CHAPTER 28

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HEGEL’S LECTURES ON
THE HISTORY OF MODERN
PHILOSOPHY

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28.1. INTRODUCTION

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THE young Hegel began lecturing on the history of philosophy in 1805, that is, while working on the *Phenomenology of Spirit* in Jena. He later taught on the subject in Heidelberg (1816–1817 and 1817–1818) as well as in Berlin (six times between 1819 and 1830). Hegel’s lectures on the history of philosophy stand out because of their ambition to conceive of every past philosophical system as an element of an encompassing whole—a whole, moreover, that testifies to a development that is necessary rather than contingent. What is at stake in the lectures, therefore, is philosophy’s effort to grasp its proper past in a truly philosophical way. We have to take into account, however, that the texts we possess were not intended for publication. Their primary aim was to introduce students to the history of philosophy, or even to philosophy as such. It is no wonder, therefore, that the lectures, largely handed down through student transcripts, exhibit a tension between Hegel’s philosophical aim and the less lofty requirements of the classroom. Apart from these, the lectures can also be considered to expose a tension between Hegel’s basic philosophical convictions and, on the other hand, the need to discuss a wide range of philosophers who appear to pursue a variety of particular and often diverging aims. In this contribution I will examine the lectures on the history of modern philosophy in view of this tension.

Before turning to the lectures, a few words about their various editions are needed. The first edition was published by Michelet between 1833 and 1836.¹ Michelet could

¹ The Suhrkamp edition of the lectures by Moldenhauer and Michel (LHPM, vols. 18–20) is based on this edition. The translation published by Haldane and Simson is based on Michelet’s second, abridged, edition of the lectures, published 1840–1844.

make use of a number of manuscripts and transcripts, part of which have since been lost. Michelet's edition is valuable because it contains materials that are not found elsewhere. Yet it is impossible, given his editorial principles, to know to what extent the text corresponds to what Hegel has actually said or in which stage of his career he has done so.² At the time Hoffmeister prepared his own edition of the lectures, published in 1940, he could draw on fewer sources than Michelet. His one-volume edition, which contains only the Introduction and the section on Oriental philosophy, will be ignored here. This chapter primarily draws on the critical edition of the various manuscripts of Hegel's introduction to the lectures on the history of philosophy, especially the one from 1820 (IHP), and on the critical edition of the lecture series of 1825–1826, which is based on five student transcripts (LHP).³ The editors of this edition consider this lecture series to be representative of Hegel's Berlin lectures as a whole.⁴

Since Hegel's view on the history of philosophy did not come from nowhere, I begin by contextualizing his endeavor (section 28.2). In order to put his work in relief, I compare it, both here and later, to Tennemann's *History of Philosophy*, the eleven volumes of which were published between 1789 and 1819.⁵ Section 28.3 examines the Introduction to Hegel's lectures. After discussing his conception of modern philosophy as a whole (section 28.4), I turn to his reading of Locke and Leibniz (section 28.5) and Kant (section 28.6).⁶ The latter part of the lectures is singled out because both Tennemann and Hegel assign an important—though quite different—role to Kant's philosophy. I conclude by a brief analysis of Hegel's account of the final moment of the history of philosophy (section 28.7). Even though this account is largely devoted to Schelling, it allows us to infer what Hegel thought about his own contribution to the history of philosophy.

² As he writes in his introduction, Michelet took his task to consist “in the art of interweaving not only larger pieces of different lecture series, but also, where necessary, individual sentences.” Cited in Brown, “Editorial Introduction,” LHP 6.27.

³ The text from which Hegel lectured in Jena has not survived. The Introduction to the 1820 lecture series is the oldest manuscript on this subject that has been preserved. The lectures edited by Garniron and Jaeschke (LHP 6–9) contain transcripts of a number of introductions, as well as an edition of the complete lecture series of 1825–1826. In Brown's translation of these texts, the part on modern philosophy covers not more than 117 pages. The same part takes up 390 pages in the Suhrkamp edition of Michelet's edition.

⁴ Brown, “Editorial Introduction,” LHP 6.36.

⁵ Because Volume VIII was a double volume, the series might also be considered to consist of twelve volumes, as is sometimes done. I will also draw on Tennemann's one-volume *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie für den akademischen Unterricht*, which was published in 1812.

⁶ While Hegel's lectures include discussions of texts on political philosophy (Grotius, Hobbes) and ethics (Kant, Fichte), I will limit myself to Hegel's discussion of theoretical philosophy, which clearly constituted his primary interest.

28.2. THOUGHTS ON THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY AT THE TURN OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

At the time Hegel offered his first lectures on the history of philosophy, this was not an evident choice: philosophers such as Tiedemann (1748–1803) and Buhle (1763–1821) had published multiple-volume histories of philosophy but never taught courses on this subject. Tennemann (1761–1819) seems to have been the only philosopher who both published a history of philosophy and lectured on the history of philosophy, as he did between 1794 and 1804 at the university of Jena and from then onward at the university of Marburg.⁷ Hegel started to lecture on the history of philosophy in Jena in 1805, which means that he took over the course of a scholar whose influential work he would come to challenge.⁸ No more than a few others had preceded Tennemann and Hegel: only during the first decades of the nineteenth century did the German academic curriculum begin to reflect the historical perspective on human culture that distinguishes nineteenth-century thought as a whole from the preceding centuries, and that today is largely identified with Hegel.⁹

Because the histories of philosophy published by Hegel's immediate predecessors were primarily intended as handbooks, their aim and methodology differed substantially from that of a lecture series. Yet Hegel was not the first to maintain that the history of philosophy should not be treated as a succession of more or less independent

⁷ Tennemann did so eleven times, as is shown in Neuper (ed.), *Das Vorlesungsangebot an der Universität Jena* (with thanks to Klaus Vieweg and Johannes Korngiebel for their help). See also Schneider, *Philosophie und Universität*, 104, 162 n; Braun, *Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie*, 240. However, both Schneider and Braun only mention the time Tennemann spent in Marburg, as a professor, between 1804 and 1819. In the absence of lecture transcripts, we cannot compare Tennemann's published work to the lectures. Prior to Hegel and Tennemann, only a few German philosophers had actually lectured on the history of philosophy. On this, see Köhler, "Hegels Vorlesungen über Geschichte der Philosophie," 53–54; Schneider, *Philosophie und Universität*, 104. Among them was Johann August Eberhard, who published *Allgemeine Geschichte der Philosophie zum Gebrauch akademischer Vorlesungen* in 1787 (Halle), a work that he presents as a guide to support the lectures on the history of philosophy he had given since an unspecified number of years. Schneider mentions Eberhard's work without commenting on it (217). Christian Weiss taught on the history of philosophy in Leipzig at least from 1799 onward, when he published *Über die Behandlungsart der Geschichte der Philosophie auf Universitäten. Zur Ankündigung der Vorlesungen über Geschichte der Philosophie* (Leipzig: Kramer, 1799); see Geldsetzer, *Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte*, 43.

⁸ I am not aware of works that point out this connection between Tennemann and Hegel. Like Tennemann, Hegel started out in Jena as an unsalaried *Privatdozent*. In 1805 he was promoted to the position of extraordinary professor, a position that did not come with a salary either. See Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography*, 221–223. The fact that Hegel followed in Tennemann's footsteps puts into perspective Köhler's claim that Hegel, "deviating from the then common curriculum," must have started teaching on the history of philosophy *because* of his particular interest in the subject. See Köhler, "Hegels Vorlesungen über Geschichte der Philosophie," 53.

⁹ See Schneider, *Philosophie und Universität*, 103–119.

positions and systems: Tennemann thought so as well, and he was not alone. At the turn of the century, German philosophers, mostly Kantians, were engaged in a lively debate on the relationship between philosophy and its history. This debate had been initiated by Kant's own suggestion, in the final chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781/1787), that the history of philosophy expresses the nature of pure reason and can therefore be grasped independently of the temporal order of the actual philosophical systems (CPR A852–853/B880–881).¹⁰ Reinhold (1757–1823), one of the first to elaborate on Kant's idea of a history of pure reason, argued in 1791 that a philosophical account of the history of philosophy requires the assessment of each philosophical system in view of the idea of a truly scientific philosophy.¹¹ After Reinhold, various other Kantians discussed the extent to which an a priori history of philosophy is possible.¹²

Tennemann contributed to this debate in the first, methodological, part of his *History of Philosophy*. Rejecting the mere compilations of his predecessors, Tennemann argues that a history of philosophy should attempt to order its material organically (GP iv). Following Kant, he writes that any philosophy is concerned with the ultimate grounds and laws of both nature and freedom, as well as with their relationship. Moreover, he takes any philosopher, however vaguely, to possess the idea of a science that achieves the most encompassing and most perfect knowledge of these grounds and laws (GP §13) and aims to actualize this ideal (GP §14). Tennemann accordingly defines the history of philosophy as “the exposition of . . . the efforts of reason to actualize the idea of the science of the ultimate grounds and laws of nature and freedom” (GP §15). This exposition assesses each philosophical system in view of the extent to which it approaches this ideal science (GP §14). The one-volume *Grundriß* that Tennemann published in 1812 makes it clear that he considered this science to be represented preeminently by Kant's critical philosophy: the latter not only lays bare the principles of human cognition and action, but also confines the domain of pure reason to that which can be thought.¹³ Mentioning Hegel only in passing, he notes with reference to Fichte and Schelling that Kant had not succeeded “in thwarting the bold flight of the spirit of speculation” (GGP §393). He is convinced, nevertheless, that the modesty advocated by Kant will ultimately prevail over the speculation he attributes to Schelling and his followers (GGP §370).

We have seen, however, that Tennemann's own propaedeutic reflections of 1798 testify to a conception of the historiography of philosophy that is all but modest. He clearly shares the ambition of the Kantians—and of Kant himself—to treat the history

¹⁰ For illuminating accounts of this debate, see Geldsetzer, *Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte*, 19–80; Braun, *Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie*, 206–259.

¹¹ See Geldsetzer, *Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte*, 20.

¹² Christian Weiss, mentioned earlier, was one of them. See *ibid.*, 28–30; Braun, *Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie*, 206–224. Thus, the debate on the historiography of the history of philosophy and the introduction of the history of philosophy into the academic curriculum took place simultaneously. Regardless of whether there is a causal relation between the two developments, the beginning of the nineteenth century clearly saw the emancipation of the history of philosophy from its merely historical treatment in reference works.

¹³ Tennemann died before he had written the final volume of his *Geschichte der Philosophie*.

of philosophy in view of the effort of reason as such to establish a science of the ultimate principles of nature and human spirit. In this regard, his reflections can be said to anticipate those of Hegel. Yet in Tennemann's actual history of philosophy the 'inorganic' presentation of facts and outlines typical of the reference works of his predecessors takes the upper hand. His writings thus exemplify the tension between the two paradigms at stake in the debate that spans the years between Kant and Hegel: the idea of a truly philosophical history of the history of pure reason versus the idea of a detailed and fact-based account of the successive philosophical positions and systems. Without ever referring to Tennemann or Kant in this regard, Hegel took it upon himself to elaborate the philosophical history of pure reason, which until then had been a mere ideal. This is not to say, however, that he succeeded in resolving the tension between the two paradigms at stake.

28.3. PHILOSOPHY AND THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

In order to determine to what extent Hegel's account of the history of philosophy differs from that of his contemporaries, it might be useful to consider his own view of the matter in the introductory part of his Berlin lectures. In most histories of philosophy, he writes, "the idea-less eye is merely presented with a disorderly heap of opinions" (IHP 18.50). Ignoring Tennemann's methodological reflections, he admits that the latter's discussion of modern philosophy is an improvement (LHP 6.362).¹⁴ Yet Hegel takes issue with Tennemann because he purports to be impartial while actually taking sides with Kant. According to Hegel, Kant's philosophy implies the view that the truth cannot be known (LHP 6.232). He attributes to Tennemann the position that philosophies which have not reached this Kantian insight are nothing but 'failed attempts' (LHP 6.232) or opinions that falsely purport to be true (LHP 6.212).¹⁵ If one assumes that the truth about the history of philosophy itself cannot be known either, as Hegel suggests Tennemann does, then one's account of this history comes down to a mere "narration and enumeration" of such false opinions (LHP 6.221).¹⁶ In Hegel's view, a philosophical account of the history of philosophy should not attempt to be impartial, but should rather take sides with

¹⁴ In the article mentioned earlier, Walsh rightly observes that Hegel, while at times showing "historical insight superior to that of most of his contemporaries" (71), regularly relies on the handbooks of his predecessors, proceeding as he did "thanks to the fact that the foundations for such knowledge were now securely laid, by the despised Tennemann and others" (70).

¹⁵ Cf. LHP 6.442. Tennemann writes in this regard that "[t]he inner ground of its striving, connected to its partial failures, guides reason through . . . conflicts and cases of censorship to the attempt at determining the domain of reason and the capacity to achieve knowledge as such" (GGP §3, cf. §5). In his *Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie*, Braun argues that Tennemann and others came to replace Kant's notion of system with a more dynamic, teleological notion of striving (258).

¹⁶ Cf. LHP 6.225, 231.

“thinking spirit, with thought” (LHP 6.233), something which he takes to imply that philosophy should assert, against Kant, that the truth can be known (cf. IHP 18.45–46).

But what does it mean to contend that the history of philosophy testifies to the view that the truth can be known? Clearly, Hegel is not referring to the truth about a particular matter of fact. He considers any particular philosophy, whatever its immediate content, to produce, and rely on, a specific determination of the ultimate principle of both thought and reality, that is, of the idea. What can be known, and what philosophy has always sought to know, is the ‘truth’ of apparently opposite determinations such as thought and being, spirit and nature, or subject and object. Whereas most philosophers, especially in the modern era, tend to affirm these oppositions, speculative philosophy conceives of them in view of the unity that encompasses both contraries. Thus, Hegel writes that within modern philosophy, thought emerges as something subjective that appears to be opposed to being as such. As he sees it, the sole interest of philosophy consists in overcoming every single guise of this opposition (LHP 9.71).¹⁷

As noted earlier, one of these guises consists in the opposition between subject and object. By grasping self-consciousness as a mode of thought in which subject and object are one, modern philosophy can be said to testify to the ability to grasp pure thought as that which actualizes itself by positing and annulling the opposition between itself and its contrary. At the same time, most particular philosophical systems are unable, according to Hegel, to grasp this unity in an absolute manner. Hegel’s lectures on the history of philosophy pursue the efforts of philosophy to adequately conceive of this unity, which is nothing but what he means by ‘idea’. In line with his Kantian predecessors, Hegel maintains that a truly philosophical account of the history of philosophy is one that takes thought as such to be the ultimate subject of the history of philosophy. Hegel distinguishes his own approach from theirs, however, by using the term ‘idea’, rather than ‘reason’, to refer to this subject (LHP 6.211).¹⁸

Hegel asserts repeatedly that a particular philosophy is bound up with the assumptions that define a particular historical context (LHP 6.237). Yet to the extent that a philosophy determines the idea in a certain manner, it at the same time becomes part of a history that transcends the confines of a particular cultural epoch:

With respect to its form, however, philosophy does stand above its age, in that it consists of thinking the substantial spirit of the age—insofar as it takes this spirit as its object. (LHP 6.237)

Focusing on the latter aspect of the history of philosophy, Hegel’s lectures aim to discover in each particular philosophical system a core that constitutes a moment of the self-actualization of thought as such and therefore cannot be destroyed by time. The

¹⁷ Cf. LHP 6.275.

¹⁸ In this context, Hegel does not refer to Kant’s conception of the idea as the unconditioned that constitutes the proper object of reason (cf. Kant, CPR A308–311/B364–367). He does mention this point during his discussion of Kant (LHP 9.162).

essential, true thought at stake in each particular philosophy, Hegel tells his students, is “not capable of changing, is eternal, not merely something that is gone and belongs to the past, but is” (206, cf. 231). What remains to be done, in his view, is to comprehend the ‘system of philosophy’ that constitutes the intransient core of the history of philosophy in a scientific manner. In his own work, he suggests, philosophy as such achieves its final self-comprehension:

Philosophy as such, the contemporary or latest philosophy, contains the very fruit of the labor of millennia; this philosophy is the result of all that has gone before. . . . The history of philosophy is this same development, for there is but *one* reason, although in its case this development is presented historically, in the way that these moments or stages have ensued in time. . . . It follows that the history of philosophy is the same as the system of philosophy. (LHP 6.220)¹⁹

For Hegel, his lectures on the history of philosophy are but one way of grasping the system of philosophy as such. In the Introduction to the lectures of 1820/1821 he suggests that the *Science of Logic* likewise treats the various determinations of the idea. Contrary to the lectures, however, it does so by completely abstracting from the temporal mode of appearance of successive philosophical systems:

I assert that by completely stripping the basic concepts of the systems that have appeared in the history of philosophy of that which concerns their external shape, their application to the particular, and so on, one obtains the various stages of the determination of the idea itself insofar as the latter is conceived logically. (IHP 18.49–50)²⁰

Thus, Hegel considers both the *Science of Logic* and the lectures on the history of philosophy to be concerned with the various determinations of the idea. In both cases, philosophy abstracts from elements that may seem to determine a particular philosophical system from the outside, such as economical or cultural developments (cf. LHP 6.236–237). In both cases, this is done in order to conceive of a particular determination of the idea as developing necessarily—or organically—from the preceding one.²¹

The lectures differ from the *Science of Logic*, however, to the extent that they do not, and cannot, completely abstract from the temporal order in which philosophical systems actually appeared:

¹⁹ Cf. IHP 18.50, E §§12–13.

²⁰ Cf. E §14. I agree with Fulda that Hegel never defended a full-fledged parallel between the *Logic* and the history of philosophy (‘Hegel’s These’, 6). Contrary to Fulda, I hold that all determinations treated in the *Science of Logic* occur in the history of philosophy as well simply because that is where Hegel took them from. The order in which these determinations are treated in the *Logic* differs from their historical order, however, if only because the work is divided into a Doctrine of Being, a Doctrine of Essence, and a Doctrine of the Concept. On this, see De Boer, *On Hegel: The Sway of the Negative*, 54–68.

²¹ Seen in this way, Hegel writes, the idea itself is “an organic system, a totality that contains a wealth of stages and moments” (IHP 18.47, cf. 49; LHP 6.221).

Because these lectures are to be historical in nature, we have to conduct ourselves historically, by taking up the shapes as they follow upon another in time. . . . But we must also notice the necessity of their issuing from one another. (LHP 6.221, cf. 224)

Whereas, according to Hegel, a truly philosophical history of philosophy must pay heed to the actual sequence of philosophical systems, it is imperative that it recognize the necessary development of the idea *in* this sequence (IHP 18.50). This requires that philosophy from the outset “bring along the cognition of the idea” (IHP 18.50).²² Evidently, Hegel takes himself to be doing just this.

Even though he himself does not quite put it this way, it might be argued that Hegel’s lectures on the history of philosophy face a twofold challenge. First, they must conceive of every single philosophical system as element of an overarching meta-system. Second, they must consider the historical order of these systems to exhibit a necessity that cannot be completely explained in terms of the influence that one philosopher exerts on another. But do the actual lectures meet these challenges? Do they differ from contemporaneous accounts of the history of modern philosophy to the extent Hegel suggests they do? Does he really resolve the tension between reason and fact that his immediate predecessors struggled with?

28.4. HEGEL’S DIVISION OF MODERN PHILOSOPHY

In line with the tradition, Hegel distinguishes between ancient, medieval and modern philosophy. Considering medieval philosophy as a mere “period of fermentation” (LHP 6.275), he regards modern philosophy to be defined by the idea of the free, self-knowing subject, as well as by the attempt to overcome its initial opposition to being (LHP 9.71, cf. 6.274–275). Because of the emancipatory role of the Reformation (cf. LHP 9.69), Hegel does not hesitate to equate modern philosophy with German philosophy, asserting that “Italy, Spain, France, England, etc. received a new form through the German nations” (LHP 6.269).

Yet his actual discussion of modern philosophy begins with someone who responded to Italian developments in physics and astronomy rather than to the Reformation, namely, Bacon. Hegel presents Bacon as someone who advanced a merely external way of doing philosophy (LHP 9.78). He admits, however, that Bacon’s fostering of empirical knowledge paved the way for the development of modern philosophy proper and, more profoundly, for the development of the unity of contraries that he calls ‘idea’ (LHP 9.76). Bacon is juxtaposed with Boehme, who is likewise presented as a transitional figure. On

²² Cf. LHP 6: 224, 226. Here, as elsewhere, Hegel opposes his own perspective to that of his predecessors, not mentioning their efforts to move beyond the mere narration of past philosophical positions.

Hegel's account, Boehme stands out for his restless struggle to conceive of God as the unity of contraries such as the positive and the negative (LHP 9.80, 86–87). However, he denounces Boehme's barbarous exposition of his speculative insights (LHP 9.85).

Hegel's subsequent fourfold division of modern philosophy proper is not strictly chronological. Descartes, Spinoza, and Malebranche are considered the main representatives of the first form of modern philosophy. This form coincides with the first phase of metaphysics, which Hegel takes to be defined by the understanding, that is, the finite, discursive mode of thought that operates by means of conceptual oppositions and ignores their underlying unity (LHP 9.89).

The second form of modern philosophy he distinguishes is that of skeptical and critical attacks on the first (LHP 9.89). In this regard, he mentions the criticisms of religion, as well as the materialism and naturalism typical of the Enlightenment (LHP 9.143–144). Hume is also treated as a representative of this form (LHP 9.146). While the philosophers belonging to this second form of modern philosophy turn against the assumptions of the first, their thought is no less than the first defined by the understanding (LHP 9.142–143).

Hegel identifies the third form of modern philosophy with the second phase of metaphysics, a phase he takes to be represented by Leibniz, Locke, and Wolff (LHP 9.90). This phase is said to differ from the first in that both Locke and Leibniz, despite their differences, adopt “the particular, finite determinateness and the singular” as their principle (LHP 9.116). Hegel regards Locke's investigations of the human mind as a ‘metaphysicizing empiricism’ (LHP 9.117) and Leibniz's system as a metaphysics that proceeds from a limited determination of absolute plurality (LHP 9.136).

The fourth form of modern philosophy, finally, is said to be represented by Kant, Fichte, and Schelling, while Jacobi is also treated in this context. This is to say that Hegel, at least in his lectures, did not want to include his own philosophy in this category. He neither refers to the fourth form of modern philosophy as a form of metaphysics nor tells us whether it is dominated by the understanding. Only with regard to Schelling's philosophy does he remark that here “speculation proper has re-emerged” (LHP 9.182), which means that in his view only Schelling was able to grasp the unity of oppositions such as finite and infinite, cause and effect, the positive and the negative (LHP 9.181–182).²³

Contemporary readers might find it surprising that Locke and Leibniz are treated together, and that Spinoza and Leibniz, as well as Locke and Hume, are assigned to different forms of modern philosophy. Hegel indeed considers the opposition between rationalism and empiricism to be subordinate, because, as he sees it, rationalists no less

²³ In Michelet's edition, Hegel considers Kant's philosophy, contrary to Schelling's, to be dominated by the understanding and to renounce reason (LHPM III, 385/476). Elsewhere he notes that while Kant points to the way in which oppositions can be resolved, he failed to attain the speculative standpoint in that he attributed this resolution to subjective thought alone (LHPM III, 381/472). Hegel's fourfold distinction in the 1825–1826 lectures does not correspond to the division of modern philosophy in Michelet's edition. In the latter, modern philosophy proper is divided into a part devoted to philosophies dominated by the understanding (itself divided into metaphysics and a transitional period) and, on the other hand, the most recent German philosophy (Kant to Schelling).

than empiricists take the content of their reflections from either inner or outer experience (LHP 9.89). He opposes this procedure to a method that actually achieves what rationalism failed to achieve, namely, a form of philosophy that grants validity to immanent thought alone. This method is said to consist in a rigorous development of all determinations of thought from the principle of thought itself (LHP 9.89).

It emerges from the discussion so far that Hegel basically distinguishes between metaphysics, skepticism, and a form of philosophy that culminates in the re-emergence of speculation. As we have seen, he singles out Schelling's philosophy for its capacity to grasp the unity of apparently contrary determinations, that is, to actualize the idea. At one point, Hegel states that the two phases of metaphysics are characterized by the awareness of oppositions such as that between thought and being, or God and the world, as well as by the effort to resolve them (LHP 9.140).²⁴ In his view, metaphysics from Descartes to Wolff basically posited God as the resolution of these oppositions. Hegel does not consider this positing to be satisfactory, for in this case "the nullity of these oppositions and their presuppositions has not been exhibited in the domain of these oppositions themselves" (LHP 9.140). Accordingly, "God remains the beyond, and all the contradictions remain on this side, unresolved according to their content" (LHP 9.141). According to Hegel, Descartes also posited the unity of thought and being by conceiving of the cogito as that which necessarily exists. By doing so, he was the first to put forward "the most interesting idea of modern philosophy as such" (LHP 9.95).²⁵ Yet on Hegel's account, Descartes did not offer a satisfactory proof of the unity of thought and being. Moreover, his position exemplifies that of metaphysics as such, in the sense that he did not overcome the distinction between the finite human mind, on the one hand, and the infinite mind of God, on the other.

In sum, Hegel seems to define modern philosophy as a whole in terms of its effort to overcome the oppositions established by the discursive tendency of metaphysics. He seems to hold, moreover, that both Skepticism and Kantianism were necessary to achieve this end in the highest possible manner.²⁶ Yet in his actual discussion of particular

²⁴ This overall paradigm, if it can be called that, also constitutes the content of the second part of the *Science of Logic*, the Doctrine of Essence. This part, Hegel notes in the *Encyclopedia*, "mainly contains the categories of metaphysics and of the sciences as such,—as the products of reflective understanding, which *at once* assumes the *independence* of the distinctions and affirms their relativity. [It] connects both [thoughts] by means of an 'also', as occurring simultaneously or subsequently, without bringing these thoughts together, without unifying them into the concept" (E §114, R, cf. L I, 109–110/122). Hegel's remark offers an example, albeit a not very specific one, of his claim that the history of philosophy and the *Science of Logic* deal with the same content in two different ways.

²⁵ On Hegel's reading of Descartes, see Andrews, "Hegel's Presentation of the Cartesian Philosophy," 22–42. On Hegel's account of specific modern philosophers—both in the *Lectures* and in his published works—see Düsing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*, as well as three collections of essays: O'Malley, Algozin, and Weiss (eds.), *Hegel and the History of Philosophy*; Arndt, Bal, and Ottmann (eds.), *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*; Heidemann and Krijnen (eds.), *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*.

²⁶ In the 1825–1826 lectures Hegel does not maintain this explicitly. In Michelet's edition he writes that, because of Kant, "thinking had become once and for all an absolute requisite that could no longer be set aside" (LHPM 386/478). He notes in the Introduction to the *Science of Logic* that it was necessary "that the interest of thought should be drawn to a consideration of . . . the abstract relation of a subjective

philosophical systems he rarely refers to the view, presented in the Introduction, that the various forms of philosophy constitute various determinations of the idea. Providing his students with an overview of the most important texts and developments, his lectures differ rather less radically from Tennemann's works than he purports.

However, Hegel's fourfold division of modern philosophy differs considerably from the approach of his predecessors. Tennemann's *Grundriß* divides modern philosophy into three periods. The first period is characterized by a large number of philosophers, including Boehme and Montaigne, who one way or another departed from the Scholastic tradition. As regards modern philosophy proper, Tennemann distinguishes the period between Bacon and Kant from that between Kant and Schulze. While he uses common distinctions, such as that between rationalism and empiricism, they do not affect the structure of the text. There is no doubt that Hegel's lectures embody the idea of a truly philosophical account of the history of philosophy to a larger extent than the works of his predecessors. Yet this is not to say that his speculative approach does full justice to the subject matter of these lectures.

28.5. LOCKE AND LEIBNIZ

Apart from a number of critical remarks, Hegel's discussion of empiricism does not essentially differ from the handbooks available to him. The 1825/1826 lectures devote seven pages to Locke and only two to Hume. As regards his assessment of Locke, Hegel considers the latter to have rightly argued that consciousness proceeds by distinguishing the universal from the particular (LHP 9.118). Echoing Kant, he notes, however, that Locke only dealt with the empirical origin of concepts (LHP 9.118).²⁷ Yet Kant's transcendental deduction is deemed insufficient as well: according to Hegel, philosophy ought to investigate whether concepts such as infinity or substance are true in and for themselves, that is, whether they are conceived as the unity of contrary determinations (LHP 9.118–119, cf. 122). Clearly, this is done by neither Locke nor Kant.

As said, Hegel treats Locke and Leibniz in the same section because they represent two forms of metaphysics. While turning his attention from Locke to Leibniz, he does not try to present Leibniz's position as developing out of Locke's, let alone as a necessary development (cf. LHP 9.128). For Hegel, the most interesting element of Leibniz's system is its idealism, that is, the view that every single monad represents the world in a specific way (LHP 9.132). This idealism is said to entail that a monad, which is simple, "is differentiated in itself and, regardless of its implicit differentiation, . . . is and remains only one" (LHP 9.132–133). Clearly, this thought matters to Hegel because it testifies to

knowing to an object, so that in this way the cognition of the *infinite form*, that is, of the concept, would be introduced. But in order to reach this cognition, that form had still to be stripped of the finite determinateness in which it is ego, or consciousness" (L I, 48/63).

²⁷ Cf. Kant, CPR A86/B118.

the speculative insight into the idea that he takes to be at stake in the history of philosophy as a whole. As he sees it, however, this insight remains buried below an ‘artificial system’ that is based on an abstract conception of absolute plurality (LHP 9.136).

28.6. KANT

Using Tennemann’s account as a foil, this section focuses on Hegel’s reading of Kant. As we have seen, Tennemann assesses the history of philosophy from the standpoint of Kant’s philosophy, which he regards as the highest possible one. In his *Grundriß*, he describes Kant as a second Socrates who let reason achieve knowledge of itself so as to put it on the path to science (GGP §370). Kant is said to preclude dogmatism, speculation, and the vain striving for rational knowledge of that which cannot be known (GGP §371) and, on the other hand, to provide philosophy with the basic outline of its system. Critical philosophy, he notes,

reveals the architectonic outline of the system of philosophy that is contained in reason, shows the principles that serve to distinguish its various parts, assigns to each of these parts the principle and domain that belongs to it, and reunites the separated parts into a harmonious whole. (GGP §371)

Tennemann deplores the dogmatization of critical philosophy that, in his view, set in after Kant (GGP §379). While he does not ignore the merits of Schelling’s philosophy, he dismisses the latter’s ambition to annul the limits Kant had imposed on cognition. What Schelling took to be a scientific system is said to lack a proper ground and to be a “poetry of the human spirit” rather than a contribution to philosophy proper (GGP §386).

Tennemann’s assessment of post-Kantian philosophy follows from the twofold criterion he derives from Kant, in particular from its second, negative, element: ideally, philosophy (1) treats the principles of human cognition and action in a systematic and exhaustive manner, and (2) respects the inherent limits of philosophical cognition. By contrast, Hegel, as noted, assesses the history of modern philosophy (3) in terms of its capacity to grasp the unity of contrary conceptual determinations, that is, to actualize the idea. As his comments make clear, he also holds (4) that philosophy ought to derive all determinations of thought from the principle of thought itself (cf. LHP 9.89). Arguably, the ‘system of philosophy’ Hegel himself elaborated in the *Science of Logic* and the *Encyclopedia* meets both of these criteria. While these criteria need not conflict with (1), they might be considered to conflict with (2).

Since Hegel’s assessment of the history of modern philosophy relies on different criteria, it is not surprising that his account of Kant also differs from Tennemann’s. As regards its content, Hegel’s and Tennemann’s presentations of Kant’s philosophy have much in common: on behalf of their students, both summarize the main ideas of Kant’s most important texts in a relatively condensed and accessible manner. Hegel’s evaluation of

Kant, which is partly positive and partly critical, is based on a reading that can hardly be called original: it draws not only on earlier texts such as the *Differenzschrift* (1801), *Faith and Knowledge* (1802), and the *Science of Logic* (1812/1816), but also, as in these texts themselves, on the interpretations of Kant put forward by Fichte, Jacobi, and others.²⁸

A first positive feature that Hegel discusses is Kant's insight that, "before we can get to the truth itself, we must first investigate the nature or type of the instrument in order to see whether it is capable of accomplishing what is required of it" (LHP 9.149, cf. 182), as is done in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Though he clearly disagrees with the outcome of Kant's investigation, Hegel calls this insight "a great and important step" (LHP 9.149). This judgment is remarkable, because many readers will be familiar with Hegel's criticism of this very procedure in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the *Encyclopedia*. What Hegel dismisses in these works is the conception of reason as an instrument by means of which the mind acquires knowledge of something, but which differs from the mode of reason that is carrying out the preliminary investigation.²⁹ For Hegel, moreover, the 'absolute' or the 'absolute idea'—considered as the purported object of reason—refers not to a mode of knowing assigned to a transcendent being, but to a mode of knowing that speculative reason itself enacts.

However, it is not quite clear whether Hegel's criticism is directed at Kant himself or rather at someone like Jacobi. Whereas both deny that God can be known, Kant can hardly be said to have conceived of reason as an "instrument for getting hold of the absolute," as Hegel puts it in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (54/48).³⁰ Hegel writes of Jacobi, by contrast, that "God—being in-and-for itself, the absolute as such, the unconditioned, and so forth—cannot be demonstrated," because this means "deriving it from conditions" (LHP 9.172). At any rate, Hegel's criticism of the view that reason is an instrument covers over his basic agreement with Kant's conception of philosophy as an investigation into the determinations of thought constitutive of any cognition of material objects (nature) as well as immaterial objects (spirit).

²⁸ Hegel never questions the accuracy of these interpretations. Evidently, it cannot be excluded that his account of Kant in the *Science of Logic* is indebted to his early Jena lectures. For nuanced assessments of Hegel's reading of Kant that take into account the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* as well as Hegel's published works, see Düsing, *Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophie*; and Engelhard, "Hegel über Kant." I largely agree with Düsing that Hegel's reading of Kant is often at odds with Kant's texts and that he criticizes Kant's philosophy in terms that are foreign to it. As Düsing points out, Hegel pays almost no attention to Kant's effort to establish a scientific metaphysics (231–232). More generally, Düsing is skeptical about the teleological outlook of Hegel's conception of the history of philosophy (1–2, 244–245).

²⁹ E §10, R, cf. §41, A. It might be argued, against Hegel, that Kant does consider the activity carried out by former metaphysics (its attempt to achieve a priori knowledge of purported objects) and, on the other hand, the reflection on this activity carried out in the *Critique of Pure Reason* to be two modes of pure reason. However, it must be admitted that Kant does not make this explicit.

³⁰ Former metaphysics, Hegel writes in the *Science of Logic*, "incurred the justified reproach of having employed these forms [i.e., pure concepts] *uncritically*, without a preliminary investigation as to whether and how they were capable of being determinations of the thing-in-itself, to use the Kantian expression, or rather of the rational" (L I, 49/64).

In line with his immediate predecessors, Hegel also offers qualified praise for Kant's effort to conceive of unity in a concrete manner, that is, as something that results from a process of unification. According to Kant, he writes, thought establishes the unity of a manifold of representations and, by doing so, establishes itself as a unity:

This unity of the manifold is posited by my spontaneity; thinking is in general this synthesizing of the manifold. This is an important awareness, a momentous knowledge. But the fact that I am *one*—as thinking, active, positing unity—Kant does not explain so precisely. What thinking produces is thus the unity, and so it produces only itself, for it is what is one. (LHP 9.153)

What Hegel does not mention, however, is that what Kant calls the 'unity of transcendental apperception' can only be established if the purely intellectual mode of synthesis—to which Hegel refers in the passage just quoted—cooperates with the pure imagination and pure intuition.³¹ Kant thus argues that pure thought cannot achieve knowledge of objects all by itself. Fichte and Hegel, by contrast, highlight Kant's account of the spontaneity of thought because that is a strand of critical philosophy that they value and further develop in their own philosophical projects.

A similar point concerns Kant's account of synthetic a priori judgments in the Introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Hegel's explanation, which is extremely brief at this point, comes down to the view that, for Kant, synthetic a priori judgments are synthetic in that they connect categories such as subject and predicate, or cause and effect, prior to experience (LHP 9.150–151). In Michelet's edition of the lectures, Hegel praises the idea that "synthetic judgments a priori are nothing but a connection of that which is opposed," but blames Kant's unscientific elaboration of it (LHPM III, 337/430). Clearly, Hegel held that Kant's account testified to the speculative insight into the unity of contrary conceptual determinations, but that he was not yet ready to develop this insight in a truly systematic manner (cf. LHP 9.181).

Yet I do not think that Hegel's interpretation of Kant is correct in this regard. For Kant, synthetic a priori judgments are a priori because they connect a subject and a predicate prior to experience. They are synthetic, on the other hand, because in this case the predicate cannot be derived from the subject (CPR, A7/B11). In the case of synthetic a priori judgments, categories such as causality or substance function as predicates that are attributed to any possible object of experience. Thus, the concept of a cause, Kant writes,

indicates something different from the concept of something that happens and is not contained in the latter representation at all. How then do I come to say something about that which happens as such [*von dem, was überhaupt geschieht*] that is completely different from it and to cognize the concept of cause as belonging to everything that happens even though it is not contained in it? (CPR, A9, translation modified)³²

³¹ Kant, CPR, A116–119, cf. B150–152, A158/B197.

³² Cf. CPR, B13, A155/B194.

In Kant's example, the category of causality is connected to "that which happens as such," which means that the human mind, in order to make objective judgments about actual matters of fact, must conceive of all possible objects of experience as causally related. On Kant's account, the synthesis at stake in synthetic a priori judgments has nothing to do with the connection of contrary conceptual determinations such as cause and effect or substance and accident: his point is rather that these judgments 'connect' categories (qua predicates) and possible objects of experience (qua subject). Ignoring the text, Hegel here attributes to Kant an insight that is foreign to Kant's own purposes.

Hegel's straightforward criticism of Kant's philosophy concerns the lack of a proper deduction of both the categories and the faculties of the human mind. As far as the categories are concerned, this criticism is widespread: Kant is said to adopt the categories "empirically, just in the way they have been ordered in logic" instead of conceiving of them as particular ways of producing unity and deriving them from this unity itself (LHP 9.153). Hegel makes the same point with regard to the faculties that are involved in the production of (a priori and a posteriori) cognition:

Kant proceeds only psychologically, that is, historically. Sensibility, understanding, and reason are present in human beings; he just tells us about this, taking it up wholly empirically, without developing it from the concept. (LHP 9.151)

In Michelet's edition, Hegel's judgment is even harsher. Kant, he notes, moves from the understanding to reason in a merely psychological manner:

The soul's bag [*Seelensack*] is being searched to see what faculties are still to be found there; by chance, reason is also found there—it might as well not have been there. (LHPM III, 351/443, translation modified)

Whether or not this criticism is fair I leave to the reader to decide. In any case, Hegel does not dismiss Kant's distinction between the various faculties as such. He even refers to Kant's distinction between the understanding and reason as a necessary one (LHP 9.161). The understanding, he explains,

is thinking within finite relationships, whereas reason—according to Kant—is thinking that has the unconditioned or the infinite as its object, and this unconditioned he calls 'idea'. (LHP 9.162)³³

³³ In his own work, Hegel draws on Kant's distinction between the understanding and reason to refer to the distinction between the discursive and speculative strand of philosophy as he understands it. Thus, he writes in the 1820 Introduction that the task of philosophy, considered as knowledge obtained by reason, consists in showing, "against the understanding, that the true, the idea . . . is something universal that in itself is the particular or the determined" (IHP 18.45). Hegel does not point out that his distinction is borrowed from Kant's.

Hegel suggests that Kant was right in arguing that reason not only consists in *thinking* the unconditioned, but also aims to achieve *knowledge* of the latter (LHP 9.162–163). He briefly discusses Kant's reasons for denying that reason can achieve this aim. The first reason Hegel attributes to Kant is that the infinite is not given in experience (LHP 9.163). This suggests that for Kant only empirical cognition is warranted, which is definitely not Kant's position. The *Critique of Pure Reason* merely denies the possibility of a specific kind of synthetic a priori judgments, namely, judgments that purport to determine particular objects of thought—the soul, the world as such, and God—independently of experience.³⁴

The second reason Hegel mentions concerns Kant's view that reason, in its attempts to determine the unconditioned, produces antinomies, that is, a priori judgments that are equally well founded but have contrary contents (LHP 9.163–164). Whereas Hegel praises Kant's insight into "the necessary occurrence of contradictions of this kind" (LHP 9.164), he clearly does not consider these two reasons to warrant the claim that the unconditioned cannot be known.³⁵ Reason, he writes, "needs to know the infinite or the unconditioned, that is, to determine it, to discover and derive its determinations" (LHP 9.162).

This raises the question as to how Hegel thinks the unconditioned can be known. Even though he does not put it this way, I hold that he accepts Kant's criticism of former metaphysics: Hegel nowhere maintains that reason ought to make judgments such as "God is the cause of all things" or "the soul is an indivisible substance" (cf. LHP 9.149–150).³⁶ He would agree with Kant that in this case reason is dominated by the understanding.

But what about the mode of reason that has liberated itself from the understanding? As is well known, Kant distinguishes three ideas of reason: the soul, the world as such, and God (CPR, A334/B391). Since Kant considers the latter to encompass the other two, Hegel's reference to the unconditioned as the idea as such is not really at odds with Kant's position. Hegel's conception of the idea as the object of reason can therefore be said to be indebted to Kant. However, he rejects Kant's account of the idea as something that is merely subjective. The idea, he writes,

is only subjective, only a concept, and the being of what is existing, namely, the objective, is forever distinct from it. Therefore what reason retains of the idea is nothing but the form of its unity or identity, and all that this suffices for is the systematizing of the manifold laws and relations of the understanding. (LHP 9.164)

Hegel here draws on the Appendix to the Transcendental Dialectic, in which Kant argues that the various sciences must necessarily assume that the cognitions they produce are

³⁴ Cf. Kant, CPR, A147/B187, A246/B303.

³⁵ On this, see De Boer, "The Dissolving Force of the Concept," 787–822.

³⁶ Former metaphysics, Hegel writes in the *Science of Logic*, "incurred the justified reproach of having employed these forms [i.e., pure concepts] *uncritically*, without a preliminary investigation as to whether and how they were capable of being determinations of the thing-in-itself, to use the Kantian expression, or rather of the rational (*das Vernünftige*)" (L I, 49/64).

elements of an encompassing whole.³⁷ However, Hegel does not refer, here or elsewhere in the lectures, to Kant's stated ambition to erect a philosophical system of all a priori elements of cognition.³⁸ There is no indication in the *Critique of Pure Reason* or elsewhere that Kant wanted to curb the ambition of pure reason in this regard. By ignoring this, Hegel arguably exaggerates the difference between Kant's philosophy and his own.

Yet what Kant does not seem to hold, unlike Hegel, is the view that reason, by investigating the totality of determinations of thought, takes thought itself as its object and, by doing so, resolves the opposition between subject and object that characterizes non-speculative thought to the highest possible extent.³⁹ This is what Hegel regards as knowledge of the unconditioned or the truth as such. What is likewise absent from Kant's critical philosophy is the view that each of the determinations of thought can be derived from a single principle—the concept—that itself is nothing but the activity of positing and overcoming oppositions.⁴⁰

As was noted earlier, Tennemann approaches actual philosophical systems in view of their capacity to abstain from vain speculations and to treat the principles of human cognition and action in a systematic way. It is doubtful whether these criteria possess the force he attributes to them. But do the criteria that Hegel brings into play fare much better? Do they allow him, for instance, to determine the difference between Descartes and Kant in a satisfactory way?

We can gather from Hegel's lectures that he considered both Descartes and Kant to have conceived of self-consciousness in a speculative manner. Whereas Descartes did so by positing the subject as that which necessarily exists (LHP 9.95), Kant did so by positing the subject as that which produces itself by producing unity among its representations (LHP 9.153). Moreover, Hegel takes Kant to have taken the first steps toward a speculative understanding of the unity of contrary conceptual determinations as such. But apart from this he does not try to explain the difference between Descartes and Kant by referring to the determinations of the idea their philosophies presuppose. More generally, he does not tell his students which determinations of the idea are constitutive of the history between Descartes and Kant, or why the succession of these determinations testifies to logical necessity. Does the 'truth' about Kant's philosophy consist in the as yet 'unscientific' effort to grasp the unity of conceptual oppositions that Hegel attributes to him? Is Kant's philosophy to be assessed exclusively in terms of the extent to which

³⁷ Cf. CPR, B673, B679–680.

³⁸ Kant discusses this in the Preface, the Introduction, and the Doctrine of Method. See CPR, Axx–xxi, BA12–13/B26, A707–708/B735–736, A841/B869. See De Boer, "Kant, Hegel, and the System of Pure Reason," 77–87.

³⁹ One might object to this by referring to the passage in the *Critique of Pure Reason* which posits the identity between the conditions of possibility of experience and those of the objects of experience (A158/B197). To my knowledge, Hegel never refers to this passage.

⁴⁰ Hegel clarifies what he means by the concept in various ways. One of these clarifications draws on the language of classical logic. In this regard, Hegel considers the concept to contain the moments of universality, particularity, and individuality. The concept is said to enact these moments by, respectively, abstracting from determination, positing determination, and resolving the opposition between these contrary moments (cf. E §163).

it paves the way for Fichte and Schelling? If not, is this one-sidedness perhaps the price that any philosophical account of the history of philosophy has to pay?

28.7. THE END OF THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

As was already mentioned, Tennemann expressed the hope that Kantian philosophy would prevail despite Fichte's and Schelling's regressive denial of the inherent limits of reason. For Hegel, conversely, his own age testifies to the ever increasing force of speculative thought.

Schelling, adopting the principle of intellectual intuition, Hegel writes, took the object of philosophy to consist in "the absolute or God," and this in such a way that "this content is expressed as concrete and internally self-mediating, as the absolute unity of the subjective and the objective" (LHP 9.180). Accordingly, Schelling is said to have moved beyond the view—defended most notably by Kant—that philosophy consists in the investigation of subjective cognition alone (LHP 9.182). He did so by treating the realm of nature (the objective) and that of intelligence (the subjective) as poles that mutually presuppose one another (LHP 9.183), which means, according to Hegel, the resolution of the Cartesian opposition between the subjective and objective (LHP 9.188).

While Hegel praises Schelling for "having introduced the concept and the form of the concept into the consideration of nature" (LHP 9.186), he also points to the formalism to which his treatment of nature sometimes falls prey (LHP 9.185, 187). More important, what Hegel finds lacking in Schelling's thought is a demonstration of the identity of subject and object in purely logical terms (LHP 9.184). What it lacks is "the form of development" or "the necessity of the progression" (LHP 9.188) that he considers to require a logical treatment.⁴¹

Hegel remains silent about his own contribution to the history of philosophy. Yet we can infer from his criticism of Schelling that he considered the *Science of Logic* to remedy the defect of his former friend's system. Since the *Encyclopedia*, which contains a logic, a philosophy of nature, and a philosophy of spirit, replaces Schelling's twofold system, it seems likely that he regarded this work as a major achievement as well. We know from the Introduction, moreover, that Hegel considered the *Science of Logic* and his lectures on the history of philosophy to possess the same content, namely, the determinations of thought constitutive of any cognition of objects. If this is the case, then he must have valued these lectures as an important contribution to the unconditioned self-knowledge of pure reason that, according to Hegel, had been achieved in his time. This can also be gathered from his concluding words:

⁴¹ On this point, see De Boer, *On Hegel: The Sway of the Negative*, 105–109.

This then is the standpoint of the current age, and for now [*für jetzt*] the series of spiritual forms has thereby been concluded. I have tried to exhibit their necessary procession out of one another, so that each philosophy necessarily presupposes the one preceding it. Our standpoint is the cognition of spirit, the knowledge of the idea as spirit, as absolute spirit, which as absolute opposes itself to another spirit, to the finite spirit. To recognize that absolute spirit is for it [*für ihn sei*] is this finite spirit's principle and vocation [*Bestimmung*]. (LHP 9.212, translation modified)⁴²

Contrary to what might be expected, Hegel, using the expression 'for now', does not tell his students that his standpoint represents the highest possible one. Nor does he state that his lectures have as yet completely succeeded in showing how each philosophy necessarily follows from the preceding one. Likewise, the final sentence refers to the vocation, or end, of philosophy rather than to its actual achievement. On the other hand, Hegel leaves no doubt that he considers his own philosophy to have made absolute thought—or all possible modes of thought—the object of thought itself. Given Hegel's remarks in the Introduction, this means that he took himself to have demonstrated—at least in principle—that Kant's criticism of former metaphysics need not prevent philosophy from completely attaining the truth.

28.8. CONCLUSION

Hegel's lectures certainly approach the idea of a truly philosophical account of the history of philosophy to a larger extent than Tennemann's published works. Yet I hope to have shown that the difference between Tennemann and Hegel, despite the latter's own judgment, is gradual rather than absolute. Just as Tennemann, Hegel tells his students about the main ideas of the main texts in the history of modern philosophy and provides them with the necessary information about their authors. Both philosophers, we have seen, hold that a philosophical approach to the history of philosophy requires that one rely on certain criteria, in other words, on a certain conception of the most perfect mode of philosophy. Whereas Tennemann tends to regard philosophical systems as failed efforts to achieve Kant's position, Hegel considers them to fail to conceive of the absolute idea in an adequate way.

To be sure, Hegel's approach is more sophisticated than Tennemann's, if only because he does not base his account of ancient and medieval philosophy on the same criteria as his account of modern philosophy. Nevertheless, his standpoint with regard to the history of philosophy as a whole—the actualization of the 'idea'—implies that every single philosophy is conceived as an element of an ahistorical meta-system. As regards the modern age, each philosophy is treated in view of its capacity to overcome the oppositions produced by the discursive strand of modern philosophy as such. This means that

⁴² Brown's translation omits the 'for now'.

As was suggested earlier, this may well be a price that any philosophical account of the history of philosophy would have to pay. However, the actual lectures do not seem to meet the requirements Hegel imposes on such an account either. They do not really demonstrate that one philosophy necessarily ensues from the preceding one—other than by showing, for example, that Fichte's philosophy presupposes Kant's. Contrary to the *Science of Logic*, the lectures cannot completely abstract from the temporal dimension of philosophy. But can they therefore annul the contingency that this dimension seems to imply? It might be argued, of course, that Hegel does not foreground the 'logic' he takes to be at work in the history of philosophy because of the introductory nature of his classes or the provisional character of any lecture. Yet it could also be that the medium of the lectures makes it more difficult to see that a philosophical history of philosophy such as Hegel envisioned meets with a resistance that no speculation can overcome: the texts themselves.

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