rational institutions is that they make it possible (in ways to be specified later) for their individual members to have self-determined wills.

I shall begin my discussion of the first part of the doctrine of objective freedom by considering one of Hegel's more perspicuous formulations of the basic thought behind his appeal to a strongly holistic conception of self-determination within the realm of social theory: "The state exists as
living spirit only as an organized whole, differentiated into the particular functions [Wirk samkeiten] that derive from the single concept of the rational will (even if not known as such) and continually produce it as their result" (E 8539; emphasis omitted). This quote provides a concise statement of the four properties contained in Hegel's holistic conception of self-determination that will be of importance for my analysis of objective freedom: the self-determined social order is a (1) teleologically organized, (2) self-reproducing whole that is (3) articulated into specialized, semiautonomously functioning components ("differentiated into particular functions") whose specific qualities and relations to one another are (4) determined by the Concept ("derive from the single concept of the rational will"). In chapter 1 I gave a brief account of Hegel's reasons for thinking of an entity that exhibits these properties as self-determined, or free. My concern in this chapter is not to defend this use of the term 'freedom' but to articulate the thought that underlies it by showing what these properties amount to in the context of Hegel's social theory and how they translate into a plausible (though incomplete) account of the features of a rational social world.

As a first step it is necessary to say a few words about the meaning of 'rational' as it is applied here to the social world. In what respects and from what perspective are the institutions of Sittlichkeit judged to be rational? Because this part of Hegel's doctrine depends on a strongly holistic conception of self-determination, the features of the rational social world it picks out will be properties the society exhibits as a whole rather than properties that belong to its individual parts as such. These properties will reside primarily in certain relations that obtain among the various components of a society, and so the rationality at issue here will inhere in the organization of those components, or in the internal structure of the social world. Thus, Hegel's holistic conception of self-determination can be thought of as specifying the relations in which the parts of a social order must stand to one another in order for it to qualify as a rationally organized whole.

It is important to note that a social order of this kind will appear rational only from a standpoint that affords a view of the social order as a whole and hence only to someone who is able to transcend the limited perspectives bound up with some particular position within it. While this suggests the perspective of an outside observer who, perhaps for purely aesthetic reasons, takes pleasure in contemplating a well-orga-
way of defining the rationality of the state that Hegel criticizes in his frequent and spirited attacks on the social contract tradition. (This raises the question, to be considered in chapter 6, whether Hegel’s famous critique rests on the dubious presupposition that social contract theory is committed to such a conception of what makes a state rational.) It is not the case, of course, that Hegel simply rejects this conception of rational organization as irrelevant to social theory but only that he assigns it a very limited role. Insofar as one of the functions of social institutions is to help social members achieve certain kinds of private ends (for example, those derived from their need for the means of survival), rational institutions, on Hegel’s account, too, must be effective coordinators of those ends. This sort of consideration figures most prominently in Hegel’s defense of civil society, one component of which consists in the familiar claim, espoused by a wide variety of non-Hegelian social theorists as well, that a market-based system of production and exchange is a rational form of organization because of its ability to coordinate effectively the private economic ends of its individual participants (§182–184).

If the conception of rational organization just described is not central to Hegel’s social theory, what does he propose in its place? As the passage cited at the beginning of this section suggests, the theory of Stillichkeit appeals to the idea of teleological organization in order to give content to the notion of a rational social whole. Thus, the kind of rational organization Hegel’s theory demands of the social order will be akin to the rationality sought by a biologist who is examining an unfamiliar form of life or by a critic who seeks to interpret a work of art. Both attempt to understand the respective objects by posing the question: How do the various parts of this entity work together to form a coherent, harmonious whole? What each of these investigators seeks to find in his object is a purposive order that bestows a kind of intelligibility on the object as a whole. Comprehending an object as teleologically organized includes, minimally, two elements: first, a conception of the essential end, or telos, of the entity as a whole—an idea of what its proper function consists in; and, second, an understanding of how the makeup of its parts is determined by that end or, in other words, how their determinate features can be explained in terms of what the entity as a whole requires in order for its end to be realized.11 Apprehending this order provides insight into what can be called the object’s inner rationality, for it enables one to grasp the reason for its being constituted just as it is by referring to an end internal to the object itself.

The version of teleological organization that informs the theory of Stillichkeit includes a third feature (referred to earlier as the articulation of the whole into specialized, semiautonomous components), which, although clearly borrowed from the example of a complex biological organism, is fruitfully exploited in Hegel’s account of the social organism. When a body is constituted such that it must carry out a variety of complex functions in order to realize its end, it normally relies on the cooperation of differentiated, highly specialized components. In biological organisms this specialization typically takes the form of a network of functional subsystems, each of which operates with a significant degree of autonomy, even though all are ultimately subordinated to the end of the whole and dependent on its proper functioning. Despite these limits to their self-sufficiency, the relative autonomy of specialized subsystems makes it possible to speak as if they had their own distinctive ends, or their own proper function. This means, then, that the relation between the organism and its parts can be meaningfully characterized as one of mutual dependence. That is, it is not just that the proper functioning of the whole is dependent on each component carrying out its particular task, but the parts, too, depend on the whole (more accurately, on their being united with the other parts so as to constitute a properly functioning whole) in order to realize their own distinctive ends. This relation of mutual dependence between parts and whole is one feature of the “interpenetrating unity” of universality and particularity that, as we saw in chapter 1, Hegel equates with rationality (§258A).

What this third feature adds to the concept of teleological organization is the idea that the fully rational organism, whether social or biological, attains its dominant end only through a multiplicity of highly differentiated, relatively autonomous components: “The different parts within the state must exist as members with their own distinctive organization, which are self-standing in themselves and bring forth [or] reproduce the whole” (VPR1, 151). What makes such an organized whole rational for Hegel is not merely that it is highly efficient in achieving its ends but, more important, that it allows for, indeed requires, the flourishing of independent particularity. Thus, it attains its dominant end not by squelching diversity but by bringing its diverse elements into a harmonious, purposeful arrangement, thereby preserving the qualitative
richness that difference implies. The contemplation of such a teleologically organized whole affords the observer the rational satisfaction that comes from seeing how diversity is both given its due and at the same time ordered so as to serve the ends of the whole to which it belongs—or, in Hegelian language, from seeing how particularity and universality are brought into a relation of “interpenetrating” unity. That Hegel conceives of a rationally organized whole in this way—as one in which there exists a relation of harmony and mutual dependence between the proper functioning of the whole and that of its semi-autonomous, particular components—is explicitly confirmed by his definition of rational existence (“actuality,” or Wirklichkeit) in the following Addition to the Philosophy of Right: “The state is actual [wirklich], and its actuality consists in the fact that the interest of the whole is realized in particular ends. Actuality is always the unity of universality and particularity; it is universality’s being broken apart into particularity, which appears as self-standing, even though it is supported and maintained only in the whole” (82702).

It is obvious, however, that simply articulating the conception of rational organization that underlies Hegel’s theory of Sittlichkeit is not sufficient to establish its suitability as a criterion for a rational social order. It is natural (for us moderns) to want to dismiss this aspect of Hegel’s view on the grounds that the ideal of rationality implicit in the notion of teleological organization, whatever its value for the biologist or critic, is out of place in the realm of normative social theory. Why, after all, ought the social world to exhibit the same kind of harmony and unity of purpose that characterize a work of art or a living organism? Our resistance to Hegel’s position is not easily set aside, for it has its source (or at least one of its sources) in our deep-seated aversion to a central feature of teleological organization, indeed to the very feature that distinguishes it most clearly from the alternative conception of rational organization discussed earlier, namely, the effective coordination of private ends. The main difference between these two conceptions is not that a teleological view thinks of the social whole as having its own ends distinct from those of its individual members as such, for, as we have seen, this is true of the first conception as well. The difference resides, rather, in whether primacy is given to the whole or to the individual members as such in determining the ends ascribed to the social whole. More precisely, the teleological view thinks of the social whole as having ends that are con-
semiautonomous social spheres whose specialized and complementary functions work together to make the modern social world into a self-reproducing, rationally intelligible whole. In doing so I shall proceed in roughly the order suggested in my statement at the beginning of this section of the four properties contained in Hegel's holistic conception of self-determination. Recall that the self-determined social world was defined there as a (1) teleologically organized, (2) self-reproducing whole that is (3) articulated into specialized, semiautonomously functioning components whose specific qualities and relations to one another are (4) determined by the Concept.

I have already described the general features of the conception of teleological organization that is at work in the theory of Sittlichkeit. The first step in acquiring a more concrete understanding of how this conception functions as an ideal for social organization is to specify the ends Hegel attributes to the social world as a whole. What precisely is it that constitutes "the interest of the whole" (§2702), or the "general business (allgemeines Geschäft)" (VPR1, 150) of the social organism? The most easily recognized of these ends comes into view by thinking, once again, of the example of a biological organism: a rationally organized society must have at its disposal the materials and capacities required for its own reproduction. This thought alone brings to light an important piece of Hegel's account of what makes the structure of modern Sittlichkeit rational, namely, that each of its spheres exercises a distinct function necessary for the material reproduction of society: the family furnishes society with human individuals; civil society supplies the material goods needed for the sustenance of life; and the state carries out the function of coordinating the two spheres (in that its legislation is aimed, in part, at shoring up the two subordinate institutions and ensuring that neither flourishes at the other's expense).

Yet what the social organism needs in order to realize its end of self-reproduction cannot be fully specified in terms of its material requirements alone, for the simple reason that the social organism is something more than a merely material being. The institutions of Sittlichkeit make up what Hegel calls "objective spirit," and thus, like any "spiritual" being, a social whole exists (to use Hegel's language) not only as substance but also as subject (PHG, 117, 23). In other words, human society is not simply a material entity but one that exists also as (human) consciousness. More precisely, the social world functions only in and through the conscious wills, attitudes, and beliefs of its constituent parts (human beings), all of which exist within that world as individuated bearers of consciousness. The fact that the social world is made up of parts that are themselves discrete units of subjectivity (in a sense to be further determined) marks, as Hegel recognizes, an extremely important difference between social and biological organisms. Taking note of this difference is crucial to our project here not only because it affects the content of Hegel's view on a number of significant issues but also because the ways in which he understands and accommodates the fact that the social world is made up of individual subjects will bear importantly on our assessment of the acceptability of his holistic starting point.

In our attempt to determine what the social organism requires to reproduce itself, and to do so with reasonable efficiency, the social world's ontological status as a spiritual rather than merely material entity is of considerable importance, for it imposes conditions on the rationally organized society that concern not just its objective structure but also the subjective makeup of the agents of social reproduction. Most important, it implies that in order for a society to reproduce itself as the kind of being it is, its individual members must be subjectively constituted so as to be capable of carrying out socially required functions of their own accord—that is, through activity that is motivated from within rather than induced by an external, coercive apparatus. If we recall the account given in chapter 3 of the subjective disposition appropriate to ethical life, the strategy behind Hegel's response to this requirement of the social organism comes clearly into view: the need for reliable reproducers of social institutions—for social members who are capable of regularly and willingly overriding their private interests for the sake of universal ends—can be met only if individuals' activity in the service of universal ends affords them a more substantial satisfaction than can be had from the pursuit of private ends alone. Thus, the demand that the rational social world be constructed so as to allow its members to find and realize their practical identities as particular individuals within their social activity can be understood as grounded both in society's need for an internally driven mechanism of reproduction and in the requirement that individuals, in accomplishing this social task, not be subject to a foreign will. This point suggests that it might be appropriate to regard Hegel's account of the subjective disposition of Sittlichkeit as an important piece of his solution to a basic problem of social theory that admits of a dis-
tinctly Rousseanean formulation: How is society to accomplish its “general business” in a way that is compatible with the freedom of each participating individual?  

While this formulation highlights a genuine and deep affinity between Hegel’s and Rousseau’s approaches to social theory, it would also be misleading if it were taken to imply that the telos of the social whole for Hegel is conceptually independent of the freedom of individual social members and that the basic problem the theory of Sittlichkeit faces is one of reconciling the claims of these two distinct and competing ends (the end of the whole and the freedom of its members). A more accurate representation of Hegel’s position, I believe, is one that sees the concern for individuals’ freedom as deriving from, and therefore as internal to, the end of the social whole properly understood. On such a view, the end of the social order as a whole would be conceived of such that the realization of individuals’ freedom would appear not as an extraneous desideratum but as an essential part of the work of a properly functioning society. It is in fact possible to interpret Hegel’s position in precisely this way once we realize that the telos he attributes to society as a self-sustaining entity is not mere self-reproduction but self-reproduction in accord with its own essence; the social organism’s end, in other words, is to reproduce itself as the kind of being it essentially is.

The essential nature of the rational social order is, of course, to realize itself as free, or self-determining, but in which of the many senses of self-determination encountered thus far? Although Hegel never addresses this question in precisely this form, it is of utmost importance to recognize that his conception of the telos of the social whole includes not only self-determination in its strongly holistic sense but also the practical freedom of its individual members. Thus, it belongs to the essence of the rational social whole to reproduce itself in a way that also accommodates the greatest possible freedom of its individual parts. This crucial feature of Hegel’s theory, though nowhere made explicit, shows itself in the importance the Philosophy of Right accords to the more individualistic forms of freedom—personal and moral freedom, the accounts of which occupy two of the work’s three main parts—and it is expressed more directly in the very important statement, made in the midst of one of Hegel’s most extensive discussions of rational social organization, that “the individuals of the mass are themselves spiritual natures” (§264). As its context makes clear, this statement is not intended to express the point (though it, too, would be true for Hegel) that the essential nature of human individuals is to belong to a community that, taken as a whole, exhibits the properties of a spiritual being. Rather, the claim that individuals themselves are spiritual beings is meant to convey precisely what it appears to, namely, that it is the essence of human individuals to replicate within themselves, albeit approximately and on a miniature scale, the qualities that define a spiritual being. Further, it implies that a social world that failed to give this fact its due would fall short of the ideal implicit in the requirement that it reproduce itself as the kind of being it essentially is (because it would neglect the kind of beings its individual parts essentially are). Whatever else follows from Hegel’s statement ascribing a spiritual status to individuals themselves—its full import will become clear only in succeeding chapters—it means above all that providing for the freedom of its individual members is part and parcel of the social organism’s proper functioning. In Hegel’s account of Sittlichkeit the social world fulfills this aspect of its essential nature not only by constituting an arena within which its members acquire particular identities that enable them to embrace the universal will of their institutions as their own (and hence to be self-determined when acting in accord with that will) but also by securing the conditions necessary for them to realize their freedom as individual persons and moral subjects.

One important consequence of this way of construing the telos of the social whole is that the two possibilities sketched here for giving content to the notion of objective freedom—one derived from Rousseau’s account of the general will, the other from Hegel’s holistic conception of self-determination—no longer appear as competing alternatives. For the crucial assumption that the parts of the social world must themselves achieve the forms of self-determination appropriate to them as individuals in order for the whole to realize its essential end means that the Rousseanean conception of objective freedom—defined broadly as that which secures the conditions of the freedom of individual wills—turns out, on Hegel’s view, to constitute one essential element of society’s telos as a whole.

Once we have determined the proper end of the social organism, the next step in apprehending the modern social world as a rationally organized whole is to discover how its composition is determined by that end or, in other words, how the specific functions of its parts—in our
case the three basic institutions of Sittlichkeit—are necessary if the social world is to be able to reproduce itself in accord with its essential nature. Hegel gives expression to this aspect of his conception of rational organization in the following passage: "The living self-production [Sich-selbst-Hervorbringung] of the spiritual substance consists in its organic activity: ... the articulation and division of its general business and power into ... different powers and businesses. The fact that the final end is brought about out of the determinate workings of the different spheres of business ... constitutes the inner necessity of freedom" (VPR, 130; emphases omitted). I have already noted how each of the spheres of modern Sittlichkeit makes a unique contribution to producing what is materially required for the social order's self-maintenance. Assigning these distinct reproductive functions to the different social institutions makes it possible to see the latter as articulated spheres within a social whole that carry out their specialized tasks by functioning as relatively autonomous subsystems. It becomes meaningful, for example, to make the family, the economy, and the state into objects of study in their own right and to ask about each: How does this sphere carry on its distinctive business? Through what particular mechanisms does it accomplish its own part of the general task of society's material reproduction? Moreover, because the essential end of the social order also includes the freedom of its individual members, a further task of Hegel's theory is to demonstrate how its basic institutions function so as jointly to secure the conditions necessary for personal and moral freedom to be realized. The details of this important part of Hegel's account of how the general business of society is realized through the cooperation of distinct, independently functioning social spheres will be the main topic of chapter 5.

The claims of the previous paragraph can be formulated more succinctly as follows: Hegel's appeal to the notion of a teleologically organized whole in order to give content to the concept of a rationally structured society implies that one of the central tasks of his social theory is to delineate how the institutions of modern Sittlichkeit, when working in concert, are especially well-suited to achieve the two primary ends of the social organism as a whole, namely, its material reproduction and the formation of conscious agents of social reproduction who are free as persons and moral subjects. It is in this way that the Hegelian social theorist demonstrates the necessity of such institutions or shows that, in Hegel's words, "they constitute the inner necessity of freedom." Necessity of course, is to be understood here as teleological necessity: the family, civil society, and the modern state are claimed to be necessary in order for the social organism to realize its proper end.

Although central to Hegel's account of a rational social world, the points just made do not yet exhaust the content of his claim that the modern social world is rationally organized. For Hegel's conception of rational organization includes a further, much more obscure element that is bound up with his metaphysical doctrine of the Concept, as developed in the part of his philosophical system known as the Logic. This aspect of Hegel's social theory is alluded to in the passage cited at the beginning of this section in which the particular spheres that make up the rational society are said to "derive from the single concept of the rational will." It is also what is at issue in Hegel's numerous statements to the effect that the composition of Sittlichkeit as a whole reflects the logical structure of the Concept. As I indicated in chapter 1, 'the Concept' (der Begriff) is Hegel's term for the basic structure that is said to inform not only reason—the cognitive faculty of the "subject"—but also the "object" of that faculty, actuality itself (Wirklichkeit). This is to say that for Hegel the 'Concept' names both the structure reason requires of its objects if they are to satisfy its demand that the world be intelligible through and through, as well as the structure that can be demonstrated (by philosophy) to underlie the whole of that world. In Hegel's more grandiose language, the doctrine of the Concept can be said to ground his philosophy's famous claim to establish the thoroughlygoing identity of subject and object. The relevance of this metaphysical thesis to social theory lies in its claim to be able to give a distinctive content to the notion of a rationally organized social world (because it purports to specify the structure of any entity that is fully intelligible to reason). More specifically, Hegel appeals to his account of the three essential constituents of any rationally ordered whole—the "moments" of immediate unity, difference, and mediated unity—in order to determine the number and nature of the parts required by the social world in order to qualify as rational. Thus, in the context of the theory of Sittlichkeit, the doctrine of the Concept translates into the requirement that the social world be composed of three distinguishable social spheres, each corresponding to one of the three moments of the Concept. The rationally organized social world, then, is one whose basic institutions allow the moments of immediate unity, difference, and mediated unity to attain full and com-
patible expression. From the perspective of Hegel's metaphysical position, such institutions are judged to be rational not because they are well-suited to achieving a particular set of ends specific to the social organism (and hence "rational" in a sense that can be grasped independently of any distinctively Hegelian theses about the nature of reason) but rather because the whole they constitute is inherently rational in the sense that it embodies the very structure of reason itself.

The specific doctrines of Hegel's Logic have proved exceptionally resistant to the efforts of generations of sympathetic commentators to reconstruct them into a philosophically compelling metaphysical system. Rather than defend this aspect of Hegel's social theory by attempting to make plausible the metaphysics from which it derives (a challenge I forgo less for lack of space than for lack of ability), I shall restrict myself to the more modest, but not necessarily less rewarding, task of showing how Hegel exploits the resources of his doctrine of the Concept to make a powerful point about the nature of the modern social world, the force of which is appreciable without a mastery of Hegelian logic. This procedure, of course, stands in opposition to that of interpreters who insist on the seamless integrity of Hegel's thought and therefore reject out of hand any attempt to explicate a part of his philosophy in detachment from its metaphysical foundations. In contrast to this interpretive approach, I regard it as a testimony to the depth of Hegel's philosophical achievement that his theory of Sittlichkeit can be shown to provide a compelling account of the rational social world independently of a prior commitment to his metaphysics. For this means, in agreement with Hegel's own self-understanding, that the particular pieces of his all-embracing system are not simply the result of mechanically applying an abstract conceptual formula to the different problem areas of philosophy. Rather, as I shall try to show in the case of his social theory, Hegel at his best reveals an astounding ability to employ his distinctive metaphysical doctrines to provide insight into the complex phenomena peculiar to the various domains of philosophical inquiry.

The point I have in mind comes into view if we think of the Concept not as specifying the structure of intelligible reality überhaupt but as a highly abstract account of the kind of inner articulation required of a self-conscious being, whether individual or collective, in order for it to be a whole, fully integrated subject (or, in Hegel's terminology, in order for it to realize its essential nature as "spirit"). When we add to this the consideration that the family, civil society, and the state are (for reasons to be considered later) associated with the Conceptual moments of immediate unity, difference, and mediated unity, respectively, it becomes clear that Hegel means to claim that the modern social world, composed of these institutions, qualifies as a spiritual, therefore thoroughly rational, whole.

The aspect of this doctrine I want to emphasize here—what I consider its rational kernel—comes more clearly into focus when we consider Hegel's reasons for associating the three institutions of Sittlichkeit with the moments of the Concept. In this context immediate unity, difference, and mediated unity refer primarily to the structure of the institutions with which they are linked. More specifically, they designate the type of unity that characterizes the institution in question, as well as the kind of relations among its individual members that such unity involves. The point here is that while the family, civil society, and the state all embody a kind of social unity—in each case the group in question can be said to have a collective end, or general will—each embodies a unity of a different sort. The family, for example, counts as an instance of immediate unity because love is the principal bond that unites family members and makes it possible for them to have a collective will, each regarding the good of other members and of the family as a whole as his own good. Familial love represents an immediate attachment to others because it has its origin not in thought, which is mediated or reflective, but in "natural feeling" (in both sexual love and the love between parent and child). As Hegel puts it, "within family life ... one experiences Sittlichkeit in the form of unmediated love and trust" (VPR2, 144; slightly amended). It is important to note here that the unity of the family is not only immediate but also "substantial," in contrast to "formal" or "external" unity (§§157–158; VPR1, 250). This means that familial love, and the trust that issues from it, are the basis of substantial attachments among family members, where 'substantial' refers to the fact that one's having such attachments (to other particular individuals) makes up the substance of who one is—or, to use the terminology developed in chapter 3—that those attachments are (partially) constitutive of one's identity as a particular individual. It follows from this that members of substantial social unities do not regard their participation in them as merely or primarily a means for satisfying their own private ends. Rather, their membership in such groups is the source of new, socially shared final
ends such that, for example, participation in the life of one's family be-
comes an end in itself. For the members of substantial unities' social
union as such is itself the true content and end, and the proper destina-
tion [Bestimmung] of [such] individuals is to lead a universal [that is,
shared or collective] life" (§258A).

Civil society, in contrast, represents the moment of difference—or
"atomism" (E §523)—because those who participate in the economic
sphere do so as separate, independent individuals who work and trade
in order to satisfy their own particular needs, especially those that derive
from their status as natural beings. In civil society individuals are joined
together in what Hegel calls "formal universality" (as opposed to the
substantial unity of the family) and are said to have merely "external" rela-
tions (§§157, 181), both to one another and to the economic order as a
whole. These basic features of the economic sphere are due to the crucial
fact that in modern civil society production and exchange are market-
regulated. This means that while there are rules—laws of the market—
that in fact govern the apparently independent activities of economic
agents and unite them into a coherent system of production and ex-
change, the operation of those rules remains external to both the wills
and consciousness of the individuals involved. Within such a system,
individual producers and traders contribute to the realization of a so-
cial end—the efficient increase of overall social wealth—but they do so
without either knowing or willing that end as their own. The relations
members of civil society have to other individuals and to the economic
order in general are external in the sense that, as economic agents, they
need be, and typically are, motivated only by their own private ends
rather than by the ends of other participants in civil society or by the
collective end that they in fact (but unwittingly) bring about. In this
sphere individuals' relations to others and to society itself appear to
them as primarily of instrumental value, since they serve as the means to
achieving a set of ends (including the protection of their person and
property) they have independently of their association with others in
civil society: "universality as such is not an end in and for itself but
rather a means for the existence and maintenance of individuals"
(VPR1, 208). (It is important to bear in mind that this is a simplification
of Hegel's account, since civil society in its fully rational form also in-
cludes certain groups, the corporations, in which members partially
shed the perspective of independent individuals and acquire bonds of

solidarity with the fellow members of their trade or estate. Yet even these
bonds are said to develop directly out of one's egoistically motivated pro-
ductive activity and are therefore still grounded in one's role as an inde-
pendent individual who pursues private ends.)

Finally, the modern state as Hegel understands it embodies the mo-
ment of mediated unity. As such, it incorporates two prominent struc-
tural elements of the previous spheres: the substantial unity of the fam-
ily and the element of difference, or atomism, characteristic of civil
society. Hegel, following Rousseau, conceives of the state, or political
sphere, as the public realm where legislation is framed and executed in
accord with a shared conception of the good of society as a whole—as
the arena, in other words, where the general will is given both a deter-
nate content and a real existence. The state incorporates the atomism of
civil society because citizens enter the political sphere with diverse, in-
dependently established identities as particular individuals whose fam-
ily ties and positions within civil society provide them with divergent
particular interests. Because the moment of difference is not to be sup-
pressed by the state but rather incorporated into it, the principal con-
cern of Hegelian politics is to find a way of integrating the particular
wills of individual citizens with the general will not only through the
fanning of laws that further the good of the whole but also by subjec-
tively transforming citizens so as to enable them to embrace the general
will as their own. The latter requirement poses a by now familiar prob-
lem: What enables citizens to assent to social policies that sometimes
subordinate their private interests to the good of the whole? Hegel's re-
sponse here is to appeal to the same idea that underlies his account of
the substantial unity of the family: individuals are capable of embracing
the ends of the state as their own only if they are able to experience their
roles as citizens as a source of their own selfhood (§261A). Thus, in or-
der for individuals to will the general will (in order for them to be citi-
sens in the full sense of the term) the state must be a substantial unity in
which individuals' relations to their fellow citizens—their being joined
together as a single nation, or people (Volk)—provides them with a
shared, "universal" project, the carrying out of which is for them both
an end in itself and a substantial source of the value they ascribe to their
own lives.

This, however, raises a further question: What is the source of the
more than merely instrumental ties that citizens are said to have to one
another? What kind of attachment in the political sphere substitutes for the bond of love that unites individuals in the family? It is tempting to assume that Hegel's appeal to the idea of national identity implies that the ties among citizens are akin to bonds of brotherhood, having their roots in a prereflective attachment citizens feel to one another by virtue of their all belonging, through birth, to a single people. The ability of citizens to embrace the general will, then, would be parasitic on a lovelike concern they feel for the welfare of their compatriots prior to (independently of) the dealings they have with one another within the specifically political institutions of their society. Yet Hegel repeatedly emphasizes that there is a fundamental qualitative difference—one that makes the state an instance of mediated rather than immediate unity—between the attachments of the family and those within the state. The unity that characterizes the latter, Hegel insists, is not grounded in immediate feeling or any other "bond of nature" (VPR1, 250) but is instead a "union through laws" and therefore a "unity that is known, conscious, expressly pronounced, and thought" (§157N). The state, then, embodies the Conceptual moment of mediated unity because the tie that binds citizens together—the bond that endows them with a single will—comes into being only through a collective act of legislating reason: in giving itself laws, the state establishes for itself principles that are universally binding, explicitly known, and consciously endorsed through a process of public reflection on the common good. The state, Hegel says, differs from the family in that it "knows what it wills and knows it in its universality, as something thought; it therefore functions and acts in accord with conscious ends, recognized principles and according to laws that ... are present to consciousness" (§270).

Hegel's claim that the substantial attachments among citizens first get fully constituted through the enacting of laws implies that the specific workings of the legislative process play a crucial role in his account of how the modern state solves its central problem of bringing citizens to embrace the general will as their own. For Hegel the key to achieving this integration of wills lies in a certain (ideal) feature of the act of legislation itself, namely, its "publicity" (§§314–315), or, as I shall refer to it here, the public transparency of the process through which the general will acquires a determinate content. The legislative process in the rational state is transparent not only in the sense that it is open to public view but also in the more substantive sense that the rational basis of the laws that issue from it is clearly articulated and accessible to all citizens.

There are two main ideas behind Hegel's claim that the public transparency of the legislative process helps to enable citizens to will the general will. The first idea is that citizens come to apprehend their laws as rational—as reflecting the interests of the whole—when they see how those laws emerge from public deliberation that is aimed at discerning the collective good and that gives due consideration to the input of all major interest groups of society. For Hegel, in contrast to Rousseau, the demand that resulting laws "come from all" requires not that each individual participate in the legislative process—a requirement Hegel thought impracticable in large, modern societies—but only that all basic interest groups be fairly represented in the legislative process (§3092).

Second, in addition to seeing their laws as universally rational (rational from the perspective of the whole), citizens must also be able to regard the general will as in some way continuous with their own particular wills. The public transparency of the legislative process works to this end by allowing citizens to become spectators of the real process—which Hegel calls a "spectacle," or Schauspiel (§3152)—through which their particular interests are taken into account—recognized as having a weight—in arriving at the necessary social compromise among competing particular interests. This distinctively political way in which individuals find particular satisfaction in the universal is predicated on their identification with (at least one of) the principal actors that occupy the legislative stage, namely, "the associations, communities, and corporations" (§308) to which, as members of civil society, they belong prior to their political involvement. Insofar as individuals see their corporate deputies as representations of themselves—and hence as representing their own particular interests—they are able to experience the recognition accorded to corporate interests in the legislative process as a kind of recognition of themselves as particular beings.

Given his metaphysical doctrine of the Concept, together with the claim that the family, civil society, and the state embody its three characteristic moments, it is possible to appreciate the general idea behind Hegel's assertion that the modern social world is a spiritual, thoroughly rational whole. But this assertion, properly understood, is more than simply a claim about the abstract structure required of the social world in order for it, as a whole, to count as a spiritual entity. It is also a claim about the different kinds of social membership individuals need to experience in order to exist as whole, fully developed subjects. This point becomes clearer when we realize that the idea of a Conceptually organized
The social world not only specifies the necessary internal structure of the three basic institutions and the relations that must obtain among their members but also gives an account of the different kinds of identities required of individuals if they are to participate freely in such institutions. Focusing on the latter point suggests that Hegel's demonstration of the Conceptual structure of Sittlichkeit includes the claim that the modern social world is rational (in part) because it allows its members to develop and express different, complementary types of identities, each of which is indispensable to realizing the complete range of relations to others (and to self) that are available to human subjects and worthy of achieving. On this view, then, to lack membership in any of the three basic institutions would be to miss out on an important part of what it is to be a fully realized (individual) self.

Before filling in some of the details of this interpretation, it is necessary to consider a fundamental (and partially justified) objection to the suggestion that Hegel intends for his doctrine of the Concept to serve as an ideal not only for the structure of the social world as a whole but also for the internal composition of individual social members. This dispute, it will easily be recognized, is just one specific aspect of the larger debate over the extent to which the theory of Sittlichkeit is holistic in its foundations—or, in other words, over the extent to which the basic properties of the rational social world can also be ascribed severally to the parts of that world, namely, to individual social members. Implicit in this objection is the interpretive claim, opposite to my own, that for Hegel only Sittlichkeit taken as a whole realizes (or approximates) the rational structure attributed to a spiritual entity and that an individual comes as close as he or she can to achieving this ideal simply by occupying a specialized position within such a rationally structured whole.21

There are indeed textual grounds for attributing such a strongly holistic position to Hegel on this issue. First, there is one important class of individuals, namely, women, who, though not denied the formal rights of personhood, are unambiguously excluded from membership in two of the three institutions of Sittlichkeit, the state and civil society (881642, 166, 301A; VPR1, 98, 253–254). In other words, it is clearly the case that Hegel believes (and finds it untroubling) that women realize the ideal of spirituality not by embodying the three moments of the Concept within themselves but only by participating in the life of a larger whole that does so. Second, there are suggestions that Hegel also means to consign large groups of men to a spiritual fate not unlike that of all women. This impression is created by Hegel's apparent exclusion of many (male) members of the first two estates of civil society—the agricultural and commercial estates—from participation in the political sphere, with the consequence that life in the state appears to be the nearly exclusive province of the civil servants who make up the "universal" estate.22 This suggests that the strongly holistic position—the idea that the spiritual status available to individuals consists only in their being part of a Conceptually organized whole—is more deeply rooted in Hegel's social theory than if it were restricted to the single case of women (and hence easier to dismiss as merely the consequence of chauvinistic assumptions about the natural superiority of men).

While Hegel's exclusion of women from the state and civil society is indisputable, the textual issues involved in the second case are considerably more complex. I shall argue here that although support for both positions can be found in the relevant texts, a comparison of early with later sources reveals that Hegel's thought underwent an unmistakable development from the more strongly holistic position described earlier to the view that a defining aim of the rational social order is to allow for all (male) individuals to incorporate, as fully as possible, each of the types of identities associated with membership in the three basic social spheres. This development is brought out most vividly by considering two parallel passages from different versions of the Rechtspfilsophie, the first of which is taken from student transcripts of Hegel's lectures in 1818–1819. "It can appear hard that the whole of Sittlichkeit gives over a part of its individuals to the limitedness of family life or to the necessity of bourgeois life [in the sphere of civil society]. On the one hand, that is a necessity; on the other hand, there is reconciliation in this necessity" (VPR1, 270). Less than two years later, in the first published version of the Philosophy of Right, this passage is replaced by §§262–264, which contains the following statement (already partially cited earlier) regarding the spiritual nature of individual social members: "Individuals . . . are themselves spiritual natures. As such, they contain within themselves a dual moment, namely, the extreme of individuality, which knows and wills for itself, and the extreme of universality, which knows and wills the substantial. For this reason individuals achieve their right to both of these sides only insofar as they have actuality as both private and substantial persons" (§264). From a position that allows itself to be reconciled to the necessity that large numbers of individuals be given over to the narrowness of a purely domestic existence, or to a life restricted to
the pursuit of one's profession, Hegel moves to a view that recognizes the right of all (male) individuals to participate in social life as a family member, as the practitioner of a socially productive occupation, and as a citizen all at once. As he puts the point more plainly in his lectures of 1819–1820: "the human being [der Mensch] fails to achieve his destiny [Bestimmung] if he is only a father, only a member of civil society, etc. (VPR2, 127–128)."

The passage cited earlier (§264) introduces a further complication into the present discussion because it refers to individuals as embodying only two extremes (individuality and universality) rather than the three moments one would expect, given the tripartite structure of the Concept. This becomes less puzzling, however, when we realize that Hegel not infrequently (for example, at §260+Z) lumps the family and civil society together, calling them the spheres of particularity[26] and contrasting them both with the state, which he identifies as the universal sphere. Associating the family and civil society with particularity expresses the idea that, viewed from a perspective that looks at the social world as a whole, these two spheres serve the purpose of fostering and giving expression to the particularity of social members. That is, through their participation in civil society and the family individuals develop and express identities that distinguish them qualitatively from other members of the state and provide them with divergent, potentially conflicting ends and interests. Yet Hegel's practice of subsuming the family and civil society under the single rubric of particularity is not inconsistent with the expected threefold classification, because membership in each sphere is associated with a distinct kind of particular identity, depending on whether the social unity in question embodies the Conceptual moment of difference or immediate unity.

We have already seen how Hegel distinguishes the family from civil society on the basis of the kinds of relations—whether (immediate) "substantial" or "external"—that hold among the members of the group in question: as a family member, one's relations to others make up part of the content of one's identity (with the consequence that the good of those others, and of the family as a whole, become one's own, consciously embraced final ends), whereas the ends that are consciously pursued by members of civil society are private, and their relations to others have for them primarily an instrumental value. But, as I suggested previously, the difference in the ways individuals relate to one another within these two institutions implies a corresponding difference in the kinds of particular identities that are acquired and expressed in those spheres. The most fundamental difference between these identities can be expressed as follows: in the family one conceives of oneself as essentially a member of a particular social unity (§158), as someone who depends on one's attachments to these concrete others for being who one is, while the participant in civil society conceives of himself as an independent individual, a pursuer of private ends and projects who achieves a self-sufficient existence by supporting himself through his own productive activity. The identity of a family member, then, is characterized by the fact that other individuals figure positively into his self-conception rather than functioning negatively, as a limit or boundary of the self over and against which he defines who he is. Thus, the family distinguishes itself from civil society in that participation in the former provides individuals with particular identities that are won, paradoxically, only through a kind of surrendering of self, namely, through abandoning the standpoint of an independent, separate self motivated only or primarily by its own private ends.

Implicit in Hegel's account of Stättlichkeit is the idea that each of these kinds of identities possesses a distinct, independent value for the individual who has them and that experiencing particularity in both of these forms is essential to realizing (or approximating) the full range of possible modes of selfhood. To miss out on any of these forms of social membership, then, is to be deprived of one of the basic ways of being a self and hence to suffer an impoverishment of one's life (in this one respect). One way of bringing out this point more forcefully is to recall how membership in each sphere brings with it different kinds of practical projects, each possessing its own distinctive pleasures and rewards: while family members engage in consciously shared projects that are defined and limited by the good of others to whom they are attached through love, civil society is the sphere in which individuals (in the words of one commentator) "pursue their own welfare in their own way, choose their own way of life, and enter into voluntary relations with others who are likewise free choosers of their own ends and activities." Another way of bringing out the importance of participating in both spheres is to consider how each form of social membership provides individuals with a different way of having their particularity affirmed by others. In civil society the recognition individuals achieve is conditional on their competence as productive social members and is therefore earned "through their own activity, diligence, and skill" (§207). In contrast to this, recognition
in the family, because it is based on love, represents an affirmation of the particular being one is that is independent of one's usefulness to others and of what one has made oneself into. Whereas in civil society "I must give myself the form of universality, make myself into something for others [in order to achieve recognition], . . . in the family I am valued [ich gelte] on the basis of what I immediately am" (VPR2, 148)—that is, my particular qualities are affirmed by others for no reason at all other than that they happen to be mine.

In contrast to the spheres of particularity, membership in the state offers individuals the possibility of achieving a universal existence by taking part in "a public life dedicated to the substantial universal" (§157). The state is the realm of universality because within it citizens acquire an identity that is universally shared (that is, shared with all other citizens of one's land), and because they learn to discern and to be moved by the good of the whole, even though this sometimes conflicts with interests they have by virtue of their specific positions in civil society or the distinctive situations of their own families. Hegel's claim is that individuals whose practical engagements are restricted to family life and to the pursuit of their own private good within the economic sphere lead unnecessarily narrow lives that fall short of realizing the full range of possibilities for selfhood offered by the modern world. Participation in the realm of politics is important not merely because it is requisite for individuals to meet the Rousseauean requirement that they have wills undetermined by an external other (since by affirming the general will, the law that determines their actions ceases to be something other) but also because it provides individuals with a distinctive set of projects and attachments that rounds out and enriches their otherwise merely particular lives. Moreover, life within the state is for Hegel more than simply one further way of being a self, equal in significance to all others. Rather, it represents—by virtue of embodying the moment of universality—the highest of these possibilities. That is, political life most closely approximates the ideal of self-sufficient subjectivity (which is to say, spirituality) because it is the arena within which citizens, as a body, determine themselves in accord with universal principles arrived at through the exercise of their own socially constituted, public reason.