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METAPHYSICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE HISTORY OF
PHILOSOPHY: HEGEL'S 1820 INTRODUCTION TO THE
LECTURES ON THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

ALLEGRA DE LAURENTIIS

HEGEL EXPLICATES HIS THEORY of the history of philosophic thinking in several introductions to the various cycles of *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* held in Jena, Heidelberg, and Berlin. Only the introductions to the first cycle of Heidelberg lectures (1816) and to the second cycle of Berlin lectures (1820) survive in Hegel's own hand.¹ Since the earlier of these is an integral part of the latter, an analysis of the 1820 Introduction provides a reliable account of Hegel's theory.

Hegel lectures on the history of philosophy mainly as a philosopher, not as a historian. "The history of philosophy must itself be philosophical,"² he declares in the address delivered ahead of the 1820 Introduction.³ Thus, he is not interested primarily in delivering a chronicle of philosophic ideas, propositions, claims, arguments, and counterarguments in the historical order of their formulation. He presupposes his audience's general acquaintance with historical facts and

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¹ The introductions to all other cycles of lectures on the history of philosophy survive—some of them in fragmentary form—in students' manuscripts. The editorial history of the introductions is told in Georg W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* (hereafter, "W"), ed. Eva Moldenhauer and Karl M. Michel (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1969–79), 20:520.

² "Die Geschichte der Philosophie muss selbst philosophisch seyn"; Georg W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungsmanuskripte II (1816–1831). Gesammelte Werke* (hereafter, "GW"), vol. 18, ed. Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg: Meiner, 1995), 18:39.

³ The textual basis for my analysis is the critical edition cited above (n. 2). The translations are my own, but I consult throughout the Haldane/Simson 1892–96 edition (*Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson [New York: The Humanities Press, 1974]) and the Knox/Miller 1985 translation of the Heidelberg and Berlin introductions (*G.W.F. Hegel. Introduction to the Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans. Thomas M. Knox and Arnold V. Miller [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985]).

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events pertaining to philosophic theories, as well as with major thinkers' general tenets. Hegel is rather concerned with showing, first, why these tenets were relevant and enjoyed recognition in their time; second, how and why they were subsequently transformed; and third, how a core meaning may be discerned in them throughout their transformations.

A paradigmatic illustration of Hegel's procedure in interpreting fundamental principles of the philosophic tradition is provided by the following comment on "being person" in a Remark to his treatment of "property" in the 1821 *Philosophy of Right*:

The notion that what spirit is according to its concept or *in itself*, it should be also in its *Dasein* and for-itself (thereby that it be person capable of property, having ethicality [and] religion)—this idea is itself spirit's concept (as *causa sui*, i.e. as free causation, spirit is such *cuius natura non potest concipi nisi existens*; Spinoza, *Ethics* I, Def. 1.) Precisely in this concept . . . there lies the possibility of the opposition between what spirit is merely *in itself* and its being also *for itself* . . . and thus the *possibility of the alienation of personhood*.⁴

In other words: the late modern conception of personhood as subjectivity with rights (to property, to moral convictions, beliefs, and so forth) is explained by Hegel as realization of the core meaning of Spinoza's "god" (or, as in other passages, of Descartes's *res cogitans*, equally inconceivable unless as existent). The core meaning of "spirit" since its inception as *nous* is the idea of a being that determines itself into being what it is—one important expression of which is, for example, modern political philosophy's notion of an autonomous, self-determining subject.

⁴"Dass das, was der Geist seinem Begriffe nach oder *an sich* ist, auch im *Dasein* und fuer sich sei (somit Person, des Eigentums faehig sei, Sittlichkeit, Religion habe)—diese Idee ist selbst sein Begriff (als *causa sui*, d.i. als freie Ursache, ist er solches, *cuius natura non potest concipi nisi existens*; Spinoza, *Ethik* I, Def. I). In eben diesem Begriffe . . . liegt die Moeglichkeit des Gegensatzes zwischen dem, was er nur *an sich* und nicht auch *fuer sich* ist . . . und hierin die *Moeglichkeit der Entaeusserung der Persoenlichkeit*"; Georg W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts oder Naturrecht und Staatswissenschaft im Grundrisse*, 1821, §66, Remark. (In the following, this work is cited as "W 7," followed by page or section number.) The translations are mine but I consult throughout Thomas M. Knox, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1952), and Hugh B. Nisbet, *Hegel. Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed. Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

The first of the goals outlined in the address and Introduction to these *Lectures* (see above) implies a serious attempt to grasp and to convey the sense in which philosophic concepts and arguments are meant and understood at their inception. This is where the philological and historiographic skill of the *historian* of philosophy has its rightful and necessary place. The second and third goals presuppose a theory of philosophy as a particular kind of thinking with specific logical and epistemological features. Here is where the *philosopher* must deliver an interpretation of historically documented theories and their principles that includes but also goes beyond the meaning ostensibly intended by each of them.

The philosopher lecturing on the history of philosophy has, then, two sets of criteria guiding the exposition: the theoretical order of philosophic concepts (dictated by the analysis of their meanings, which is for Hegel a logical and metaphysical task at once) and the chronological order of their expression in the history of philosophic systems. These two sets of criteria do not operate independently of one another. Hegel's explicit claim is actually stronger than this. The two orders of reconstruction of the history of philosophic thought are in principle the same: "According to this idea I now maintain that the succession of the systems of philosophy in *history* is *the same* as the *succession in the logical derivation* of the conceptual determinations of the Idea."⁵

As the logical sequence cannot be random, so the historical sequence is not accidental. Just as little can the reconstruction of these sequences in a history of philosophy (as a discipline) be arbitrary. Indeed, only the most superficial observer would think of philosophers' choices of themes and methods as a random series. To the contrary, as if engaging in an epoch-transcending conversation, philosophers invariably relate to, criticize, or make use of preceding ethical and

⁵ "Nach dieser Idee behaupte ich nun, dass die Aufeinanderfolge der Systeme der Philosophie in der *Geschichte* *dieselbe* ist, als die *Aufeinanderfolge in der logischen Ableitung* der Begriffsbestimmungen der Idee" (*GW* 18:49). See also Georg W. F. Hegel, *Wissenschaft der Logik. Die Lehre vom Sein* (1832) (Hamburg: Meiner, 1990), where, regarding Parmenides, Hegel writes: "What is *first* in the *science* must have shown itself as the *historically* first. And we have to regard the Eleatic *One* or *Being* as the first in the knowing of thought" (*GW* 21:76). In the following, the translations are mine but I consult throughout Arnold V. Miller, *Hegel's Science of Logic* (New York: Humanities Press, 1969).

cognitive concerns. Where no philosophic precedents are given, as in the case of the Presocratics, philosophers refer to concepts implicit in the representational thinking (*vorstellendes Denken*), in the language, mythology, religion, poetry, and wisdom that have preceded and still surround them. Even the most skeptical eye perceives philosophic theories in their historical succession as engaged in some sort of sense-making. Hegel's *Lectures* follow the logic of this sense-making as their thread of Ariadne through the history of philosophy.

While neither an exhaustive account nor a thorough justification can be given here of Hegel's strong claim on the logical and historical orders of philosophic thought, this brief study aims at clarifying the claim, elucidating two supporting theories from the body of Hegel's system, and correcting a pertinacious view on Hegel's understanding of the nature of philosophy.

According to Hegel, the primary (that is, both first and fundamental) subject matter of philosophy is human thinking itself. The history of philosophy is thus a gradual fulfillment of the Socratic command: know thyself. Thought's simultaneous double role as subject and subject-matter in philosophy lends the latter the character of a peculiarly "speculative" enterprise, much in the sense adumbrated in Aristotle's investigation of the soul: "The mind itself is included among the objects which can be thought. For where the objects are immaterial that which thinks and that which is thought are identical. Speculative knowledge and its object are identical."⁶ In the same Aristotelian spirit, Hegel explains the dynamics of philosophic thinking as progressive actualization (a becoming *fuer sich*) of what thinking is potentially (according to its concept [*dem Begriffe nach*] or *an sich*). This is the background for his claim that there is not only chronological but also, and more fundamentally, logical continuity among philosophic principles in the course of their history. Thus, it is possible for him to identify a common (and evolving) meaning in notions that apparently refer to vastly different objects of reflection. The introductory chapter to the Doctrine of Being in the Greater Logic is dedicated to justifying precisely this claim: "Thus the beginning of philosophy is the foundation that is present and self-preserving in all subsequent de-

⁶ Aristotle, *De Anima*, ed. and trans. R. D. Hicks (New York: Prometheus Books, 1991), 3.4.430a5. Hick's translation of *he episteme he theoretike* with "speculative knowledge" is fully justified in this context.

velopments, that which remains immanent in all its further determinations.”⁷

The thesis that the history of philosophic systems is the expression of a process of human thinking toward absolute self-knowing (and thus also self-determining) is strong enough to merit an isolated treatment. Its attempted justification has to be sought in the Greater Logic⁸ and not in the History of Philosophy. In section 1 below I treat Hegel’s claim that an in-depth knowledge of the history of philosophy is an integral part of philosophizing as such, and I elucidate the arguments by which he defends this claim. The interpretation of the 1820 Introduction contained in this part highlights important aspects of Hegel’s perspective that, although aimed at grounding the controversial metaphysical thesis of the inner unity of thought’s logic and history, can by themselves offer a much needed antidote to contemporary notions of the history of philosophy as a discipline having merely instrumental value for doing philosophy proper—as if the latter were a fundamentally nonhistorical discipline. Section 2 provides then support for Hegel’s thesis from the perspective of the internal coherence of his system. In the conclusion (3) I briefly respond, in the light of the theory expounded in the 1820 text, to what I take to be an influential misconception of Hegel’s understanding of the relation of philosophy to *Zeitgeist*.

I

The History of Philosophy Is Philosophy. The 1820 Introduction begins by highlighting the continuity of, and marking the distinction between, the natural and the spiritual grounds of human life and thinking. While nature remains fastened to unchanging laws throughout its metamorphoses, spirit, though necessarily anchored in habit-forming tradition, is capable of transforming the “principles, prejudices and . . .

⁷ “So ist der Anfang der Philosophie, die in allen folgenden Entwicklungen gegenwaertige und sich erhaltende Grundlage, das seinen weitem Bestimmungen durchaus immanent Bleibende” (*GW* 21:58).

⁸ Especially in the preliminary essay, “With what must the science begin?”, and in the actual treatment of the historical instantiations of the transitions from each category to the next.

riches”⁹ constituting that tradition. The productions of each generation are both form and matter of the next: they are “its soul, spiritual substance . . . but also . . . the *material* present to it.”¹⁰ Thus, in the history of our “second nature” the matter being transformed and the activity producing the transformation do not differ in substance. One epoch’s spirit is made up of that of all previous epochs and transforms the latter by assimilation into something new, namely itself. This is why to read history is for us not to read a story of extraneous events but our own story. As for the history of philosophy, it does not tell a tale of strange and alien thoughts but rather the story of our own thinking in one peculiar mode. The development of this thinking mode is articulated in a multiplicity of forms—the philosophic systems.

Accordingly, a history of philosophy is not a history of opinions, not even of opinions about topics of general interest such as god, justice, or human nature. When studying the history of philosophy we are being confronted with concepts that are not just convictions of groups or individuals but rather principles of theories. What makes a concept be a mere opinion is the fact of its intrinsic particularity or perhaps even singularity.¹¹ There are, of course, in the body of every philosophic work innumerable concepts that represent merely particular or singular convictions. But not just any concept featured in a philosophic theory is for this reason alone a philosophic concept. This is rather a notion that functions as theoretical principle: the whole theory (as a system) depends upon its meaning and consistency. Such a principle is the kind of system-identifying concept Hegel refers to as *Grundbegriff*.

The singularity or particularity of thoughts embodying mere opinion affects both their form and their content. As long as my (or my community’s) ideas about divinity, morality, or right are merely my (or our) opinions, their referents are merely my (or our) gods, customs, or sense of justice. As such, these thoughts are of no philosophic import—except as cultural, psychological, or historical beginnings of properly philosophic concepts. What enables such thoughts

⁹ “Grundsätze, Vorurtheile und . . . Reichthum” (*GW* 18:37).

¹⁰ “deren Seele, geistige Substanz, . . . aber zugleich . . . ein vorliegender *Stoff* fuer sie” (*GW* 18:37).

¹¹ Compare *GW* 18:42.

to develop into philosophic concepts, on the other hand, is the fact of their intrinsic universality.¹² The thoughts of divinity, justice, or personhood, in their many mythological, aesthetic, religious, or theological guises, have potentially universal content. Their objective meaning is inextricable from the connotation of universality. “God” is not divine if he presides over Athens alone; “justice” is not just if it admits of exceptions; and, by virtue of its intension alone, the concept of “personhood” cannot extend to some but not other persons. These concepts are implicitly universal from the moment of their inception, but it is only in the course of history that they do become explicitly so.

As for the truth content of universal concepts, Hegel reminds his audience that philosophic theories’ differences and mutual contradictions do not prove that philosophic truth is relative or, what is the same, that there is no truth in philosophy.¹³ Skeptic or relativistic truth abstinence, Hegel comments, only stimulates thought’s hunger for truth.¹⁴ At first, the variance and disagreement among parts of a cognitive undertaking each equally claiming to provide us with truth seem to contradict our legitimate rational expectations. Upon reflection, however, it becomes clear that we can only notice, compare, and grasp theories’ differences against a common ground. This ground is the “instinct” that drives thought to find truth: “*The truth however is one*,—the instinct of reason possesses this invincible feeling or belief. . . . Already the instinct of thinking pursues [the idea] . . . that the truth is one.”¹⁵ To engage in thinking without an instinctive belief in the possibility of truth would be akin to engaging in eating without belief in the possibility of satiety.

The subject matter ubiquitous in philosophy is neither individual witticisms nor particular cultural beliefs, but rather the concept of what is true. The history of philosophy consists of a meaningful series of formulations of this concept. Akin to the *Phenomenology*’s description of the path of consciousness, the *Lectures on the History of*

¹² Compare *GW* 18:43.

¹³ This observation applies of course equally to the history of the positive sciences.

¹⁴ Compare *GW* 18:43.

¹⁵ “*Die Wahrheit aber ist Eine*,—dieses unueberwindliche Gefuehl oder Glauben hat der Instinct der Vernunft . . . —dass die Wahrheit nur eine ist . . . darin folgt schon der Instinct des Denkens” (*GW* 18:43 and 45).

Philosophy describe the continuous process of self-differentiations of one thinking activity. As the *Phenomenology* presents self-conscious reason's reconstruction of its development out of its own natural stages, so do these lectures present philosophic thinking as incessantly retracing its own history in the endeavor to grasp itself.

To say that conceptual thinking is philosophy's medium and subject matter is not to say that philosophy is a science of abstractions. Philosophic thinking does not consist only of a formal determination of concepts and their relations—that is, it is not reducible to formal logic, linguistics, or mathematics. It consists, rather, of the analysis and determination of the meaning of system-identifying concepts. The content of a concept that functions as principle in a system is not exhausted by its relations to sub- or superordinate concepts. As already mentioned, not just any concept that arises in a philosophic theory is for Hegel a philosophic concept in the technical sense. *Grundbegriffe* are concepts whose meaning, internal consistency, and mutual compatibility provide the grounds of justification of the theory they are embedded in. A system-identifying concept, for example Plato's "idea" or Leibniz's "monad," is a unity of other concepts differing from it and among themselves. In virtue of its being an internally differentiated unity, this "concrete concept" contains not the common but rather the differentiating features of the notions it encompasses. At this point,¹⁶ Hegel illustrates the distinction between abstract and concrete concepts through that between abstract and concrete sensible representations (*sinnliche Vorstellung[en]*). The sensible representation of "red" is abstract because it is an abstraction from many representations. The sensible representation of "rose," on the other hand, is more concrete, because it is also a unity of many representations (life, shape, color, smell, and so forth), that is, it is "One Subject, One Idea."¹⁷

Contrary to the familiar rule holding for concepts as classes, according to which a concept's increasing extension always implies its decreasing intension, the more general a system-identifying principle is, the more determinations it contains: "Here the most extensive is

¹⁶ GW 18:46.

¹⁷ Ibid.

also the most intensive.”¹⁸ This is why Hegel refers to philosophy as the most concrete of sciences and why he maintains that common sense and even enlightened ratiocination are insufficient by themselves to account for philosophic principles and what derives from them:

It is in this that knowledge of reason distinguishes itself from knowledge of the understanding, and it is the business of philosophizing to show against the understanding that the true, the Idea does not consist of empty generalities, but of a universal that in itself is the particular, the determinate.¹⁹

This definition of the Idea (or “the true”) as concrete universal containing particularity or determinacy is an abbreviated form of the definition of “the Concept as such” (*der Begriff*) from the Logic:²⁰

The *Concept* as such contains the moment of *universality*, as free equality with itself in its determinacy; it contains the moment of *particularity*, or of the determinacy in which the Universal remains serenely equal to itself, and it contains the moment of *singularity*, as the inward reflection of the determinacies of universality and particularity. This singular negative unity with itself is what is *in and for itself determined*, and at the same time identical with itself or universal.²¹

The notion of a universality that by self-particularization posits itself as a (universal) singularity is elucidated by Hegel in the sections of the

¹⁸ “Hier ist das Extensivste auch das Intensivste” (*GW* 18:47–8).

¹⁹ “Es ist hierin dass sich die Vernunftkenntnis von der blossen Verstandeskenntnis unterscheidet, und es ist das Geschaefte des Philosophirens gegen den Verstand zu zeigen, dass das Wahre, die Idee nicht in leeren Allgemeinheiten besteht, sondern in einem Allgemeinen, das in sich selbst das Besondere, das Bestimmte ist” (*GW* 18:45).

²⁰ I use (with few exceptions noted explicitly) the following translation of the *Encyclopaedia Logic*: G. W. F. Hegel. *The Encyclopaedia Logic (with the Zusätze)*, ed. and trans. Theodore F. Geraets, Wallis A. Suchting, and Henry S. Harris (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1991). The textual basis of my analysis of the main text is *GW*, vol. 20 and, for the Remarks and Additions, *W*, vol. 8. The *Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences* (1830) is cited in the following as “E,” followed by section number.

²¹ “Der *Begriff* als solcher enthaelt die Momente der *Allgemeinheit*, als freier Gleichheit mit sich selbst in ihrer Bestimmtheit—der *Besonderheit*, der Bestimmtheit, in welcher das Allgemeine ungetruebt sich selbst gleich bleibt, und der *Einzelheit*, als der Reflexion in sich der Bestimmtheiten der *Allgemeinheit* und *Besonderheit*, welche negative Einheit mit sich das *an und fuer sich Bestimmte* und zugleich mit sich Identische oder Allgemeine ist” (*E*, §163).

Doctrine of the Concept that follow this passage. In the 1820 Introduction, however, he merely comments that this notion cannot be grasped by understanding alone, but requires reason (*Vernunft*).

Reason grasps a particular kind of concepts that can be characterized, in a first and general way, as sharing the mark of self-referentiality. Both this kind of notion and the kind of thinking that makes such notions intelligible—namely reason—may thus be called “speculative.” One such notion, for example, is “self-consciousness.” As explained in the chapter of the *Phenomenology* bearing this name,²² “self-consciousness” refers to mind’s taking on the contradictory (and thus also self-negating) role of being subject and object of one and the same act of cognition, simultaneously and in the same respect:

If we call the movement of knowing, *concept*, but knowing as motionless unity, or the Ego, the *object*, then we see that not only for us, but for knowing itself, the object corresponds to the concept.—Or alternatively, by calling what the object is *in itself*, the *concept*, while [calling] the object what it is as *object* or *for an* other, it becomes clear that the being-in-itself and the being-for-another is the same.²³

Self-consciousness is a concept that the understanding cannot analyze because it involves the sublation, and thus the inclusion, of a contradiction. It is a speculative concept arrived at and grasped only by speculative reason.²⁴

²² The translations of the 1807 *Phenomenology of Spirit* are my own. The textual basis is *GW*, vol. 9. I have consulted throughout Miller’s *Hegel’s Phenomenology of Spirit* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977).

²³ “Nennen wir *Begriff*, die Bewegung des Wissens, den *Gegenstand* aber, das Wissen als ruhige Einheit, oder als Ich, so sehen wir, dass nicht nur fuer uns, sondern fuer das Wissen selbst, der *Gegenstand* dem *Begriffe* entspricht. – Oder auf die andere Weise, den *Begriff* das genannt, was der *Gegenstand* *ansich* ist, den *Gegenstand* aber das, was er als *Gegenstand*, oder *fuer ein* anderes ist, so erhellt, dass das *Ansichseyn*, und das fuer ein anderes seyn dasselbe ist” (*GW* 9:103).

²⁴ Nonstandard analytic philosophy of logic does share Hegel’s views with regards to the meaningfulness and viability of some contradictions. See for example the numerous outstanding contributions of Graham Priest on this subject, such as his *In Contradiction: A Study of the Transconsistent* (Dordrecht: Martinus Nijhof, 1987); the two historical introductions to *Paraconsistent Logic. Essays on the Inconsistent*, ed. Graham Priest, Richard Routley, and Jean Norman (Munich: Philosophia Verlag, 1989); and “What’s So Bad about Contradictions?” *Journal of Philosophy* 95, no. 8 (1998): 410–26.

Thus, Hegel's characterization of the discipline of the history of philosophy as description of the development of the Idea can be usefully summarized in the following terms. According to this theory, the subject matter of this discipline is thinking as articulated in time through a series of theories (*Systeme*) centered upon concepts (*Grundbegriffe*) that are intrinsically speculative and thus intelligible only to reason.

The 1820 Introduction continues by highlighting different but connected features of philosophic thinking, or of the developing Idea: (1) its "organic" structure (philosophy is an evolving system of systems); (2) its speculative nature (philosophy is self-knowing knowledge); and (3) the characteristic dynamics of its movement, namely a simultaneously outward and inward development. As these are the features that justify the claim of the intrinsically historical character of theoretical concepts, we turn to them first. Incursions into the Greater Logic are made necessary by Hegel's present use of terms whose technical meaning he has explained previously, namely in the 1812, 1813, and 1816 editions of the three books of the Logic. Since the spirit's "deeds" on the stage of history (compare *Philosophy of Right*, §343) parallel the processes of consciousness described in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, passages from the latter will be used to illustrate Hegel's present argument.

(1) *Philosophic thinking is an organic system.* In its historical unfolding philosophy can be likened to a living organism. Philosophic thinking is one, but it exists only as a dynamic whole of vitally interrelated parts (theories). It maintains its specific identity throughout its transformations. It develops through time due to an internal drive.

Physical liveliness . . . like the liveliness of spirit . . . is an urge, passes over into the hunger and thirst for truth, presses for knowledge of it, for the satisfaction of this urge . . . [T]he true has the urge . . . to *develop* itself. Only the living, the spiritual moves, stirs itself inside itself, self-develops. In this way the Idea, concrete in itself and self-developing, is an organic system, a totality that *contains in itself a wealth of stages and moments*.²⁵

²⁵ "Die physische Lebendigkeit . . . wie die Lebendigkeit des Geistes . . . ist Trieb, geht ueber in den Hunger und Durst nach Wahrheit, nach Erkenntnis derselben, dringt nach Befriedigung dieses Triebs . . . [D]as Wahre [hat] den Trieb . . . sich zu *entwickeln*. Nur das Lebendige, das Geistige bewegt, ruehrt sich in sich, entwickelt sich. Die Idee ist so, concret an sich und sich entwickelnd, ein organisches System, eine Totalitaet welche ein *Reichtum von Stufen und Momenten in sich enthaelt*" (GW 18:43 and 47).

Like the description of an organism's ontogenesis, the description of philosophy in history requires a concept of **self-movement** in which the connotation of change does not imply that of transition to another. Hegel's technical term for organic or self-movement—and the term he uses in this Introduction to characterize philosophy's history—is “**development**” (*Entwicklung*).

Rather than using the term indiscriminately to denote any kind of process, Hegel confines the use of “development” in the *Logic* to the dynamic structure of self-related thinking. He sets it apart from other dynamic configurations by which thinking relates to the being and to the essence of things other than thought. In the opening of the *Encyclopaedia's* Doctrine of the Concept we read:

The progression of the Concept is no longer either passing-over or shining into an other, but *development*; for the [moments] that are distinguished are immediately posited at the same time as identical with one another and with the whole, and the determinacy is as a free being of the whole Concept.²⁶

This passage summarizes the three structural features of thinking whose distinction Hegel considers so fundamental as to constitute the organizational principle of the entire *Logic*. The differences in thinking Being, Essence, and the Concept are functions of the difference in the relation of each to thinking itself.

When thinking has categories of Being for its generic objects (for example, indeterminate being, nothing, becoming; determinate being, its quality, quantity or intrinsic measure, and so forth) its dynamic is described by Hegel as a “passing over” (*Uebergehen*) from one to another category. In this context, the denotation (the signified) of each category is seemingly independent of thinking itself and is related to the next category by a reflection extrinsic to it.

When thinking has categories of the Essence of Being for its generic objects, Hegel prefers to describe its movement as a “shining into another” (*Scheinen in Anderes*), that is, a reciprocal reflection among the meanings of different categories. Each of the categories

²⁶ “Das Fortgehen des Begriffs ist nicht mehr Uebergehen noch Scheinen in Anderes, sondern *Entwicklung*, indem das Unterschiedene unmittelbar zugleich als das Identische mit einander und mit dem Ganzen gesetzt, die Bestimmtheit als ein freies Seyn des ganzen Begriffes ist” (*E*, §161).

involved in this logical sphere constitutes part of the meaning of the preceding as well as of the following one, though only logical analysis can detect this reciprocal “shine.” For example, the category of identity already contains—upon reflection—the category of distinction (*Unterschied*)²⁷ and vice versa. Both, in turn, contain the category of ground and vice versa: the ground of something’s identity is necessarily distinguishable from, though also identical with, what is grounded by it. Equally, the notion of the world as appearance implies a notion of the world’s essence and vice versa. Through both, in turn, “shines” a notion of the world’s actuality that includes both its essence and its appearance. Each of the categories of essence is meant as referring simultaneously to a determinacy of Being (Essence is the Essence of Being) and a determinacy of thought (Essence is also the Concept—or truth—of Being): the ground of x provides the objective reason for the existence of x while providing also the concept of what x essentially or truly is.

It is only when thinking has itself as its explicit object—as in the system-identifying concepts of philosophic theories: idea, *nous*, god, *res cogitans*, substance, monad, reason, mind—that Hegel refers to its movement as development. In the 1820 Introduction, in particular, he makes it explicit that self-referentiality is the *differentia specifica* of genuinely philosophic thinking over against all other kinds of thought. Thus, the logical and chronological movement of philosophic thinking is correctly identified as self-development:

[T]hat philosophically known truth exists in the element of thought, in the form of universality, . . . this is familiar to our common way of thinking. But [to say] that the universal itself contains its own determination, . . . here begins a properly philosophic proposition—here it is, therefore, that a consciousness that does not yet cognize philosophically withdraws and says that it doesn’t *understand* this.²⁸

²⁷ Two excellent and concise discussions of Hegel’s uses of *Unterschied* and *Differenz* in the Logic are in *E*, pp. xxiii–xxiv, and Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 131–3.

²⁸ “[D]ass die philosophisch erkannte Wahrheit im Elemente des Gedankens, in der Form der Allgemeinheit ist, . . . es ist diss unserer gewöhnlichen Vorstellung gelaueffig. Aber dass das Allgemeine selbst in sich seine Bestimmung enthalte, . . . hier faengt ein eigentlich philosophischer Satz an—hier tritt darum das noch nicht philosophisch erkennende Bewusstseyn zurueck, und sagt es *verstehe* diss nicht” (*GW* 18:45–6).

Accordingly, the organic-systematic character of philosophy is a consequence of its self-referential nature, that is, of its being speculative.

(2) *Philosophic thinking is a speculative organic system.* The reason for philosophy's organic nature is its speculative character.

In a move parallel to that described in the *Phenomenology*, where natural consciousness discovers itself in its rebirth as self-consciousness ("Ego is the content of the relation [of knowing to object] and the relating itself")²⁹ philosophic inquiry always already includes the investigation of the agent (that is, thinking itself or "the universal") and the medium of investigation (that is, concepts or "universals"). In order to determine what thinking is, how it affects its objects, whether it constitutes or distorts them, whether it is adequate to or incongruous with them, there is no other tribunal to turn to or instrument to use but thinking itself. Philosophy proper begins with the recognition of a universal containing its own determination, as defined in the Logic: "The *Concept* as such contains the moment of *universality*, . . . of *particularity*, . . . and . . . of *singularity*, as the inward reflection of . . . universality and particularity. This . . . negative unity with itself is what is *in and for itself determined*."³⁰ One fundamental meaning of "speculative thinking" is that it objectifies what is otherwise (for example, for ratiocination) merely subjective. To make theoretical and practical human thinking into an object of logical and historical investigation is to turn thought into an object for thought. This is why both the historical whole of philosophic theories and the theory of this history merit being characterized as "speculative."

These introductory reflections premised to the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* parallel what Hegel had written in 1807 when introducing the history of consciousness. Thinking as generic activity (*Denken ueberhaupt*) is to conceptual cognition (*begreifendes Erkennen*)³¹ as natural consciousness is to self-consciousness. Philosophic

²⁹ "Ich ist der Inhalt der Beziehung, und das Beziehen selbst" (GW 9:103).

³⁰ "Der Begriff als solcher enthaelt die Momente der *Allgemeinheit* . . . , der *Besonderheit* . . . und der *Einzelheit*, als der Reflexion-in-sich der . . . *Allgemeinheit* und *Besonderheit*, welche negative Einheit mit sich das *an und fuer sich Bestimmte* . . . ist" (E, §163; see above, n. 21).

³¹ The distinction is also outlined and illustrated by Hegel in §2 and Remark of the 1830 *Encyclopedia*, GW 20:40–1 and W 8:42–3, respectively.

science, we read in the Introduction to the *Phenomenology*, is apt to convey the truth because thinking is neither merely an instrument nor a medium that modifies or distorts a subject matter alien to it but rather this subject matter itself. Since any object of philosophic investigation must be conceptual, philosophic thinking always investigates itself in the investigation of truth.³² Thus, the historical inception of philosophic thinking coincides with the rise of the self-reflexive stage of consciousness, namely self-consciousness. As long as consciousness has for its object a content which it does not consider to belong to itself—“beings” that it senses, “things” that it perceives, “forces” that it understands to exist beyond the things perceived—its history is part and parcel of the natural history of knowing. The stages of natural consciousness do not yet constitute knowing proper, let alone philosophic cognition, just as the stages of the natural soul do not yet constitute spirit proper.

Now, since this exposition has for its object only appearing knowledge, . . . it can be taken as the path of natural consciousness making its way to true knowledge; or as the path of the soul that journeys through a series of its own configurations as stages set for it by its own nature, that it may purify itself into spirit. . . . Natural consciousness will prove itself to be only [the] concept of knowing, or nonreal knowing.³³

Real or philosophic knowing begins when thinking realizes³⁴ that its objects are being determined by itself. Knowing the object and self-knowing, then, come together in one act: “Ego is the content of the relation, and the relating itself; Ego is itself over against an other, and

³² See *GW* 9:53–4.

³³ “Weil nun diese Darstellung nur das erscheinende Wissen zum Gegenstande hat, so . . . kann [sie] . . . als der Weg des natuerlichen Bewusstseyns, das zum wahren Wissen dringt, genommen werden; oder als der Weg der Seele, welche die Reihe ihrer Gestaltungen, als durch ihre Natur ihr vorgesteckter Stationen durchwandert, dass sie sich zum Geiste laeutere . . . Das natuerliche Bewusstseyn wird sich erweisen, nur Begriff des Wissens, oder nicht reales Wissen zu seyn” (*GW* 9:55–6). Hegel insists that natural consciousness *per se* “loses its truth” on the path of philosophy: “Das natuerliche Bewusstseyn . . . verliert auf diesem Wege seine Wahrheit” (*GW* 9:56).

³⁴ English offers as many speculative insights as German does. The use of “to realize” for “to become aware of” is the perfect psychological counterpart to the speculative meaning of Hegel’s “self-actualization of consciousness.”

simultaneously grasps beyond³⁵ this other which for the Ego is likewise only the Ego itself.”³⁶

The phenomenological presentation of knowing as it merely appears,³⁷ namely in relation to what is allegedly other than knowing, is, then, the negative prelude to “free science moving in the form proper to it.”³⁸ The latter, then, is the proper subject matter of a philosophical history of philosophy: self-investigating and thereby self-determining or “free” thought.

(3) *Philosophic thinking is outward and inward development.* The 1820 Introduction also claims that the externalization of philosophic thinking in the historical sequence of its systems is at the same time an inwardization (*Insichgehen*) or recollection (*Erinnerung*) of philosophic consciousness—a deepening of its self-reflexive character.

Further, this development is not directed [only] outwards as in externality, but the developmental unfolding is also a going inwards; . . . As the outward going of the philosophical Idea in its development is not . . . a becoming other but likewise a going-into-itself, a deepening of itself in itself, so does the progression render the Idea, previously general and rather undeterminate, more *determinate* in itself.³⁹

³⁵ Michael J. Petry, *Hegel's Philosophy of Subjective Spirit* (hereafter, “*Subjective Spirit*”), vols. 1–3 (Boston: Reidel, 1978), uses “to include” to translate Hegel’s *uebergreifen* in the definition of the Ego in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit (*E*, §438), where the universality of reason is explained as the Ego’s capacity of being permeated and grasped by the object as well as the Ego’s activity of “grasping beyond” and incorporating the object. Inwood, *Dictionary*, suggests “to embrace” or “to overreach” (58–9).

³⁶ “Ich ist der Inhalt der Beziehung, und das Beziehen selbst; es ist selbst gegen ein anderes, und greift zugleich ueber diss andre ueber, das fuer es ebenso nur es selbst ist” (*GW* 9:103).

³⁷ Compare *GW* 9:55, quoted above: “nur das erscheinende Wissen.”

³⁸ “die freye, in ihrer eigenthuemlichen Gestalt sich bewegende Wissenschaft” (*GW* 9:55).

³⁹ “Ferner geht diese Entwicklung nicht nach Aussen als in die Aeusserlichkeit, sondern das Auseinandergehen der Entwicklung ist eben so ein Gehen nach Innen; . . . Indem das Hinausgehen der philosophischen Idee in ihrer Entwicklung nicht . . . ein Werden zu einem Andern sondern ebenso ein In-sich-hineingehen, ein sich in [sich] Vertiefen ist, so macht das Fortschreiten die vorher allgemeine, unbestimmtere Idee in sich *bestimmter*” (*GW* 18:47).

If self-referentiality, or the inclusion of thought in the thinking of the object, is characteristic of philosophy, then the advance of philosophy in time will also follow, in conformity with the Socratic command issued at the beginning of its history, an inward trajectory: advancing philosophic knowledge will imply increased cognition of the knowing self.

It is true, of course, not only of philosophy but of other forms of spirit as well that their movement is always more than objectification in an “other,” be this the spiritual or the material products of our species’s second nature. Their development is as well a recollection (*Erinnerung*), whereby spirit enhances its grasp and determination of itself precisely through its self-externalization.⁴⁰ By apparently becoming other, spirit attains an ever more concrete shape of itself. As in the *Phenomenology* self-experience is said to lead the soul to self-knowledge (the soul “achieves cognition of what it is in itself through the complete experience of itself”),⁴¹ so in the *Philosophy of Spirit*, spirit’s experience of its own externalizations leads to its increasing self-knowledge. And since spirit consists of human thought’s development in self-knowing, increased self-knowledge means also increased inner determination (and “concretion”) of the very nature of spirit. This, again, may be illustrated by recourse to the *Anthropology of the soul*. In the development of spirit from natural soul to consciousness proper, every stage in the externalization of the soul—its taking possession of corporeality, its positing and taking possession of the external world, and so on—also represents a phase of spirit’s inwardization, that is, the progressive transformation of its in-itself into for-itself, or of its corporeity into subjectivity. Both sides of the soul’s development, externalization and inwardization, are teleologically directed toward the full sublation of soul into conscious selfness or Egoity:

⁴⁰ For a detailed overview of the role of *Erinnerung* in the general economy of the logic and psychology of thinking in Hegel see Angelica Nuzzo, “Thinking and Recollecting. Logic and Psychology in Hegel’s *Philosophy*,” forthcoming in *La memoria*, ed. Gianna Gigliotti (Naples: Bibliopolis/Vrin, 2005).

⁴¹ “durch die vollstaendige Erfahrung ihrer selbst zur Kenntnis desjenigen gelangt, was sie an sich selbst ist” (*GW* 9:55).

In itself, matter has no truth within the soul; as being-for-itself, the soul separates itself from its immediate being, and sets the latter over against itself as corporeity. . . . The soul that has posited⁴² its being over against itself, that has sublated and determined it as its own, has lost the meaning of *soul* as *immediacy* of the spirit. The actual soul . . . is in-itself the *ideality* for-itself of its determinacies; in its externality [it is] *recollected* in and infinitely related to itself.⁴³

Only a philosophical history of philosophy can capture the inwardizing or recollective dimension of spirit's external development, namely by reconstructing the successive sublations of philosophic principles in the history of the systems. The logical concretization, that is, increasing intension and extension,⁴⁴ of philosophic concepts is then the necessary complement to their chronological succession. The principles of ancient philosophies are comparatively more "abstract" and their signification more "external" than later ones, but they are included or recollected in these: "Philosophy is, now, for itself the knowing of this development and, as conceptual thinking, is itself this thinking development. The further this development has thriven, the more complete philosophy is."⁴⁵

The history of philosophy is not *Historie*, a story told from a perspective external to philosophy or a report on real occurrences as op-

⁴² Petry, *Subjective Spirit*, translates "Soul which posits its being over against itself," but Hegel uses the verb in the past tense: *entgegengesetzt hat*. Indeed, the soul's process of positing its own content as an other from itself must be concluded for it to cease to be mere soul and to begin its journey as consciousness. The logic underlying this process is explained in the Greater Logic, Doctrine of Being, chap. 1.C: the truth resulting from the analysis of undetermined being and undetermined nothing (namely that they are becoming) is not just that being and nothing are permanently passing into each other, but that they have always already done so (*GW* 21:69).

⁴³ "An sich hat die Materie keine Wahrheit in der Seele; als fuersichseyende scheidet diese sich von ihrem unmittelbaren Seyn, und stellt sich daselbe als Leiblichkeit gegenueber. . . . Die Seele, die ihr Seyn sich entgegengesetzt, es aufgehoben und als das ihrige bestimmt hat, hat die Bedeutung der Seele, der Unmittelbarkeit des Geistes, verloren. Die wirkliche Seele . . . ist an sich die fuer sich seyende *Idealitaet* ihrer Bestimmtheiten, in ihrer Aeusserlichkeit *erinnert* in sich und unendliche Beziehung auf sich" (*E*, §412).

⁴⁴ See above, n. 18.

⁴⁵ "Die Philosophie ist nun fuer sich das Erkennen dieser Entwicklung, und ist als begreifendes Denken selbst diese denkende Entwicklung. Je weiter diese Entwicklung gediehen, desto vollkommner ist die Philosophie" (*GW* 18:47).

posed to a fable about unreal ones. The history of philosophy is *Geschichte*, the developmental history without which what has developed cannot be made intelligible.⁴⁶ For example, a philosophic investigation of mind ignoring all that “mind” has meant since Anaxagoras resembles the efforts of psychologists attempting to grasp their patients’ personalities without knowledge of their personal history.⁴⁷ **Mind per se does not name a thing but a concept.** In theorizing “mind” one cannot indicate any signified thing to which the term corresponds

⁴⁶ *Geschichte* derives from *geschehen*, whose core meaning in its Old High German form (*scehanto*) is “to turn [out] suddenly.” Over time, the latter acquired the connotation of the unexpected, new event (*Ereignis*) and finally that of *Werden*, becoming in general.

⁴⁷ For such an **ahistorical approach** see John R. Searle’s *The Mystery of Consciousness* (New York: New York Review of Books, 1997). In the introduction, “errors” and “obsolete categories” of the “religious and philosophical tradition” are said to “plague” contemporary mind theory (p. xii). But Searle’s own thesis—“consciousness is a natural, biological phenomenon. It is as much part of our biological life as digestion, growth, or photosynthesis” (p. xiii)—hardly differs from those of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century thinkers like de la Mettrie, Cabanis, C. Vogt, or Du Bois-Reymond. This peculiar a-historicity is reproduced in Daniel Dennett’s study of “the mind (or brain)” (*The Intentional Stance* [Cambridge: MIT Press, 1997], 123). Despite assurances that his investigations into “mind” are philosophical, Dennett’s sparse references to mind theories in Western philosophy are oddly selective. In *The Mind’s I* (with Douglas R. Hofstadter) (New York: Bantam, 1982), he leaps from a sketch of Locke’s conception of conscious mind as “transparent to itself” to Freud as discoverer of “the existence of unconscious mental processes” (*ibid.*, 11–2). No reference is made to Leibniz’s rebuttal of Locke, his theory of *petites perceptions* (*New Essays on Human Understanding*), of life-degrees in the monad (*Monadology*), or of the difference of “perception” from “apperception” (*Principles of Nature and Grace*); to apperception’s central role in Kant’s theory of mind; to Hegel’s distinction between conscious and unconscious thinking (*E*, §398) and implicit and explicit soul content (*E*, §§402–3); or to Freud’s extensive debt to Nietzsche on this subject. Thus, there are certainly more “somewhat distinct ancestries worth noting” (*Consciousness Explained*, 44) than Dennett suspects. Thomas Nagel (*Other Minds* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1995], 7) offers an interesting explanation for this philosophizing. He claims, “philosophers don’t have to know much about history or anything about literature, but they are expected . . . to have at least an amateur’s grasp of the contributions of Newton, Maxwell, Darwin, Einstein, Heisenberg, Cantor, Goedel, and Turing . . . all of which provide data for philosophical reflection.” One cannot help wondering why a (preferably nonamateurish) grasp of Plato, Aristotle, Spinoza, Leibniz, Kant, or Hegel is not seen as providing at least as good “data” for doing philosophy.

other than the concept of mind itself. “Mind” signifies “the concept of mind” and this, as all concepts, has a history. The contemporary meaning of “mind” must thus be codetermined by the meanings it has embodied in the history of philosophy. An adequate contemporary concept of mind will have to overcome and include (sublate) all previous ones. In announcing that “the STUDY of the history of philosophy is study of philosophy itself,—as cannot be otherwise,”⁴⁸ Hegel prepares his audience for the radical idea that a philosophical history of philosophy is a chronological recapitulation of the intrinsic logic of philosophic thinking.

II

The History of Philosophy Parallels the Logic of the Idea. It is probably not extravagant to maintain that Hegel’s thesis (quoted in the opening section but to be repeated here) lies at the foundation of his entire philosophy as system: “According to this idea, I now maintain that the succession of the systems of philosophy in history is the same as the succession in the logical derivation of the conceptual determinations of the Idea.”⁴⁹

The thesis can be paraphrased as stating that the historical succession of systems in the history of philosophy parallels (to use a weak version of the claim) or coincides with (to use Hegel’s strong version) the logical succession of spirit’s phases in its practical and theoretical activity of knowing itself.⁵⁰ The sequential whole of theories (*die Aufeinanderfolge der Systeme*) displays phases that correspond to internal principles of human thinking and acting (*Begriffsbestimmungen der Idee*), and the sequence of the phases is dictated by the necessity intrinsic to the logic of these principles. Since the systems in the history of philosophy are different expressions of one thinking process, Hegel claims further that their principles, though necessarily known (*erkannt*) only through historically documented

⁴⁸ “das STUDIUM der Geschichte der Philosophie [ist] Studium der Philosophie selbst,—wie es denn nicht anders seyn kann” (GW 18:50).

⁴⁹ GW 18:49. See n. 5.

⁵⁰ See GW 18:52.

theories, can only be adequately grasped (*begriffen*) as determinations of the Idea, determinations whose logical connection is expounded in the Logic:

I maintain that if one strips the fundamental concepts [*Grundbegriffe*] of the systems that have appeared in the history of philosophy of what concerns their exterior shape, their application to the particular, and similar features, then one obtains the various stages of determination of the Idea itself in its logical concept.⁵¹

Put in a somewhat different way: the philosopher reconstructing the history of philosophy understands the theories succeeding each other in time to be expressions (or real appearances: *Erscheinungen*)⁵² of principles of the theoretical and practical activity of self-knowing called “the Idea.”⁵³

In the text under discussion Hegel does not develop an explicit argument for the idea that the history and logic of philosophic thinking correspond to each other—let alone for the stronger version purporting that they are “the same.” In support of his thesis he merely refers us here to the metaphysics of time from his *Philosophy of Nature*.⁵⁴

After a brief treatment of the philosophy of time being invoked here as explanatory of this thesis (1), we shall turn to a related but different doctrine of Hegel’s that provides additional (though far from definitive) support for it (2). This is the theory of the parallel and seemingly inverse directions of the ontological and logical developments of “knowing substance” (*wissende Substanz*) into its

⁵¹ “Ich behaupte, dass wenn man die *Grundbegriffe* der in der Geschichte der Philosophie erschienenen Systeme rein dessen entkleidet, was ihre aeusserliche Gestaltung, ihre Anwendung auf das Besondere, und dergleichen betrifft, so erhaelt man die verschiedenen Stufen der Bestimmung der Idee selbst in ihrem logischen Begriffe” (*GW* 18:49–50). For an exhausting explication and critical assessment of Hegel’s thesis and its metaphysical pre-suppositions see Klaus Duesing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie. Ontologie und Dialektik in Antike und Neuzeit* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1983).

⁵² *GW* 18:51.

⁵³ On margin of this passage in the manuscript Hegel notes: “only because of this do I bother to deal with it, to lecture on it [nur darum gebe ich mich damit ab, halte Vorlesungen darueber]” (*GW* 18:51), that is, on the history of philosophy.

⁵⁴ *E*, §§254–9.

conceptual form (*Begriffsgestalt*), that is, into self-knowing substance or subjectivity proper. This theory is found in the section on Absolute Knowing of the 1807 *Phenomenology*.⁵⁵

(1) By referring to the time metaphysics from the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel is reminding his audience of the theory that nature and spirit are both forms of the self-external being (*Aussersichsein*) of the Idea. This self-externality, common to the existence of nature and spirit, consists of their spatiality and temporality. In the section on Mechanics, for example, space and time are defined as derivations from a more fundamental determination of nature, namely pure externality (*Aeusserlichkeit*). Space is nature's externality in-itself, thus it is called immediate externality;⁵⁶ time is nature's externality for-itself, thus it is called mediated externality.⁵⁷

The same conception underlies the exposition of the spatial and temporal dimensions of the "natural soul"⁵⁸ in the Philosophy of Subjective Spirit. Spirit as natural soul is described at first in its spatial existence, that is, as a multiplicity of geographic, ethnic, familial, and individual traits and temperaments characterized by the inertia and reciprocal indifference typical of all natural things regarded as phenomena in space. These are the "places" of spirit's first self-externalization, or the soul's natural qualities as they coexist on earth.⁵⁹ The second dimension of the natural soul is temporal: the stages of life, reproduction, and the individual soul's oscillations between the sleeping and the waking state. These are the "epochs" of spirit's first shape as soul. Each of these is a way in which the soul undergoes natural changes. They lend human and other animal life its character as a continuum of differentiations.⁶⁰ This distinction of spatial (or immediate) and temporal (or mediated) forms of the natural soul is, of course, purely analytical. What there is, in all places and at all times, is their unity, that is, the mediated immediacy of the living body.⁶¹ It is

⁵⁵ *GW* 9:428.

⁵⁶ Compare *E*, §§254–6.

⁵⁷ Compare *E*, §§257–9.

⁵⁸ *E*, §§391–402.

⁵⁹ Compare *E*, §§392–5.

⁶⁰ Compare *E*, §§396–8.

⁶¹ On the logical identity of "soul" and "living body" in Hegel see Michael Wolff, *Das Koerper-Seele Problem. Kommentar zu Hegel, Enzyklopaedie (1830)*, § 389 (Frankfurt: Klostermann, 1992).

precisely the dynamic unity of qualities and changes in and of the soul that explains how this phenomenon of nature can eventually distinguish itself from its own corporeality and acquire inwardness. Soul is the stage at which nature begins to lose its one-sided extrinsicality. It is the first turning point in the actualization of the concept of corporeal nature: “Spirit is the existent truth of matter, [namely] that matter itself has no truth.”⁶² Thus soul, the first concrete unity of spirit, consists of the simultaneous perception of diverse qualities (sensations) and the continuous experience (as *Erlebnis*) of a variety of changes. The soul that senses or finds in itself (*emp-findet*) one totality of sensations is the feeling soul (*die fühlende Seele*).⁶³ Merely feeling soul will eventually, through the repetition of sensations or habitual sentience,⁶⁴ turn into actual soul, the precursor of consciousness: “The ego is the *lightning* that strikes through the natural soul and consumes its naturalness.”⁶⁵ These primitive features of the existence of spirit in its most natural mode carry over into all its subsequent shapes. Spirit exists and acts always and exclusively in the external dimensions of space and time.

The 1820 Introduction to the History of Philosophy stresses the role of space and time as particular representations (*Vorstellungen*) of self-reflective thinking. As all activity, thinking exists only in its externalization: only what is actual (*wirklich* or *wirkend*, that is, having effects) exists. Philosophic thinking is no exception: it only exists through its actualizations.⁶⁶ If time and space are dimensions of extrinsicality in general and if thinking exists only in extrinsic forms, then time and space are constitutive of thinking as much as of nature, of the natural soul, and of all other determinations of the Idea. This, Hegel clarifies, applies to individual consciousness as much as to spirit in general and its absolute expressions, that is, art, religion, and philosophy. The time-space of individual consciousness is individual

⁶² “Der Geist ist die existierende Wahrheit der Materie, dass die Materie selbst keine Wahrheit hat” (*E*, §389 Remark).

⁶³ Compare *E*, §§399–403.

⁶⁴ Habituation is described in §§409–10.

⁶⁵ “Das Ich ist der durch die Naturseele schlagende und ihre Naturlichkeit verzehrende *Blitz*” (*E*, §412 Addition).

⁶⁶ Compare *GW* 18:52.

life; the time-space of spirit is human history; and the time-space of philosophy, the history of philosophy:

This *being-there* and thereby being-in-time is a moment, not only of single consciousness in general that as such is essentially finite, but also [a moment] of the development of the philosophical Idea in the element of thinking . . . and so pure philosophy appears in thinking as an existence proceeding through time.⁶⁷

Thus, Hegel determines space and time as, respectively, the immediate and mediated dimensions of the Idea's externality. In the element of thought—the speculative mode of which is philosophy—the Idea displays its immediacy in thought's logic and its mediation in thought's history. The fact that nature as a whole is one mode of actualization of the Idea explains why every natural event must always be codetermined by space and time. The fact that spirit as a whole is the other mode of actualization of the Idea makes it intelligible why both logic and history are quintessential determinations of thinking in general—and of philosophic thinking in particular. Only the kind of ratiocination that abstracts from thought's actual existence separates artificially its logic from its history. In actuality, however, they will always be found to codetermine the self-actualization of spirit that thinking is.

(2) The thesis of the coincidence of logical and historical dimensions in the Idea's development as philosophy finds some intrasystematic support also in Hegel's conception of the movement of consciousness from substance to subjectivity. In the chapter on Absolute Knowing from the 1807 *Phenomenology*, Hegel recapitulates briefly the phases of consciousness described in the book. Consciousness starts out as "substance," that is, as simple identity of form and content or thought and object. It then develops by progressive internal diremptions, by which the originally immediate identity reveals itself to be (and thus becomes for itself) a mediated one, or a unity of opposite determinations. In the end, absolute knowing represents a phase

⁶⁷ "Diss *Daseyn* und damit in der Zeit *seyn*, ist ein Moment nicht nur des einzelnen Bewusstseyns ueberhaupt, das als solches wesentlich endlich ist, sondern auch der Entwicklung der philosophischen Idee im Elemente des Denkens . . . und so erscheint im Denken die reine Philosophie als eine in der Zeit fortschreitende Existenz" (*GW* 18:52–3).

in which consciousness has sublated its own diremptions so that it now recognizes its initial substantiality as having been all along also subjectivity. Hegel then remarks that, taken as a whole, the movement of consciousness described in the *Phenomenology* appears to be proceeding in two parallel but seemingly contrary directions. *Realiter*, consciousness as substance must be thought of as preceding self-knowing consciousness (in the same way that nature must be thought of as preceding spirit, or the natural soul as preceding consciousness and mind): “Now, knowing substance is there in actuality earlier than its form or conceptual shape.”⁶⁸ But for a substance to self-develop at all, it must contain from the beginning the internal principle of its movement. From a logical perspective, then, substance’s capacity for knowing and then self-knowing, its subjective *dynamis* or “conceptual shape,” precedes consciousness in the substantial mode. This *arché* is, in Hegel’s terminology, the concept or truth of consciousness, namely self-consciousness. Spirit is the dynamic unity of the principle or concept of consciousness with that of which it is the principle or concept, namely substance: spirit “is in itself the movement that knowing is—the transformation of that *in-itself* into the *for-itself*, of *substance* into *subject*, of the object of *consciousness* into object of *self-consciousness*, that is, . . . into the *Concept*.”⁶⁹

Being a form of spirit, self-consciousness is a process, not a state (it is *metabolé* and not *hexis*). It consists of the permanent recapitulation, that is, acknowledgment and preservation, of all stages of knowing that lead up to it. In absolute knowing, past forms of consciousness are not present only in their in-itself mode (as archeological curiosities) but always also in their for-itself mode (as stages and components of consciousness’s own grasp of itself). In this way, while Hegel denies definitiveness to each stage of consciousness, he restores validity to every one of them precisely in the logical transitions by which each is overcome.

⁶⁸ “In der Wirklichkeit ist nun die wissende Substanz frueher da, als die Form oder Begriffsgestalt derselben” (GW 9:428).

⁶⁹ “[Der Geist] . . . ist an sich die Bewegung, die das Erkennen ist—die Verwandlung jenes *Ansichs* in das *Fuersich*, der *Substanz* in das *Subject*, des Gegenstands des *Bewusstseyns* in Gegenstand des *Selbstbewusstseyns*, d.h. . . . in den *Begriff*” (GW 9:429).

This entire movement from a substantial and abstract to an increasingly subjective and concrete form of spirit could never take place if the possibility of the latter were not included in the former logically, namely as its *intrinsic telos*:

Thus, in the *Concept* that knows itself as Concept the *moments* emerge earlier than the *fulfilled whole* whose becoming is the movement of those moments. Contrarywise, in *consciousness* the whole, though un-conceptualized, is earlier than the moments.⁷⁰

The phenomenological thesis that the logical and real developments of consciousness appear as parallel and contrary movements while being *realiter* the same, reemerges in the 1820 Introduction to explain the definition of philosophy as unfolding of absolute spirit. Hegel states here that philosophic thinking proceeds “on a seemingly inverse path”⁷¹ to that of its historical unfolding. The seeming inversion arises from the circumstance that the philosopher studying the real progression of philosophy has to “already bring along *the knowledge of the Idea* in order to recognize the process as development of the Idea.”⁷² The philosopher knows the Idea thanks to his privileged historical position. He can look back at the Idea’s historical unfolding. This unfolding is what makes up the content (the “fulfilled whole”) of the concept of philosophy. Since philosophy is thought that thinks itself, it fulfills two roles at once. As object of itself, its past phases or moments appear to it as preceding present thought, the subject of philosophic knowing. As subject, however, philosophic thinking grasps its present state (the unity resulting from the sublation of those moments) as lending intelligibility to its own past in the first place. In their embodiments as principles of systems, the moments of this process are the logical elements of the present, concrete concept of philosophy. In this sense, the series of systems in the history of philo-

⁷⁰ “In dem *Begriffe*, der sich als Begriff weiss, treten hiemit die *Momente* frueher auf, als das *erfuellte Ganze*, dessen Werden die Bewegung jener Momente ist. In dem *Bewusstseyn* dagegen ist das Ganze, aber unbegriffne, frueher als die Momente” (GW 9:429).

⁷¹ “auf anscheinend umgekehrtem Wege” (GW 18:45).

⁷² “um . . . ihren [der Philosophie] Fortgang als Entwicklung der Idee zu erkennen, muss man freylich *die Erkenntnis der Idee* schon mitbringen” (GW 18:50).

sophic thinking can be interpreted as being “the same” as the logical series of self-determinations of the Idea.

III

Taking seriously the central claim from the 1820 Introduction has far reaching consequences in one’s grasp, interpretation, and evaluation of Hegel’s conception of philosophy as systematic science of truth. Only one such consequence, bearing upon Hegel’s understanding of the history of philosophy, can be discussed here.

A widespread view attributes to Hegel the thesis that philosophy’s function with regard to the cultural and political reality it expresses and responds to is **purely recollective**. At least in part, the popularity of this reading is strengthened by the paraphrasing character of English translations of a famous passage from the Preface to the 1821 *Philosophy of Right*. Hegel speaks here of **philosophy as making its appearance “after actuality has completed its formative process and has made itself ready.”**⁷³ Translations usually disregard the reflexive form of *sich fertig machen*, a common expression that means “to make oneself ready,” and interpret the phrase as indicating that actuality is “finished” (*fertig*).⁷⁴ But the reflexive form implies both completion and preparedness. Since completion is expressed in the preceding phrase (“actuality has completed its formative process”), and Hegel’s prose is seldom redundant, the connotation of “preparedness” should be stressed in translation. Actuality has completed one of its phases and has made itself ready for the next. More importantly, since the subject of the phrase is actuality, the translation is also at odds with Hegel’s consistently Aristotelian use of “actuality” as an activity that by definition does not attain any “completed state.” Thus, translations neglect here to convey Hegel’s idea of a **recollective and simultaneously anticipatory function of philosophy**. Indeed, if the

⁷³ “nachdem die Wirklichkeit ihren Bildungsprozess vollendet und sich fertig gemacht hat” (*W* 7:28).

⁷⁴ Knox, *Philosophy of Right*, paraphrases *sich fertig gemacht hat* with “is already there cut and dried” (12); Nisbet, *Elements*, with “has attained its completed state” (23).

history of philosophic thinking follows the logic of the Idea, then philosophic principles must be as much determined by those they have sublated as by the ones they contain as yet only implicitly. As in causal chains, where effects must be implicit in the causes they in turn sublata, or as in a chain of syllogisms (the image Hegel invokes at the end of the system⁷⁵ to illustrate the concept of philosophy as “Idea *thinking itself*”),⁷⁶ the sublation of earlier into later principles also implies the immanence of the latter in the former. Thus, while it is true that for Hegel the principles of a system, in sublating all previous ones, do express an epoch whose life cycle is concluded, it is equally true that these same principles anticipate a new epoch.

Prima facie this appears to contradict the “owl of Minerva” allegory from the Preface to the *Philosophy of Right*. But the allegory (often quoted out of context) intends to highlight only one of the functions Hegel attributes to philosophy. It is embedded in a passage vigorously directed against the idea of a moralistic, ideological, or generically normative vocation of philosophy and philosophers. Hegel’s main concern here is to criticize the assumption that philosophers’ role is to set the world aright by positing normative criteria not already present in it: “By way of adding one more word about *giving instruction* as to how the world ought to be: philosophy at any rate always arrives too late to do so.”⁷⁷ If the history of philosophy is the outward expression of spirit’s process of self-knowing, the owl allegory cannot be taken to capture the whole of philosophy’s functions. By expressing the final wisdom of one decaying epoch, philosophy provides the first full grasp of it. But to grasp is always to go beyond the limitations of what is being grasped (*Begreifen* is *Uebergreifen*).⁷⁸ Philosophy, says Hegel, is “the *thought* of the world.”⁷⁹ Though it attains systematic completion at the end of an epoch, it thinks beyond this end. The historical conception of philosophy from the Preface to

⁷⁵ *E*, §§575–7.

⁷⁶ *E*, §574.

⁷⁷ “Um noch ueber das *Belehren*, wie die Welt sein soll, ein Wort zu sagen, so kommt dazu ohnehin die Philosophie immer zu spaet” (*W* 7:27–8).

⁷⁸ Compare n. 35.

⁷⁹ “der *Gedanke* der Welt” (*W* 7:28).

the *Philosophy of Right* is indeed the same as the conception of spirit we find at its conclusion:

The history of the spirit is its *deed*, as spirit is only what it does, and its deed consists . . . of making itself into the object of its consciousness. . . . This comprehending is its being and principle, and the *completion* of one comprehending is at once its externalization and transition.⁸⁰

Thus, each philosophic system grasps both an epochal closure of spirit and the new beginning for which it has “made itself ready.”

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⁸⁰ “Die Geschichte des Geistes is seine *Tat*, denn er ist nur, was er tut, und seine *Tat* ist, sich . . . zum Gegenstande seines Bewusstseins zu machen. . . . Dies Erfassen ist sein Sein und Prinzip, und die *Vollendung* eines Erfassens ist zugleich seine Entaeusserung und sein Uebergang” (*W* 7:§343).