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## **Hegel's Political Philosophy of Self-Knowledge: How Knowing Thyself Necessarily Occurs in a Political Community**

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel grounds the state in will, which is the primary expression of self, and sees the state and its institutions as manifestations of will. Yet, Hegel's conception of will is radically different from that of any of his predecessors and, consequently, the basis of the state and subsequent political obligation is radically different.

The *Philosophy of Right* presents will as reason (freedom) actualizing itself in the world. As active reason, will is a form of the mind or thought. Since, as Hegel says, mind (spirit) is consciousness in general, will must be viewed as a particular mode of consciousness. Therefore, the basis of the state is, for Hegel, metaphysical in that the state is a necessary objective mode of consciousness in the form of will but also voluntary as the product of free will. This argument must be considered in greater detail.

### **1. Consciousness**

The *Phenomenology of Mind* traces the development of consciousness until mind posits itself as its own reality, i. e., mind will be considered as both substance and subject. Within this journey various modes of consciousness are presented which are superseded, though not annihilated, by more adequate modes of consciousness until mind (spirit) arrives at absolute knowledge in which mind is its own object.<sup>1</sup>

Consciousness, the substance of mind, is compelled by inner necessity to move forward until it can account for its other by seeing the other as itself, i. e., its own product. Consciousness cannot rest as long as what is the object of consciousness is seen as alien to consciousness or as long as what is *in* consciousness is not *for* consciousness.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. by J. B. Baillie, New York 1967, 145.

<sup>2</sup> G. W. F. Hegel, *Philosophy of Mind: Being Part Three of the Encyclopaedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, trans. by William Wallace, Oxford 1971, 21.