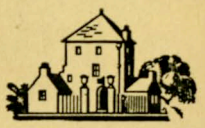
THE PHILOSOPHY OF HEGEL

Hegel's basic writings, including selections from *The Philosophy of History*, *The Philosophy of Right and Law*, *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, *The Science of Logic*, *Lectures on Aesthetics*, etc.

Edited with an Introduction and Notes by
CARL J. FRIEDRICH



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THE PHILOSOPHY OF HEGEL

Edited with an Introduction by

CARL J. FRIEDRICH
Harvard University

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himself; to Kant's many followers it is as wrong as it is historically misleading. For the *Logic* of Hegel radically transcends, indeed it repudiates the very "limits" within which Kant had hoped to confine "any future metaphysic." It is rationalistic ontological speculation of the very sort which Kant had hoped to have banished from the history of philosophy forever. *The Science of Logic* is no logic in the traditional sense at all, and Hegel took great pride in the fact that it was not. For this traditional logic was concerned with what Hegel considered "abstractions" and lifeless ratiocination concerning such abstractions. The true logic is concerned with the *ground of being*, the beginning and the end of all philosophy. In short, it is ontology.

Traditional logic is based upon the law of contradiction, according to which A is not non-A. Hegel's entire *Logic* is built upon an ontological repudiation of this principle. He does not repudiate it for "abstract thought," that is to say, for ordinary scientific thought. But he does reject it for philosophical and dialectical purposes. The repudiation takes the form of dialectic. This dialectic is the celebrated core of Hegel's philosophical method, the procedure upon which he based his proud claim of having "completed" the task of the spirit as manifest in philosophy. "I know," Hegel says in his Introduction to the *Logic*, "that my method is the one and only true one." And the reason he thought so was the dialectic which enabled him, he thought, to grasp the object as it is in itself. This dialectic method is nothing separate and apart from its content or object; it is at work in the object and "moves it along." [37]

In order to appreciate what Hegel is getting at it is necessary to realize that the dialectical process is not a type of deduction. It is common to associate with the notion of dialectic some idea of *a priori* reasoning. In Hegel's view this is entirely inadmissible. Dialectics is descriptive: descriptive of the process of thought which one must have experienced in order to be able to understand it. Dialectic in this sense shares something of the intuitive quality of all direct experience.

The central experience with which dialectic struggles is the

inadequacy of all concepts. Hence Hegel insists that such concepts must be made to correspond to the fluidity and richness of what is being seen when life in its fullness is beheld. We have therefore considered it desirable to render the specific Hegelian *Begriff* as conception rather than concept;[38] for it is intended to be something broader, more comprehensive and lacking logical precision in the traditional sense. As Hartman says: "The result is a new concept of the concept." [39] Besides first the object with which the conception is concerned and second the conceiver, one other persistent core of so fluid a conception remains: its various aspects form a unique system, and through this interrelationship all the conceptions in turn form a system.

If the conception thus only emerges in the process of reasoning, if it involves "hard work" as Hegel in typical German fashion likes to insist, then the dialectic is this "movement of the conceptions," this dynamic process by which they are distilled, not as something static and fixed, but as something forever evolving and achieving new forms as the perspectives change through the relation with other conceptions.

The law of dialectic is probably the best-known and at the same time the least understood aspect of Hegel's philosophy. The thesis-antithesis-synthesis triad has an arid and formal ring, especially when associated with some of the later notions of the materialist interpretation of history. In point of fact, we are here confronted with something very much more perplexing, more rich and yet at the same time more confused than the simple logical triad suggests. We have already discussed the notion, so central to Hegel's dialectic, that both antithesis and synthesis preserve, as well as suspend the antecedent conception. We have also mentioned the related notion that the synthesis "elevates" the two antecedent conceptions; it is through such synthesis that the conceptions reach ever new "levels of discourse." And it is Hegel's contention that this dialectic process is not something he invented, not a newfangled notion at all, but a sound and objective description of what has actually occurred in the history of the spirit as manifest in the development of philosophy.

The "vast power of negation" which fascinated Hegel is the

originator of ever-new thought. Hegel does not pretend to understand how this can be; all he knows is that it is so. Philosophical thought records and analyzes the experiences which it has made; that is all. Hence the somewhat stereotype character of this dialectic. No synthesis, no matter how unique, can help arousing this power of negation, can help eliciting a contradiction and thus starting the process all over again. In terms of abstract logic, the Hegelian position amounts to claiming that: A is non-A. This formidable challenge to established logical principles is rooted in an ontological, that is to say, metaphysical assumption. This metaphysical assumption is the core of the Hegelian philosophy: the absolute is reason. Hence Hegel can assert that dialectic is God's thinking himself in man or, to put it another way, dialectic is eternal reason realizing itself in man's thought. The whole argument of *The Science of Logic* stands and falls with this metaphysical basis which shows that its problem is derivative of the more basic problems of religion and politics outlined above.

One of the difficult, if not unresolvable, problems of Hegel's dialectic approach is that of where to begin. He chooses, rather surprisingly, the conception of being (*Sein*). But in order to understand this, one has to remember that the entire *Phenomenology of the Spirit* is a kind of prolegomena for the *Logic*. What is most immediately given is being, but being without reference to any particular thing, indeterminate being. This at once posits the negation of being: the absence of all determination suggests non-being, or the nothing (*Nichts*). We have here the contradiction of the non-being being—a basic dialectic issue in Plato's *Parmenides*. But whereas in Plato the static eternity of the ideas stands in the way of a resolution, Hegel dialectically resolves, that is to say, suspends and preserves, the antithetical paradox by suggesting that both being and non-being—or rather nothingness—are superseded by the higher synthesis of becoming (*Werden*). The truth of both being and non-being is to be found in their actual coexistence in "becoming" which constitutes "the identity of their identity and their non-identity." As Hegel puts it in the *Logic*, the truth is "each immediately disappears in its opposite." [40]

The category of becoming is extremely important for Hegel; all higher being is movement, development, action, history. Hence God, too, is essentially becoming. God as merely being is lifeless, an abstraction, a motionless substance. For Hegel, God is active, a spiritual being full of life and unfolding in accordance with His inner nature. But the process does not stop at becoming; as becoming is actualization, it becomes something. The being here and now (*Dasein*) is definite, is a settled something that has ceased to become. Thus it is, according to Hegel, that becoming (*Werden*) suspends itself, as it suspends being and nothingness or non-being, and becomes something actually existent here-and-now (*Dasein*). But as always it at the same time also preserves itself as well as being and nothingness in this being here-and-now. As being and nothingness disappear into becoming, so becoming disappears, because that which is disappearing, disappears itself. "Becoming is an untamed restlessness (*haltungslose Unruhe*) which coalesces into a result that rests." [41]

One could go on now to pursue the meandering course of dialectic through its complex unfolding in the *Logic;* enough has perhaps been said to indicate, if ever so briefly, just how the dialectic proceeds and how extraordinarily obscure much of its reasoning appears. One might well exclaim with Wagner in Goethe's *Faust*: "I am as dazed by all this as if a millstone were going around in my head." Finiteness and infinity, quantity and measure, being for and by itself, reflection and essence, phenomenal and actual world, conception, subjectivity, and objectivity, and finally the idea—these and many other minor categories are treated in the same extraordinary way, their interrelationship being traced as one vast system of contradictions, with the conceptions containing these contradictions.

This may be illustrated once more in the concept of freedom, so central to the entire Hegelian philosophy. Hegel does not identify freedom with freedom of the will, or freedom from the operation of causality. Freedom is the activation of one's own inner tendency; it is an unfolding of oneself; it is self-realization. The teleological, Aristotelian matrix is clearly ap-

have an ethical being only in so far as they belong to this ethical sphere which is the state. As Hegel puts it quite simply: "The state is the actual reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of the ethical *Idea*." This may be and, in my opinion, is a most unfortunate way of defining the state. But whether we like it or not, let us only be sure that we do not make the crucial mistake of assuming that Hegel means the state as ordinarily conceived, that is to say the state as an institution engaged in law enforcement, or a state as a configuration of power, etc. For this is not the entity about which Hegel is making his assertions.[44] If one is to understand this proposition, it is necessary to read it the other way around as well: "The ethical idea is actualized (*verwirklicht*) in the state." Only in so far as the community through its organization realizes the ethical idea can it be said to be a state. "The state has its immediate existence in the ethical habits (*Sitte*) of the individual and in his self-consciousness." Self-realization is possible for the individual in the state only, because that is what the state consists of.

In a sense, these are elaborate tautologies, or, more precisely, identifications. But such identifications have a most important practical implication, as is immediately apparent, if we consider Hegel's notion that it is the highest duty of the individual to be "a member of the state." What this means is not some kind of totalitarian destruction of the individual, but an insistence that it is the duty of the individual to realize the ethical idea by participating in the community which is dedicated to this task. From the point of view of those who would insist on the state's being an institution for issuing commands, or a configuration of power, such a position may well be considered as destructive of the state's most essential characteristic and hence subversive. Haller's notion that the state is power and that the most powerful must rule, Hegel rightly characterizes as the notion that the state and its power are phenomena of nature and hence a denial of the state's true concern with the just and the ethical, a denial, that is, of the state as based upon law. Characteristically, and rather dramatically, Hegel takes Haller to task for belittling Magna Charta and similar enactments; in Hegel's view they are basic law and "contribute to

every piece of bread that the citizens eat." Hegel's rather difficult language has kept obscure his central position in the *Philosophy of Right and Law*, namely that "it is the hardest thing which can happen to a man, to be alienated from thought and reasonableness, from reverence for the laws and from the knowledge of how infinitely important, even divine, it is that the duties of the state and the rights of the citizens, as well as the rights of the state and the duties of the citizens be determined by law." In short, Hegel's approach is in line with, but makes metaphysically an earnest effort to buttress philosophically, the proposition in favor of a "government of laws and not of men."

If any test of this side of the matter is needed, all that is necessary is for the reader to turn to Hegel's views on Church and State (see below pp. 289–91). Only in its outward manifestations, its ownership of property and the like, is a church obliged to acknowledge "a limited subjection to the police power." When it comes to matters of doctrine, it is "a matter of conscience and part of the subjective freedom—the sphere of the inner life which is not the concern of the state." How is this view to be reconciled with the idea then that the state is the actualization of the ethical idea? "The ethical truth exists as law," Hegel answers, and the doctrine of the state is embodied in this attachment of the citizens to principles of law. What constitutes the essential difference is what is involved in the difference between the religion as revealed truth, and philosophy as rational truth. To restate a position previously discussed, we might cite a passage in which the Russian writer and man of affairs, Baron Boris d'Yxkull, a friend and student of Hegel's, has described the main theme of their conversations during long walks: "Religion is the anticipated (*geahnte*) philosophy, philosophy nothing but conscious religion; both seek, but by different paths, the same, namely God." [45]

This rationality of the state as the embodiment of ethics gives it a kinship to science and scholarship. After noting the church's inclination to resist rational, scientific inquiry and mentioning Bruno and Galileo, Hegel concludes the argument by rejecting the view of those who would consider the

separation of church and state as a misfortune (as De Maistre and other restoration reactionaries had done) and asserts that "only through this separation has the state been able to become what it was intended to be: the self-conscious rationality and ethics." But Hegel insists likewise that this separation is most fortunate for the churches, since it enables them to concentrate upon their essential task which, as we already know, is in Hegel's view the highest there is, namely to provide the community in which man can become certain of God.

Anyone who takes the foregoing principles seriously will not be surprised to find Hegel display a positive appreciation of public opinion which he links with sound common sense (below pp. 317 ff, § 316–19). Yet, he has no illusions, but appreciates the curious intermingling of truth and error in public opinion and he therefore suggests that it deserves "as much to be respected as to be despised." So one must rise above public opinion to accomplish something great and truly significant "He who says and accomplishes what his time wants and desires is the great man of that time." In keeping with these views, freedom of speech and of the press receive the kind of limited support from Hegel which is still characteristic of English and Continental law.

So far, so good. But the discussion of the state is concluded by Hegel's defense of war. He remarks rightly that in all that has been said there is involved an "ethical aspect of war." War, he asserts, is not to be looked upon as an absolute evil, resulting from accidental causes, such as the whims of princes, the interests of particular persons, etc. No, war is also the way in which a state's ethical reality asserts itself against others. Eternal peace, he says, would produce a situation as foul as that of a sea never whipped by gales, and through war "the ethical health of nations is maintained." The notions here involved are related to those underlying William James's celebrated essay on "The Moral Equivalent of War," although James puts the idea more in terms of individual ethical health.[46] There is a fierce and cynical ring, though, to certain phrases which occur in this connection, such as that about the cavalry with bare sabers (below pp. 321 ff, § 324). "Wars take place where they

are rooted in the nature of things; afterwards the seed sprouts again . . ." Yet, much of the sentiment behind the crusades and wars, cold and hot, in defense of ideals or for their propagation, is in actual fact very close to the Hegelian viewpoint. For it is always the state as an ideal entity, as a community engaged in realizing the ideal and hence manifesting the dynamics of the world spirit that is meant by Hegel. Here we come upon the celebrated dictum of Hegel that world history is the world court which must be assessed in terms of Hegel's philosophy of history to which we shall turn presently.*

It has at times been suggested that Hegel developed these ideas, including more particularly the views on war, in response and with conscious adaptation to the Prussian tradition, after his arrival in Berlin. Actually, none of the ideas are in any sense novel for him. His ideas were distorted as we noted by substituting the existent Prussian "state" for the "state" of Hegel's ethical radicalism. But we find not only the sharp distinction of state and society, as already noted, but all those points which are in keeping with his ideas on ethical autonomy. To make the state the kind of ethical community which Hegel postulated—that is, participate effectively in law-making—a people must give themselves laws. Hegel thought it ridiculous to suggest that the people are not mature enough for that. By the same token he demanded the trial by jury, *public* judicial trials, local self-government for towns and other corporate entities. We have already noted his spirited defense of Magna Carta, and his positive although moderate inclination to support freedom of the press. How clearly Hegel embraced these notions at a much earlier date, his early constitutional writings (see below) as well as his study on natural law will show. Hegel evidently thought that the Prussia of Hardenberg was the embodiment of these requirements; one could say that he

* How far Hegel is from the modern totalitarians, and how close to traditional views, may be seen from his insistence upon the civilized nature of modern warfare. How far are even so-called "peace-loving" states from Hegel's belief that "war therefore contains the norm of internal law that the possibility of peace should be maintained . . . war is not conducted against the internal institutions nor against the peaceful life of family and private persons." (See below pp. 328 ff, § 338.

"idealized" the Prussian state rather than "Prussianized" his idea of the state.[47] As his biographer noted, the government had not yet organized reaction and few doubted that soon a popular representation would be set up for all of Germany.

Upon the publication of the *Philosophy of Right and Law,* Hegel found himself the target of sharp criticism. His intemperate remarks against the more radical elements of the national democratic movement were bitterly resented, more especially his attack against his fellow philosopher Fries. And since Hegel was in the strong position of professor at Berlin (where he had gone in 1818), his comments do indeed seem to be "kicking the underdog," an unattractive behavior which is adversely commented upon even by such admirers as Rosenkranz. There was a political element involved here, and, as Rosenkranz remarks, Hegel had to pay heavily for this intemperate remark, for it caused quite a few to suspect him of a change of heart, of a rather obsequious adaptation to the Prussian bureaucracy, and a general sympathy with reactionary trends. These suspicions were reinforced by Hegel's including in the preface the words: "What is rational, that is actually real (*wirklich*), and what is actually real (*wirklich*), that is rational." This proposition seemed to many a formula of complete quietism, especially when it came as the culmination of an argument violently condemning revolutionary, nay even progressively reformatory ideas as "empty abstractions."

Hegel undertook to answer the argument in the Introduction to the revised *Encyclopedia* which he had first published in Heidelberg in 1817 as an introduction to his system. He starts by remarking (§ 6) that it is decisive to realize that the content of philosophy is *Wirklichkeit,* the true or actual reality which is the living spirit which has created itself and become the world—the world of the external and internal consciousness. This consciousness of the world we call experience. Then, after quoting the sentence, Hegel rather bitterly remarks:

> These simple sentences have seemed to some extraordinary and have been attacked, even by those who would not deny that they believe in philosophy and religion. It is unnecessary to deal with religion, since its doctrines about God's government of the world clearly enunciate these propositions. What concerns the philosophical meaning, one ought to presuppose sufficient education in these people for them to know not only that God is actually real (*wirklich*), but that He is the most real (*wirklich*), that He alone is truly real, but also formally speaking that what is here-and-now (*Dasein*) is partly phenomenal, and only partly real. In ordinary life one calls every notion, error, the evil and all that goes with it, as well as everything, be it ever so deformed and transitory, something real. . . . I have dealt with all this in a lengthy *Logic* where I treat of actual reality (*Wirklichkeit*) and have distinguished it not merely from the accidental which has also existence, but also from being-here-and-now (*Dasein*), from existence and other terms.

Hegel then elaborates again his insistence that norms are indeed valid, where they are directed toward changing that which is contingent, but that they are "empty abstractions" when they seek to change that which is truly actual and real, in the sense of being a manifestation of the spirit and of the idea. The meaning and limits of this conception are made more concrete by Hegel's philosophy of history. How much Hegel was basically in line with Christian tradition can be seen in Richard Hooker's discussion of Goodness: "Because there is not in the world any thing whereby another may not some way be made the perfecter, therefore all things that are, are good."[47a]

VII

History and the Arts

In Hegel's conception of the world, of man and his God, history occupies a very special place. For it is in history that the whole of his gigantic conception is, in a sense, *validated.* This validation is, of course, not carried out with the detachment of a scientific observer who is ready to revise his general hypotheses in the light of his findings, who treats them merely as working hypotheses employed for the ordering of the facts which "speak louder." Not at all. Hegel leaves no doubt that

It has been said so often as to have become almost a commonplace that Hegel looked upon his philosophy of history as an eschatological design, or, as one recent writer has put it, as prophecy. The prophetic proclamations of Marx and Engels, linked as they were by their authors to Hegel's thought, have served to reinforce this notion and to rivet upon it the sanction of self-evident obviousness. But a reading not only of the Introduction, but of *The Philosophy of History* as a whole (or at least in such substantial additions of its concrete substance as we are here offering) reveals Hegel as essentially looking backward and assessing the way we have come, rather than the road ahead. In a famous sentence from the preface of the *Philosophy of Right and Law* (see below p. 227) Hegel suggests that "the owl of Minerva begins its flight when dusk is falling." This poetic simile is intended to reinforce Hegel's carefully elaborated notion that man can perceive the conception of actuality, the divine essence, only when the actuality has already been fully unfolded and indeed has become cut and dried. Philosophy to him "paints gray in gray" because the essence which it understands is a form of life that has grown old. Applied to history seen as the unfolding of freedom, this suggests that Hegel would feel himself to be at the end rather than at the beginning of a period. And he says quite specifically that "what happens in the future, does not concern us." What Hegel is referring to is on one hand the Slavic world, which he explicitly excludes from his consideration, because it is something in between the West and Asia and has not so far appeared as an autonomous stage of the configurations of the spirit.

On the other hand, the American reader might be particularly interested in what Hegel says about America. "America is therefore the land of the future in which in times to come . . . world history shall reveal itself. . . . But what has so far happened there is only an echo of the old world and an expression of an alien aliveness, and as the country of the future it does not concern us here. For in history our concern must be with what has been and with what is." [50] It is evident that Hegel does not flatter himself to have found in his philosophy

of history, any more than in his dialectic, a key to the future. His sense of the real, his *Wirklichkeitssinn*, obliged him to view the future as a closed book. This did not keep him from throwing out a guess as to one important aspect of American life, its frontier. As part of a highly realistic appraisal of the differences not only between North America and Europe, but also between South America and North America, Hegel wrote: "Concerning politics in North America the need of a firm cohesion is not yet present, for a real state and a real government only develop when there is a difference of classes, when riches and poverty become very large and a situation arises where a great number of people can no longer satisfy its needs in the accustomed way. But America does not yet approach this tension . . . For a state to become a state it is necessaary that the citizen cannot continually think of emigrating, but that the class of cultivators, no longer able to push to the outside, presses upon itself and is gathered into cities and urban professions. Only then can a civic system develop and that is the condition for an organized state." Hegel elaborates this further in his effort to show that America and Europe cannot be compared, and that the conditions in America do not prove that a republican system is capable of survival. Sure, America is an independent and powerful state, but only when the entire land will be settled and occupied will a fixed order of things emerge. And what it will be. Hegel does not profess to know. It is likely to be a new configuration of the world spirit. Until now America has been an annex of Europe. What it eventually will be is no concern of his.[51]

But beyond this history which for Hegel includes the past up to the present, there is philosophy. Philosophy's task is concerned neither with what has been nor with what will be, but with what is and is eternally so. This presumably also holds for the philosophy of history. At the very end of his survey of the concrete history, Hegel observes that the history of the world, all the changing scenes which it presents, is the process of the development and of the realization of the spirit. He therefore claims this interpretation of history to be the true theodicy, the justification of God in history. And he feels that

only this insight can reconcile the spirit with world history, that what has happened is not only not without God, but is essentially his work. In a letter to a Russian friend, Hegel suggested that Russia possessed an enormous possibility through the developing of its intensive nature, and it is not unreasonable to maintain that Hegel reluctantly admitted to himself that a new dichotomy, a new antithesis might well be in the making. But as to its substance, his philosophy condemned him to silence.

We have included enough of Hegel's *Philosophy of History* to make it unnecessary to give a summary here. That he sees it as the history of freedom, as the self-realization of the spirit, our preceding analysis has made clear, anyhow. It only remains to say a word about our inclusion of so much of Hegel's actual treatment of history, rather than the Introduction which is the part of Hegel's philosophy of history mostly studied today. It seemed essential to do so, if the true view of Hegel is to emerge. Hegel was, as we have seen, very deeply concerned over "concreteness," and this concreteness is a matter of envisaging actual reality in all its many different facets. Only by studying how Hegel links his vast generalities with the concrete detail of historical data—even including geographical data—can one see how he meant them. To be sure, many of these facts are now obsolete; modern scholarship has put in critical perspective most of the writers upon whose work Hegel based his interpretation. But there is enough of a common core left to allow one to see how Hegel selected and organized his facts to provide suitable validation for his conception of the march of history.

Hegel's *Philosophy of History* consists of lecture notes, collated and edited after his death; only the main part of the introduction has been published, by modern scholars, in accordance with Hegel's own manuscript. The same is, of course, true of his *Philosophy of Religion* and his philosophy of art as embodied in the *Lectures on Aesthetics*. There has been a good deal of learned discussion as to how far one might go in accepting these lectures as authentic. There can be little question that the works written and published by Hegel himself, like

INTRODUCTION

THE SUBJECT OF THESE LECTURES IS THE PHILOSOPHY OF world history. What history—world history—is I need not explain. The general notion of it is sufficient and we largely agree on it.* But what may strike you in the title of these lectures and what may seem to call for an explanation or justification is that we propose to consider a philosophy of history, that we propose to treat history philosophically.

The philosophy of history is nothing else but the thinking, the reflecting upon history. We humans cannot avoid thinking about things, for man is thinking; that is what differentiates him from the animal. All that is human—feeling, knowledge and insight, desire and will—all these contain thinking, if they are human and not animal. The same is true of all concern with history. But such reference to the general share of thinking in all human affairs as in history may seem inadequate, because we maintain that thinking is subordinate to being, to that which is given, that thinking has being as its basis and is guided by it. To philosophy, on the other hand, are attributed its own thoughts, which speculation evolves out of itself without regard to that which is and which it then applies to history, thus treating history as material, not leaving it as it is but arranging it according to its thoughts; that is, it constructs a history a priori.

History has only to grasp clearly what is and what has been, the events and the deeds. History is the more true, the more it sticks to what is given and has as its objective that which has happened, though this is not readily at hand and calls for manifold researches connected with thinking. The task of philosophy seems to be in contradiction to this objective, and it is with this contradiction I wish to deal in my introduction—with the reproach made to philosophy because of the thoughts it

* But see the further discussion, in the fragment reprinted below, on the different kinds of history writing, pp. 35 et seq.

brings into history and according to which it treats history. That is to say, the general purpose of the philosophy of world history must first be stated and the immediate consequences which result must be noted. The relation of thoughts and events will thereby automatically be clarified. Therefore—and to avoid becoming too prolix in this introduction, rich material awaiting us in the world history itself—it seems unnecessary to enter into refutations and corrections of the many more special false ideas and reflections current concerning the viewpoints, principles, and notions about the purpose and the sense of treating history, and, more particularly, concerning the relation of concepts and philosophy to historical matters. (Each new preface to a history and, in turn, each preface to a review of such a history presents a new theory.) I shall pass these over or, in some cases, recall them.

1. THE RATIONAL VIEW OF WORLD HISTORY

First of all, let me remark concerning the preliminary concept of a philosophy of world history that, as I have said, one accuses philosophy of approaching history with thoughts and of looking at history in terms of thoughts. But the only thought philosophy brings along is the very simple thought of reason, namely that reason rules the world and that things have happened reasonably (according to reason) in world history. This conviction and this insight is a presupposition in regard to history as such. In philosophy itself this is no presupposition or assumption; in philosophy speculative knowledge proves that reason—we can limit ourselves to this term without discussing the relation to God—is the substance as well as the infinite power, that it is the infinite stuff of all natural and spiritual life as well as the infinite form, the activation of this being its content. It is the substance, that through which and in which all actual reality (*Wirklichkeit*) has its being and existence. It is the infinite power, in the sense that reason is not so powerless as to achieve merely ideal existence—merely an ought—and hence exist only apart from actual reality, who knows

where, perhaps only in the heads of a few men. It is the infinite content, all essence and truth, and hence its own stuff which it gives its activity to work on. Reason does not need, like finite action, conditioning materials or given means from which it might receive nourishment by way of objects for its activity; reason feeds upon itself and is itself the material which it works upon. Just as reason is only its own premise and presupposition, just as its end is the absolute and final end (*Endzweck*), so reason is also the activation and production (of this end) from inside itself into the phenomena not only of the natural universe but of the spiritual as well, in world history. It is this which, as noted, is proved in philosophy and is presupposed here as so proved: that this idea (of reason) is the true, the eternal, the absolutely potent, that it reveals itself in the world, and that nothing is revealed in the world except this idea, its grandeur and its honor.

Those who are not familiar with philosophy I could ask perhaps to approach the exposition of world history with the faith in reason and with the thirst for its understanding. It is indeed the desire for rational insight and for knowledge, rather than merely for a collection of bits of information, which may be presupposed as the subjective desire involved in the study of the sciences. In fact, I do not have to ask for such faith in advance. What I have so far said and will say hereafter is not merely a presupposition . . . but a summary of the whole undertaking, the result of the reflections we are engaged in, a result which is known to me because the whole is known to me. It has been and is being concluded from the contemplation of world history itself that things happened according to reason, that this history is the rational and necessary way of the world spirit which is the substance of history, the one spirit whose nature is one and always the same and which explicates its one nature in the world's existence. (The world spirit is the spirit altogether.) This must be, as noted, the result of history itself. But we must take history as it is; we must proceed historically, empirically. Among other things, we must not allow ourselves to be seduced by professional historians; for at least among German historians, even those

of great authority who are proud of their study of the sources, there are those who do precisely what they reproach the philosophers with, namely, the imparting of a priori inventions to history. To give an example, it is a very widespread invention that there existed a first and most ancient people which, directly instructed by God, lived in perfect understanding and wisdom, and possessed a penetrating knowledge of all natural laws and of intellectual truth; or that there have existed such and such priestly nations; or, to be more specific, that there existed a Roman epic poem from which the Roman historians have derived their older history, etc. Such a priori statements we shall leave to the brilliant professional historians, among whom they are not unusual.

As the first condition we can therefore say that we seek to comprehend the historical data truly. But there is an equivocation involved in such general terms as "truly" or "comprehend." For the average and mediocre historical writer who thinks and claims to be merely receptive, to be dedicated to what is given, is not actually passive in his thinking. He brings along his categories and he sees what is there through them. The true (interpretation) does not lie on the surface; in all science reason cannot sleep but must think. He who looks at the world according to reason is viewed by the world according to reason too. The two are in a mutual relationship.

But it is not our business here to treat of the different ways of thinking, of the viewpoints, of judgment, even of so basic a matter as the importance or unimportance of information and what needs to be emphasized in the vast material before us.

I shall recall here only two forms of the general conviction that reason rules the world and therefore also world history, because they offer an opportunity to touch upon the main point which causes the difficulties. . . . The first is the historical view of the Greek Anaxagoras that *Nous,* the general intellect or reason, rules the world, but not an intelligence seen as self-conscious reason, not a spirit as such; this distinction is important. The motions of the solar system occur according to unalterable laws; these laws are the reason of the system. But neither the sun nor the planets which rotate according to

these laws has a consciousness of these laws. Only man distills these laws from existence and knows them.

This thought that reason is in nature, that it is ruled by general laws unalterably, does not startle us; . . . we are accustomed to it and do not stress it. I have mentioned it partly in order to indicate that history shows us that views we consider commonplace have not always been in the world, but rather that such a thought once marked the beginning of an epoch in the history of the human spirit. Aristotle says of Anaxagoras that as the originator of this thought he appeared like a sober man among drunks.

Socrates took this thought over from Anaxagoras, and it then became dominant among philosophers, with the exception of Epicurus who attributed all events to chance. We shall see later in which other religions and among which other peoples the same thought appeared. Plato then lets Socrates say (in *Phaedo* 97/98) concerning this discovery that thought—not conscious thought, but at first indeterminedly a reason which is neither conscious nor unconscious—rules the world: "I was happy about it and hoped to find a teacher who could interpret nature according to reason and who could demonstrate the particular end in the particular thing and the general end, the final end, the good in the whole. I would not have given up this hope for anything. But," Socrates continues, "how disillusioned I was when I started to work on the writings of Anaxagoras and I found that he mentioned only external causes—air, ether, water and the like—instead of reason." It is evident that what Socrates found unsatisfactory about the principle of Anaxagoras was not the principle itself but the failure to apply it to concrete nature. Nature was not conceived or understood in terms of this principle. The principle remained abstract or, to be more precise, nature was not conceived as a development of this principle or as an organization produced by reason as its principle.

I want to call attention right here at the outset to this difference between stating a proposition, a principle, a truth only abstractly and proceeding to a more definite determination and a concrete development. This difference is decisive and,

indefinite a word as providence. One speaks of this reason without being able to state what is its meaning, what is its content, and what is the criterion by which we may determine whether something is in accord with reason or not. Reason comprehended in its determination, this only is the heart of the matter; the other viewpoint, which stops with reason in general, is nothing but words. We now turn to the second aspect which we propose to consider in this introduction.

II. THE IDEA OF HISTORY AND ITS REALIZATION

The destination* of reason in itself and its relation to the world raises the same question as that which will exist after the final end of the world. It ought to be realized, to be actualized. Two aspects must therefore be considered: the content of this final end, the destiny in itself and as such, and the realization thereof.

Our subject, world history, occurs in the field of the spirit. The world comprises both physical and psychic nature. The physical nature affects world history . . . but the spirit and the course of its development is its substance. . . . The first thing, therefore, which we must do is abstractly to determine the spirit. (The spirit is not an abstraction; it is not abstracted from human nature but individual, active, completely alive. It is consciousness, but also its object. It is the nature of the spirit to have itself as its object.)† . . .

In the light of this discussion it can be said of world history that it is the description of the spirit as it works out the knowledge of that which it is in itself. The Orientals do not know that the spirit is free in itself, or that man is free in

* The German term "Bestimmung" usually translated as "determination" also means "destination" or "destiny." This meaning is implied here.

† These parenthetic sentences are inserted from the lecture notes, as given by Lasson, *op. cit.*, p. 31. Hereafter Hegel develops the idea of the spirit much in the same terms as in the *Phenomenology of the Spirit*, for which see pp. 410 ff. below.

himself. Because they do not know it, they are not free. They only know that "one" is free; therefore such freedom is only arbitrariness, ferocity, obtuseness of passion or—by contrast—mildness and gentleness, which itself is merely accident or arbitrament. This "one" is therefore a despot, not a free man, not a man.

The consciousness of freedom arose among the Greeks, and therefore they were free; but they, like the Romans, knew only that a few are free, and not man as such. Neither Plato nor Aristotle knew it. Therefore the Greeks not only had slaves to whom their lives and their beautiful freedom was tied, but their freedom was itself only an accidental or contingent, undeveloped, passing and limited flower, involving a harsh servitude of the human and humanitarian sentiments.

Only the Germanic nations have in and through Christianity achieved the consciousness that man *qua* man is free and that freedom of the spirit constitutes his very nature. This consciousness arose first in religion, in the innermost region of the spirit. But to extend this principle to the secular realm was a further task, the solution and execution of which required a difficult and long labor, a civilizing process (*Bildung*). Slavery, for example, did not cease immediately upon the conversion to Christianity; even less did freedom immediately become dominant in (Christian) states, nor were governments and constitutions organized according to reason and based upon the principle of freedom. The application of the principle to secular matters, the permeation and transformation of the secular state by this principle, constitutes the course of history. I remarked before upon the difference between the principle and its application. . . . World History is the progress in the consciousness of freedom, a progress which we must know and understand in its (inherent) necessity. . . .

Hence, what constitutes the reason of the spirit in its determination (that is, its destination), . . . what constitutes the final end of the world we claim to be the spirit's consciousness of its freedom and thus the actualization (*Wirklichkeit*) of its freedom. That this (concept of) freedom is still indeterminate and ambiguous in definition; that freedom, being the highest

we keep before our eyes how in history evil has triumphed and the most flourishing empires have been brought low by human beings, when we look upon these individuals with deepest sympathy in their unspeakable woe, we can end up by feeling sorrow for this vainglory and an indignation of the good spirit (if such be in us) since this destruction is not simply the work of nature, but of men. . . .

In looking upon history as this butchery, . . . the thought naturally arises: for what final end have all these sacrifices been made? . . . We propose to see all these events as means toward the final end which we believe to be the true result of world history, its substantive destination, its absolute final end. We refuse to reflect upon these events in terms of direct reflection and leave to others the sentimental contemplation of them. . . .

First of all, we note that what we have called principle, final end, destination, or what we have called the spirit in itself, its nature, its conception, is merely something general and abstract. A principle, a maxim or a law is something general and inward which as such, be it ever so true, is not fully actually real. Purposes, principles and the like are in our thoughts only in our inward intention or in books; they are not yet in actual reality (*Wirklichkeit*). What is by itself, is only a possibility, a potentiality, but it has not yet emerged into full existence. A second element must be added to make it actually real, which is its activation, or actualization, and the principle of this is the will and the activity of men in the world. Only by this activity are those conceptions and determinations (destinations?) realized and actualized.

The laws and principles do not live, are not enforced by themselves. The activity which gives them existence and works them out is the needs and desires of man, his inclinations and his passions. To bring something into existence by deed, I must be concerned with it. I want to be in on it, I want to be satisfied by carrying it out—in short, it must be of interest to me. "Interest" means to be in, to be part of something. A purpose for which I am to be active must in some way be my own purpose. I must be able to satisfy my own purpose even

though this other purpose or end may have many other aspects which do not concern me. This is the infinite right of the subject, the second essential aspect of freedom, that such a subject finds itself satisfied in some activity or work . . . It is important to avoid a misunderstanding here. It is often said that someone is only interested in the sense of seeking only his own private gain, without conviction . . . But he who is interested in something is always himself a part of it. . . . Nothing happens, nothing is achieved but that the individuals who are involved also are satisfied, in their own particular interests . . . these interests may be those of needs and wants, but they may be those of insight, conviction or at least of opinion or prejudice, whenever the need of arguing, of intellect and reason have been awakened. Human beings demand that what they are to be active for be acceptable to them . . . This is especially true of course in our own time, when men are not drawn to action by loyalty and authority, but wish to determine for themselves the share they have in something and to do so by their own intelligence, their autonomous conviction or belief.

Thus we say that altogether nothing has ever come into being without the interest of those whose activity was involved. We may further call an interest a passion. And (in view of what happens) when an individual, by relegating all his other interests and purposes, . . . with all his innate capacity of will immerses himself wholly in something, concentrates all his resources and powers upon this one purpose, we are obliged to state that nothing great happens in the world without passion. Passion, to be sure, is the subjective and hence formal aspect of the energy of will and of activity, while its content or purpose is still indeterminate. The same is true in connection with convictions, one's insight and conscience. . . .

From this elucidation of the second essential aspect of historical reality of a purpose it follows parenthetically regarding the state, that a state will be well-organized and strong in itself if its general end is joined to the private interests of its citizens, the one is satisfied and realized through the other—a very important proposition in itself. Yet within a state many arrangements are needed, many inventions of useful institu-

tions, involving long struggles of the understanding, until what is most appropriate to its purpose becomes conscious. Also (there will have to take place) struggles with the particular interests and the long and difficult disciplining of the passions, before such a conjunction of the general and the particular interests is achieved. The time of such a conjunction constitutes in the history of a state the period of its flowering, of its virtue, of its power and its happiness. But world history does not begin with some such conscious purpose or end. . . . The history of the world starts with its general end, namely to satisfy the desire of the spirit to conceive itself (*dass der Begriff des Geistes befriedigt werde*), only by itself, that is to say as nature; it is the innermost and unconscious drive, and the whole business of world history is the work of bringing it into consciousness. . . . The infinite mass of wills, interests and activities are the tools and means of the world spirit to accomplish its end . . . to come to itself and to contemplate itself as actual reality. That those living processes of individuals and nations, by seeking and satisfying their own limited ends, serve at the same time as the means and tools of something higher of which they know nothing and which they therefore accomplish unconsciously—this could be questioned, and has been questioned, has been many times denied, and has been ridiculed and despised as a dream, as philosophy. As against this, I have proclaimed at the outset that reason rules the world, and I have stated this as our presupposition and faith. . . . This reason is immanent in historical existence and it realizes itself in and through it. . . . The speculative truth of this proposition is treated in the *Logic*.* . . . Hence I cannot prove it here, but I can illustrate it by examples in this philosophy of history.

What is involved here is that in world history something else results from the actions of men than what they intend and achieve, something else than they know or want. They accomplish their interest; but something else is accomplished, which was implied in it, but which was not in the consciousness and the intention of the actors. To give an analogy, a man may set fire to the house of another out of revenge which may indeed be justified; . . . the immediate action is to hold a small flame to a small part of a beam. What had not been immediately involved follows: the part of the beam is joined to the rest, to other beams of the house, and those in turn to other houses; hence a vast conflagration develops which destroys the property and perhaps the lives of many human beings who were not the object of the revenge. This result was neither part of the primary deed nor the intention of him who commenced it. Hence this action is more generally determined: though in intention it was only an act of revenge against an individual, it was also a crime . . . and implies therefore a penalty. This example merely shows that in the immediate action something else may be implied than is consciously willed by the actor. . . .

* See below, pp. 177 ff.

But let me give another example which contains this conjunction of the particular and the general. . . . When Caesar was in danger of losing the position, not yet of predominance, but of equality besides the other men who stood at the head of the state and of succumbing to them who were about to become his enemies—and who had at the same time on their side and in support of their interests the formal constitution and the power of legal form—he fought these men in his own interest of maintaining his position, his honor and his security. His victory over them, since their power consisted in rule over the provinces of the Roman empire, thus became the conquest of this entire empire. Caesar thereby became, though the formal constitution remained, the individual ruler of the state. What the execution of his purely negative, defensive purpose thus secured for him—namely, the monocratic rule over Rome—was at the same time a necessary destination of Rome in the history of the world. Hence his work not only brought him particular gain but instinctively accomplished what was timely in and by itself. Such are the great men in history whose own particular purposes contain the substantial task which is the will of the world spirit. This substance is their true power and strength, for it is at work in the general, un-

conscious instinct of their contemporaries. They are inwardly driven to it and have no resistance against him who has undertaken the execution of such a purpose in his own interest. Rather, nations gather around his banner. He shows them and executes what is their own immanent drive.

[Hereafter Hegel's lectures dwelt, according to the various reports we have, upon the role of the ordinary men who sustain social life (*die erhaltenden Individuen*) as well as the role of the world historical individuals who initiate major changes. In this connection, a sentence from his own MS may be quoted: "If we cast a glance at the destiny of these world historical individuals, they have had the good luck to be the executioners of a purpose which forms a stage in the forward march of the general spirit." He then turns to the value of the individual.]

If we must therefore accept the proposition that the individuals, their purposes and their satisfactions are sacrificed, . . . and they are seen as means to an end,* there nonetheless is in every individual a side which we hesitate to view this way, even in relation to the highest (namely, reason and the world spirit), because it is something absolutely not subordinate but something intrinsically eternal and divine in them. This is their morality, their ethics, their religiosity.† . . . When we speak of a means we initially think of it as something extrinsic to the end which has no share in it (the means). In fact even natural things—the most ordinary lifeless things employed as means—must have the quality of corresponding to the purpose, must have something in them which they have in common with the purpose or end. Human beings are hardly ever external means to the rational end. Not only do they satisfy together with this end . . . their own and different particular purposes, but they share in the rational end itself and thereby

* This phrasing which recurs in Hegel is presumably chosen to counteract and contradict Kant's categorical imperative which forbids us to treat human beings as means and hence concludes "there shall not be war." Hegel expounds the opposite. See above, pp. xlviii-ix.

† See below, pp. 252 ff. and 260 ff.—Ed.

right and law, justice and the common good. The principle of thought, therefore, had so far been reconciled already. Moreover the Protestant world had a conviction that the principle which would result in a further development of law was already present in the reconciliation which had been evolved previously.

A consciousness which is abstractly developed and sensible can be indifferent to religion, but religion is the general form in which truth exists for the non-abstract consciousness. The Protestant religion does not admit of two kinds of conscience, while in the Catholic world the Holy stands on the one side and on the other side abstraction opposed to religion, to its superstition and its truth. This formal, individual will is now made the basis of general propositions. Right in society is that which the law wills, and the will exists as an isolated one. Thus the state, as an aggregate of many individuals, is not a substantial unity in and by itself. It is not the truth of right and law in and by itself, to which the will of its individual members ought to be conformed in order to be true free will. On the contrary, atoms of the will are made the starting point, and each will is represented as absolute.

A principle was thus discovered to serve as the rational basis for the state, which does not, like previous principles, belong to the sphere of opinion, such as the social impulse, the desire for security of property, and the like. Nor does this principle owe its origin to piety, as does that of the divine appointment of the governing power. Rather, it is a principle of certainty, resulting from the recognition of identity with my self-consciousness; but it is not yet the principle of truth which needs to be distinguished from it. This is a vast discovery with regard to the most inward and freedom. The consciousness of the spiritual is now the foundation of the political society, and philosophy has thereby become dominant. It has been said that the French Revolution resulted from philosophy, and it is not without reason that philosophy has been called

world wisdom. For it is not only truth in and by itself, as the pure essence of things, but also truth as it is alive in the world. We should not, therefore, contradict the assertion that the Revolution received its first impulse from philosophy. But this philosophy was only abstract thought in the first instance, not the concrete comprehension of absolute truth—an immeasurable difference.

[After elaborating these thoughts further, Hegel states:]

The two following points must now occupy our attention: first, the course which the Revolution in France took; second, how that Revolution became world-historical. 1) Freedom presents two aspects. The one concerns its content, its objectivity, the thing itself. The other relates to the form of freedom, involving consciousness on the part of the individual of his own activity. For freedom demands that the individual recognize himself in these acts, and that they should invariably be his, it being in his interest that the desired result be attained. The three elements and powers of the living state must be considered according to the above analysis, their examination in detail being referred to the *Philosophy of Right and Law*.

[What follows here closely parallels what may be found in the selections from that work, below § 273 ff, p. 293.]

In view then of these main considerations we have to trace the course of the French Revolution and the remodeling of the state in accordance with the idea of right. Purely abstract philosophical principles were set up at first. Conviction and religion were not taken into account. The first constitutional form of government in France was one which recognized royalty. The monarch was to stand at the head of the state, and on him, in conjunction with his ministers, was to devolve the executive power; the legislative body, on the other hand, was to make the laws. But this constitution involved an internal contradiction from the very first, for the legislature

therefore took place and the government was overturned. At length, after forty years of indescribable war and confusion, a weary heart might well congratulate itself on seeing a termination and pacification of all these disturbances. But although one main point is set at rest, there remains on the one hand that rupture which the Catholic principle inevitably occasions, on the other hand that which has to do with man's subjective will. The main one-sidedness consists in this, that the [ideal] general will should also be the empirically general, that is, that the individuals as such should rule or at any rate take part in the executive government. Not satisfied with the establishment of rights, with freedom of person and property, with the existence of a political organization in which are to be found various circles of civil life, each having its own functions to perform, and with that influence over the people which is exercised by the intelligent members of the community, and the confidence that is felt in them, liberalism sets up in opposition to all this the atomistic principle of individual wills. It maintains that all should emanate from their express power and have their express sanction. Asserting this formal side of freedom, this abstraction, the Liberals allow no political organization to be firmly established. The particular orders of the government are forthwith opposed by the advocates of liberty as the mandates of a particular will, and are branded as the displays of arbitrary power. The will of the many expells the ministry from power, and the opposition steps in. But the latter, having now become the government, have the many against them. Thus are agitation and unrest perpetuated. This collision, this knot, this problem, is that with which history is now occupied, and whose solution it has to work out in the future.

2) We have next to consider the French Revolution, for the event is world-historical in its significance, and that contest of formalism which we discussed in the last paragraph must be properly distinguished from its wider bearings. As regards

even this is of small moment, since its strength lies in the reason incorporated in it. Minor states have their existence and tranquillity secured to them more or less by their neighbors. They are, therefore, properly speaking, not independent and have not the fiery trial of war to endure. As has been remarked, a share in the government may be obtained by everyone who possesses competent knowledge, experience, and a morally disciplined will. Those who know ought to govern; knowledge, not ignorance and the presumptuous conceit of knowing better. Lastly, as to conviction, we have already remarked that in the Protestant church the reconciliation of religion with legal right has taken place. In the Protestant world there is no sacred, no religious conscience in a state of separation from, or perhaps even hostility to, secular right. This is the point which consciousness has attained, and these are the principal bases of that form in which the principle of freedom has realized itself. For the history of the world is nothing but the development of the idea of freedom.

Objective freedom, the laws of real freedom, demand the subjugation of the mere contingent will, for this is completely formal. If the objective is rational in itself, human conviction and insight must correspond with the reason which it embodies, and then we have the other essential element, subjective freedom, also realized. We have confined ourselves to the consideration of that progress of the idea and have been obliged to forego the pleasure of giving a detailed picture of the prosperity, the periods of glory that have distinguished the rise and fall of nations, the beauty and the grandeur of the character of individuals, and the interest attaching to their fate. Philosophy concerns itself only with the glory of the idea mirroring itself in the history of the world. Philosophy escapes from the weary strife of the passions that agitate the surface of society into the calm region of contemplation. That which interests it is the recognition of the process of develop-

ment which the idea has passed through in realizing itself, the idea of freedom, whose reality is the consciousness of freedom and nothing short of it. World history, with all the changing drama of its histories, is this process of the development and realization of the spirit. It is the true theodicy, the justification of God in history. Only this insight can reconcile the spirit with world history and the actual reality, that what has happened, and is happening every day, is not only not "without God," but is essentially the work of God.

that this one truth is not merely a simple abstract thought or proposition. Rather this truth is something concrete in itself. It is a common prejudice to think that the science of philosophy deals only with abstractions, with empty generalities. By contrast, what we observe, our empirical self-consciousness, our self as felt, the sense of life are thought to be that which is concrete, which is determined in itself, which is rich. In fact, philosophy does work in the realm of thought, it deals with generalities, its content is abstract, but only formally. But in itself the idea is essentially concrete, the unity of distinct particulars. Thus knowledge based on reason (rational knowledge) is differentiated from knowledge based on intellect (intellectual knowledge), and it is the business of philosophy to show that by contrast with intellect the truth, the idea, does not consist in empty generalities, but in something general that is in and by itself, the particular and the definite. . . .

. . . The truth so understood has a tendency to develop. Only the living, the spiritual moves, agitates within itself, develops itself. The idea is, therefore, concrete in itself and unfolding itself, an organic system, a totality, which contains a rich set of levels and aspects.

Philosophy is the understanding of this development and is at the same time itself this thought development, since it is the thought which understands. The further this development has gone, the more perfect has philosophy become.

This development does not move outward as if into externality; rather this development as it unfolds is moving inward, that is, the general idea remains the basis and the all-inclusive and unchanging. . . . Thus the general idea is made more distinct. A further development of the idea or its greater distinctness are one and the same. The most extensive is at once also the most intensive.

These are the abstract propositions concerning the nature of the idea and its development. For this is what a fully

being determinations of the thing-in-itself, to use the Kantian expression, or, to put it better, determinations of the rational. Objective Logic thus is their true critique, a critique which considers the forms of thought not under the abstract form of apriority as opposed to the *a posteriori*, but considers each according to its particular content.

Subjective logic is the logic of the notion, of essence which has transcended its relation to any mere being, real or apparent, and in its determination is no longer external, but is the free, independent, and self-determining Subjective, or rather the Subject itself. Since the subjective involves the misconception of the contingent and arbitrary, and, more generally, of determinations belonging to the form of consciousness, no special weight is to be attached to the distinction between the Subjective and the Objective, which will develop itself more clearly within the body of the Logic.

Thus logic is divided broadly into objective and subjective logic; more definitely, it has three parts, namely—

1. The Logic of Being,
2. The Logic of Essence, and
3. The Logic of the Notion.

BOOK I

THE DOCTRINE OF BEING

With What Must the Science Begin?

It has only recently been felt that there is a difficulty in finding a beginning in philosophy, and the reason for this difficulty, as well as the possibility of solving it, has been much discussed. The beginning of philosophy must be either mediate or immediate, and it is easy to show that it can be

neither the one nor the other: so that either method of beginning is refuted.

It is true that the principle of any philosophy also expresses a beginning, but this beginning is objective and not subjective; it is the beginning of all things. The principle is a content somehow determined—water, the one, *nous,* idea—substance, monad, and so forth; or, where it relates to the nature of cognition and so is designed rather to be a criterion than an objective determination (like thought, intuition, sensation, ego, or subjectivity itself), it is still the determination of the content to which interest is directed. On the other hand, the beginning as such, considered as something subjective in the sense of some contingent way of introducing the exposition, remains neglected and indifferent; and so the need of the question, with what we are to begin, still seems unimportant compared with the need of a principle, which alone seems to contain the interest of the matter—the interest as to what is the truth and the absolute basis of all things.

The modern embarrassment about a beginning arises from yet another need with which those are unacquainted who, as dogmatists, seek a demonstration of the principle, or who, as skeptics, seek a subjective criterion with which to meet dogmatic philosophy—a need which, finally, is entirely denied by those who begin with explosive abruptness from their inner revelation, faith, intellectual intuition, and so forth, and desire to dispense with method and logic. If thought at first is abstract and concerns itself merely with the principle regarded as content, but in the progress of its evolution is forced to regard also the other side, the behavior of cognition, then subjective activity is perceived as an essential moment of objective truth, and the need arises of uniting method with content and form with principle. The principle is to be the beginning, and the actual *"prius"* for thought is also to be first in the logical thought-process.

We have here only to consider how the logical beginning

PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT AND LAW

Preface

THE IMMEDIATE OCCASION FOR PUBLISHING THIS OUTLINE IS the need to offer to my listeners a guide for the lectures which I am giving on the philosophy of right and law. This textbook is a broader and especially a more systematic development of the same basic concepts which are contained in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* (1817) which are likewise intended as texts for my lectures.

But since it is appearing in print and therefore will reach a larger public, I am inclined to elaborate the *notes* which are intended briefly to mention related or divergent views, the further implications and the like. . . . However, this outline differs from an ordinary textbook by virtue of its method which is decisive. For it is presupposed that the philosophical way of proceeding from one matter to another and of scientific proof, that this speculative manner of knowing differs essentially from other modes of knowing. . . . The nature of such speculative knowledge I have developed fully in my *Science of Logic;* in this outline only here and there an explanation has been added concerning its elaboration and method. In view of the concrete and so very diverse quality of the subject we have abstained from proving and stressing the logical derivation in all detail—the whole as well as the development of its parts rests upon the logical spirit. I wish the study would be primarily understood and judged from this standpoint. For what we are here concerned with is *science,* and in science content is essentially tied to form.

[Hegel then speaks of the two predominant tendencies of either repeating the old trash or setting forth vague new generalities. Against both, science of the philosophical kind must be worked out.]

governments for even protecting and promoting such views as these in which "*reason,* and again *reason,* and in endless repetition *reason* is accused, belittled and condemned." After elaborating this complaint, Hegel concludes:]

It is, therefore, to be considered an advantage for science—and it is in fact as mentioned the result of the inner necessity of the subject—that the former philosophizing which kept evolving within itself as an academic wisdom has been put into close contact with reality where the principles of rights and duties are serious. . . . It is precisely this *relation of philosophy to reality* which is involved in these misunderstandings, and I am therefore now returning to what I have mentioned before. Philosophy is, because it is the *exploration of the rational,* by that very fact the *prehension of the present and the actual* (*Wirklichen*), and not the construction of something *otherworldly* that might be God knows where. . . . In the course of the following study I noted that even the Platonic Republic which is proverbially taken to be an *empty ideal* has essentially taken up nothing else but the nature of Greek ethics. When faced with the challenge of the deeper principle of the free and limitless personality, which to Greek ethics directly could appear only as an unsatisfied longing and hence as a disaster, *Plato* tried to aid Greek ethics against this challenge. But he could try to do this only in an outward and particular form of that Greek ethics by which he hoped to cope with the disaster, and in doing so he violated most deeply its deeper impulse, namely, the free and limitless personality. Yet he showed himself to be a great spirit in that the very principle around which his particular idea revolved was the axis around which the impending revolution of the world was revolving.

The rational is actual;
And the actual is rational.

Upon this conviction rests all naïve consciousness, as does philosophy, and philosophy starts from it in considering the

spiritual universe as well as the *natural* one. If reflection, sentiment or whatever form subjective consciousness may have, looks upon the *present* as something *vain,* transcends it and knows it better, such subjective consciousness is itself vanity, since it has reality only in the present. If correspondingly the *idea* is seen as merely just an idea, an opinionated notion, philosophy by contrast offers the insight that nothing is actual but the idea. Hence what matters is to recognize and know the substance which is immanent and the eternal which is present beneath the temporal and passing which appears.* For the rational which is synonymous with the idea appears (by entering through its actuality into an outward existence) in a limitless wealth of forms, appearances and configurations, and thus encloses its kernel with a variegated rind. Consciousness at the outset lives in this rind, but the conception permeates it in search of the inner pulse which beats in the outer configurations. These endlessly manifold relations, this endless material and its regularities are not the subject of philosophy. It would mix in matters which do not concern it; it may save itself the trouble to offer good counsel in such matters. Plato could have omitted recommending to the nurses not to stand still with their children, always to rock them in their arms, likewise Fichte could have omitted perfecting the passport police to the point of suggesting that not only the description of suspects be entered in their passport, but a picture. In such elaborations there is no longer any philosophy and philosophy may omit such matters the more readily as it ought to be most liberal (tolerant) in all such endless details. . . .

Therefore, this treatise in so far as it contains political science is intended to be nothing else but an attempt *to understand the state as something rational in itself and so to describe it.* As a philosophical study it ought to be furthest from con-

* This elaboration shows that what Hegel means with his usually misquoted statement is that "the rational is the idea and the idea is rational," certainly less objectionable an expression of radical idealism.—Ed.

structing a *state as it ought to be.* The instruction which it may be able to impart cannot be directed toward telling the state how it ought to be but rather how the state is to be recognized and known as the ethical universe. *Hic Rhodus, hic salta.* . . .

To understand that which exists is the task of philosophy; for what exists is reason. As to the individual, everyone is the *son of his time,* and therefore philosophy is *its time comprehended in thought.* It is as silly to imagine that any philosophy could transcend its own time as that an individual could jump out of his time, jump beyond Rhodes. If a man's theory goes beyond its time, if it builds a world *as it ought to be,* it may exist, but only in his opinion. . . .

With a little change, that saying might be: here is the rose, dance here. Whatever lies between reason as self-conscious spirit and reason as existing actuality, whatever separates that reason from this one and prevents it from being satisfied with it, is the fetter of some kind of abstraction which has not been set free as a conception. To recognize and know reason as the rose within the cross of the present and thus to enjoy this present, this sort of rational insight is the *reconciliation* with actuality which philosophy provides for those who have received the inner demand to understand. Such men then are able to maintain subjective freedom in what is substantial. . . .

It is this which constitutes the more concrete meaning for what we designated above as the *unity of form and content;* for form in its most concrete meaning is reason as understanding knowledge, while content is reason as the substantial essence of ethical and natural actuality; the conscious identity of the two is the philosophical idea. It is a great willfulness, but a willfulness which does man honor, not to be willing to recognize anything that has not been justified in thought—this willfulness is the characteristic feature of modern times, and in any case the particular principle of Protestantism.

What Luther began through faith, felt and witnessed in spirit, is the very same thing which the more mature spirit seeks to comprehend in a *conception,* and thus to free itself in the present and to find itself. It is a famous saying that half a philosophy leads you away from God . . . whereas the true philosophy leads you to Him. It is the same with the state. Reason does not content itself with an approximation which is neither cold nor warm and is therefore spit out; nor does it content itself with the cold desperation which admits that in this temporal existence things go badly or at best "fair to middling" and that . . . therefore one better keep one's peace with reality. It is a warmer peace with reality which knowledge provides.

To say one more word about preaching what the world ought to be like, philosophy arrives always too late for that. As *thought* of the world it appears at a time when actuality has completed its developmental process and is finished. What the conception teaches, history also shows as necessary, namely, that only in a maturing actuality the ideal appears and confronts the real. It is then that the ideal rebuilds for itself this same world in the shape of an intellectual realm, comprehending this world in its substance. When philosophy paints its gray in gray, a form of life has become old, and this gray in gray cannot rejuvenate it, only understand it. The owl of Minerva begins its flight when dusk is falling.

But it is time to close this preface. As a preface it could only speak extraneously and subjectively of the standpoint of the writing which it precedes. To speak philosophically of a subject, it admits only a scientific and objective treatment. Therefore to the author any objection of a different sort from a scientific treatment of the subject itself must appear as a subjective epilogue and chance assertion and hence must be indifferent to him.

Berlin, June 25, 1820.

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