The author's purpose is to understand the philosophical foundations of Hegel's social theory by articulating the normative standards at work in his claim that the three central social institutions of the modern era--the nuclear family, civil society, and the constitutional state--are rational or good.

Its central question is: what, for Hegel, makes a rational social order rational? In addressing this question the book aspires to be faithful to Hegel's texts and to articulate a compelling theory of rational social institutions; its aim is not only to interpret Hegel correctly but also to demonstrate the richness and power that his vision of the rational social order possesses. Frederick Neuhouser's task is to understand the conceptions of freedom on which Hegel's theory rests and to show how they ground his arguments in defense of the modern social world.

In doing so, the author focuses on Hegel's most important and least understood contribution to social philosophy, the idea of "social freedom." Neuhouser's strategy for making sense of social freedom is to show its affinities with Rousseau's conception of the general will.

The main idea that Hegel appropriates from Rousseau is that rational social institutions must satisfy two conditions: first, they must furnish the basic social preconditions of their members' freedom; and, second, all social members must be able subjectively to affirm their freedom-conditioning institutions as good and thus to regard the principles that govern their social participation as coming from their own wills.

Acesse aqui a versão completa deste livro