

History of Philosophy (ancients/medievals)

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In his *Lectures of the History of Philosophy* Hegel comments that while Europe had taken its religion and conception of the afterlife from the *East*, its attitude to *this world*, as in its approach to the arts, philosophy and science, had been taken from the Greeks.¹ What had struck modern Europeans about Greek life and culture was its

¹ G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy 1825–6*, in 3 volumes, edited by Robert F. Brown, translated by R. F. Brown and J. M. Stewart with the assistance of H. S. Harris (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2006), vol. 2, 9–10. This translation is based *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, vols 6–9, edited by Pierre Garniron and Walter Jaeschke (Hamburg, Felix Meiner Verlag, 1983–). Hereafter, references to the English translation will be given in the text as “LHP”, followed by volume and page numbers, with corresponding volume and page numbers to the German edition following in square brackets. I have occasionally modified the translation.

While the edition of the 1825–6 lectures is at present that closest to a critical edition of Hegel’s lectures, a greater range of material is to be found in the editions originally compiled by Karl Ludwig Michelet, the second edition of which (Hegel’s *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, in 3 volumes, edited by Karl Ludwig Michelet, Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1840–44) was translated as *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, in 3 volumes, translated by E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson, with introduction by F. C. Beiser (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995). I have in places supplemented material from the 1825–6 lectures with material from this source, given as “H&S” followed by volume and page numbers with corresponding volume and page numbers to Michelet, “M”, in square brackets. The Michelet edition is, however, generally regarded as less reliable. On the history of these various editions and the materials on which they relied, as well as the background to Hegel’s own lectures on the history of philosophy, see Karin de Boer, “Hegel’s Lectures on the History of Modern Philosophy”, in this volume.

“*Heimatlichkeit*”, the capacity of the Greeks to feel “at home”—at home *in the world* and *with themselves*. Moreover, the modern *renaissance* of ancient culture could occur only when Europeans themselves had come to be able to be, once more, “at home” [*zu Hause*] with themselves and their own humanness (LHP 2: 10 [7: 1]). Thus Hegel describes a “shared spirit of *Heimatlichkeit*” as what binds modern Europeans like himself to the Greeks (LHP 2: 10 [7: 2]).

Hegel’s treatment of the history of philosophy is, as might be grasped from this alone, decidedly Eurocentric. “Only with Greek philosophy do we make our beginning in the proper sense, for what went before [that is, oriental philosophy] was just a preliminary” (LHP 2: 9 [7: 1]). Because there is a direct link between “free, philosophical thought”, and *practical* freedom, philosophy only appears in history “where, and to the extent that, free political institutions are formed” (LHP 1: 91 [6: 266]). Therefore philosophy proper “first emerges in the West” (LHP 1: 91 [6: 269]). This freedom was, of course, only available to a few, but a shift from the oriental principle that only *one* (the despot) is free, to the principle that *some* are free (LPWH 88, 404 [154, 362]) was, for Hegel, important progress, nevertheless.

That in the strict sense philosophy has only existed in the West does not mean that the type of thought that is often associated with philosophy—*abstraction*—has not appeared elsewhere. Abstraction of thought into the realm of universality has so characterized Eastern religions as to confer on them a philosophical dimension *missing* in other religions *including* Christianity (LHP 1: 103 [6: 366]). But the abstraction of eastern thought is at the expense of the individual thinker such that it works to *dissolve* individual conscious subjectivity in a “boundless” universal—the bliss of “Oriental sublimity” (LHP 1: 105 [6: 308]). This is a type of thought characteristic of fear and unfreedom. In contrast, “the freedom of the subject is the principle of Greek philosophy—the I that knows itself to be infinite, in which the universal is specified as present” (LHP 2: 11 [7: 3]). Thus Hegel will only take the most cursory look the philosophy of the Indians and the Chinese, as he will do later with regard to the philosophy of the Jews and the Arabs. While this theme of the one-sided abstraction *from* concrete existence to an empty and abstract *infinite* will have a *role* within the history of western philosophy itself, there it will mark one aspect of a

complex movement that involves a contrary *return* of thought to the concrete, achieving a reconciliation between thought and existence. It is *this* that allows the thinking subject to feel at home in the actual world it inhabits, and grasp the rationality within it.

The foregoing is likely to be sufficient to lead many a reader to think that as both philosopher and historian of philosophy Hegel is simply *beyond* redemption. Does not this attitude reveal that for him the history of philosophy can be no more than a mirror within which he, as a self-styled exemplary modern European, narcissistically contemplates the embryogenesis of own thought? Many have indeed understood Hegel in this way, but perhaps this purported tight interpenetration between his philosophy and his account of the history of philosophy can be understood otherwise. Might it not also be claimed that *not* to acknowledge the history of philosophy as leading to one's own philosophical stance is to presume that one can, as philosopher, understand, judge and evaluate philosophy's history from a rational standpoint informed by norms that are *not* historically given? Might not Hegel's position be the expression of an approach to rationality that refuses to take the mind as a magical ingredient added, from somewhere else, to the mix of physical, organic, socio-cultural and historical forces that have otherwise made one the being that one is?

Whatever answer we come up with here presupposes that we understand Hegel's project as clearly as possible. To this end I have adopted a basically expositional and uncritical presentation. Hegel's own philosophy clearly bears many similarities to Greek "speculative" thought, but it is also premised on the necessity that the Greek experiment in freedom would fail. To understand Hegel himself it is therefore essential that we get into as clear a focus as possible his understanding of ancient philosophy and its fate.

1. Greek "*At-Homeness*"

Hegel's *Lectures the Philosophy of World History* allow us to obtain a fuller

understanding of what it means for the Greeks to have been “at home” in the world.² What had been distinctive about Greek religious consciousness was that spirit represented itself as “something that is not exterior and natural but interior and human” (LPWH 387 [337–8]). This Greek intuition was close to the Oriental concerning “the substantial unity of spirit and nature”, but in the Greek case, “the spiritual is encountered twice: as subjective being-for-self and in unity with the natural” (LPWH 388–9 [339–340]). Thus “the spiritual opposes itself to what is merely submerged in materiality” (LPWH 389 [340]), giving it a “power over nature, as what initially appears as other to it” (LPWH 392 [345]). Thus while nature might first have been perceived as external and foreign, it was nevertheless conceived as “animated and ensouled”, bearing within it something “genial” to the human spirit and so receptive to its acts of transformation (LPWH 392–3 [345–7]). This meant that although the Greeks had taken cultural and religious material from elsewhere, they could transform this material into something bearing *their own* stamp and within which they could collectively recognize *themselves* as a people (LPWH 394 [347–8]).³ It allowed a heterogeneous “conglomeration of tribes that came from elsewhere” to *become* the Greeks (LPWH 377 [322]).

This capacity to recognize one’s own action *as one’s own*, to “fully or truly

² G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History. Volume 1: Manuscripts of the Introduction and the Lectures of 1822–3*, ed. and trans., R. F. Brown and P. C. Hodgson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2011). The source for this translation is “Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte, Berlin, 1822–3” in G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen: Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, vol 12, edited by K. H. Ilting, K Brehmer, and H. N Seelmann, (Hamburg: Felix Meiner Verlag, 1996), 3–521. References to the English translation will be given in the text as “LPWH” with page number, followed by page number for the German edition in square brackets.

³ Robert Pippin summarizes Hegel’s appreciation of Greek art in terms the echo the idea of the “friendliness” of the materials of art to the expression of inner intention. Robert B. Pippin, *After the Beautiful: Hegel and the Philosophy of Pictorial Modernism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014), 22.

stand behind it, own up to it, claim ownership of it”, is, as Robert Pippin has argued,⁴ at the core of Hegel’s conception of freedom. Conceived in this way freedom will be thought as equally necessary to *theoretical* life as it is to practical activity in that it allows one to have thoughts that are held to *one’s own* normative standards, rather than merely caused by external considerations. In its Greek form, however, this freedom came with limitations. The exercise of Greek freedom was always “within the condition of naturalness” (LPWH 392 [345]), a condition reflected in the fact that Greek religion was “found in beauty—a spiritual quality burdened with sensuous elements” (LPWH 415–6 [379]) rather than in “truth”. It was the “contradiction” between this freedom and its limitation by an externally given content within which it could manifest itself that would underlie the dissolution of both the *polis* and the philosophy to which it gave rise.⁵ And this was a limitation that Hegel confidently believed modern European society could overcome. This emerging society would thereby be able to recognize its own origins, childhood and youth in the Greek world, and find in that world the origins of the renewed philosophy in which *it* expresses its own freedom.

In Rome and the Middle Ages, the earlier perceived “genial” interchanges between intentional life and the external world would be replaced by a conception of thought and existence as two rigidly distinct realms—a distinction that would be brought to the level of explicit self-consciousness in the early modern period. But Hegel would not, like some contemporaries, simply lament the loss of Greek “objectivity” and its replacement by the opposed realms underlying modern subjectivity. Rather, this abstract early-modern opposition between inner life and external existence that was largely foreign to the Greeks would, he thought, be reintegrated into a modern, complex and universalized version of Greek

⁴ Robert B. Pippin, *Hegel’s Practical Philosophy: Rational Agency as Ethical Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 5.

⁵ While the “external political destruction of Greece” lies in the Peloponnesian Wars, these wars reflected the structural features of Greek society that had resulted in Athens and Sparta striving to become the political center of Greece under conditions that made the establishment of any such center *impossible* (LPWH 414–5 [378–9]).

Heimatlichkeit, allowing a *subjective* dimension of freedom to co-exist with *Heimatlichkeit* in a way that had been impossible for the Greeks.

Hegel devotes over half the space of the published lectures to the history of Greek philosophy, which he treats in three phases: an initial development stretching from Thales to Aristotle; a period in which it divides into antithetical outlooks such as those of Skepticism, Stoicism; and the final period of neo-Platonism. We cannot here afford the space for even-handedness and will concentrate on what, from Hegel's point of view, was the highest point of Greek philosophy and what makes it particularly relevant to the modern reader—the *scientifically* speculative philosophies of Plato and Aristotle,⁶ together with the strictly pre-scientific philosophy of Plato's teacher, Socrates. As for the philosophies of Rome and the Middle Ages, while they properly fall within the history of philosophy as Hegel considers it, these respective societies had clearly not been marked by the free political institutions that formed the soil from which Greek philosophy had sprung. It will then not come as a surprise that Hegel was far from enthusiastic about the philosophy of these periods, and only the

⁶ “The development of philosophic science as science [*philosophische Wissenschaft als Wissenschaft*], and, further, the progress from the Socratic point of view to the scientific, begins with Plato and is completed by Aristotle” (H&S 2: 1 [M 2: 147]). In the 1825–6 lectures, Hegel seems to locate the point at which Greek philosophy became *science* specifically with Aristotle (2: 13 [7: 5]). Hegel freely talks of pre-Platonic philosophy (that of Parmenides and the Parmenideans, for example) and post-Aristotelian philosophy (the neo-Platonism of Plotinus and Proclus) as “speculative”, an adjective meant to capture the dynamic relations among conceptual determinations to contrast with the more static approaches he associates with the operations of the “understanding”. But speculative content can also be found in the form of *Vorstellungen* in non-philosophical traditions, such as Eastern religions, and in periods where philosophy is not *freely* pursued, as in Medieval Catholicism. Speculative content treated in a *speculative manner* proper to conceptuality itself constitutes *scientific* philosophy.

briefest account of his treatment of them will be given here. From Hegel's point of view, it will only be with the philosophy of the modern period that philosophy *proper* is re-commenced.

2. Pre-Scientific Greek Philosophy

The history of Greek philosophy, and so the history of philosophy itself, begins with Thales and Ionian natural philosophy. This philosophy had devoted itself to finding something *natural* as the “principle” or “*archi*” of all that is and Thales took that to be *water* (LHP 2: 23–4 [7: 15–6]). Actually, what had been chosen *as* the principle, whether it be “water, air, or the infinite”, is of little interest (LHP 2: 24 [7: 16]): it is the fact *that* such a principle was asserted at all that is important for Hegel. Ironically, despite the fact that the Ionians take the principles from the materials of the empirical world, this is “the beginning of a departure from what is in our sense perception, a stepping-back from this immediately existing being” (LHP 2: 26 [7: 17]). When Thales declares that *everything* is really water, his specifying *water* must involve the *thought or concept* of water as the purported explanans of everything: even if he had subjectively had in mind the sort of immediately perceivable stuff in the puddle before him, the water of *this* puddle cannot be identical to the abstraction *posited* as the principle of everything. On Hegel's understanding of the term, this makes Thales an “idealist”.⁷ No philosophical explanation in this sense, no matter how naturalistic, could avoid conceptualization, and so “thought” is the real principle behind *any* type of philosophy. As Hegel puts it in *Science of Logic*, “every philosophy is essentially idealism”.⁸

The Pythagoreans represent the transition from such Ionic *naturalism* to a

⁷ In *Science of Logic* Hegel notes that for Thales, “although this is also empirical water, it is at the same time also the *in-itself* or *essence* of all other things, too, and these other things are not self-subsistent or grounded in themselves, but are *posited* by, are *derived* from them, an *other*, from water, that is they are ideal entities [ideelle]”. G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1969), 155.

⁸ Hegel, *Science of Logic*, 154.

more abstracted and intellectual philosophy. Pythagoras and the Pythagoreans consciously grasped what was only implicit in Thales: the absolute could *not* be understood as some particular sensuous matter. Becoming conscious of the fact that its determinations must be *posits* rather than sensuous givens, the Pythagoreans had taken *number* to represent the eternal and unchanging *explanans* of everything. Thus what we know as “category theory”, *qua* systematic account of the fundamental determinations of thought, begins with the Pythagoreans as modeled of the relations among *numbers*. Particular limitations, however, follow from this numerical model. Thus *counting* takes one (the monas) as its basic category, from which is generated duality (dyas), taken to represent multiplicity, otherness and opposition. But while this introduces the important idea of opposition *as* an essential moment of the absolute, it does not allow any *determinate* conception of opposition or otherness, since the moments of the dyad are themselves simply different “ones” considered in their most abstract self-identities (LHP 2: 39 [7: 31–2]). The limitations of modeling the components of thought on numbers soon become obvious, and later philosophers including Aristotle and Plato had “stolen its fruits and have passed them off as their own by a facile alteration, substituting categories of thought in place of number” (LHP 2: 39 [7: 31]). These formal and abstractive “oriental” features of Pythagoras’ thought are consonant with the fact of his having spent much time in Egypt in the company of the Egyptian priesthood (LHP 2: 32 [7: 23–4]).

With their numericism, the Pythagoreans had not found an adequate form of expression for the speculative *concept*—that is, for pure unencumbered *thought*—and it was only with the Eleatic school (essentially Xenophanes, Parmenides, Melissus and Zeno) that a more adequate understanding of pure thought and its dynamics—its “movement”—could be achieved. For Parmenides “only being *is*, and what is nothing *is not at all*”, and the achievement of this *pure thought* represents “a tremendous advance” over the Ionians and Pythagoreans. Here, “thought, properly speaking, begins to be free for the first time on its own account, as essence, or as that which alone is true; now thought grasps its own self” (LHP 2: 57 [7: 53]). In particular, with the approach of *Zeno* the beginnings of *dialectical thought* is to be found. Reading this relation through Plato’s *Parmenides*, Hegel says that “Parmenides proved that the One is, but Zeno showed that the many is not” (LHP 2: 65 [7: 62]). But the truth here

appears in a somewhat inverted form: while Zeno himself might have taken this to show the unreality of change (a claim that can be refuted *by walking*), for Hegel it shows the *reality* of change and thereby, “that the representation of motion inherently involves contradictory determinations” (LHP 2: 66 [7: 63]). As a *principle*, the dialectic implicit in Zeno would emerge in Heraclitus’ “bold and more profound dictum that being no more is than is non-being” by which he “grasped the dialectic of the Eliatic school objectively and ... treated this objective dialect as the principle, or as the absolute” (LHP 2: 73 [7: 71]). Such a concept of the absolute as unity of opposites would later come to fruition in Plato’s dialogue, *Parmenides* (LHP 2: 205–7 [8: 33-6]). We cannot understand Plato, however, without understanding the most significant of the pre-scientific philosophers—Socrates, and we will pass over Hegel’s discussion of intervening figures and go straight to him.

For Hegel, Socrates was more than a philosopher: the principle he introduced constitutes a “major turning-point [*einen grossen Wendepunkt*] in the world’s consciousness” (LHP 2: 124 [7: 127]). Socrates had added a *subjective dimension* to the otherwise habitual moral lives of Athenian citizens: his challenge to his interlocutors being “to discover and learn from themselves what their vocation and final goal, and also what the world’s purpose is, what is true in and for itself; they must attain truth by and through themselves” (LHP 2: 124–5 [7: 127]). In short, he challenged them to discover this within the resources of *their own individual consciousnesses*, and not to simply take on in an unquestioning way the duties that were assigned to them by custom.

Philosophy for Socrates did not entail any withdrawal from everyday existence into any realm of abstract thought. He could combine a questioning attitude while living the life of a citizen engaged in the political life of Athens, fighting in three campaigns in the Peloponnesian war and occupying various public offices. Moreover, *as a philosopher*, his occupation “properly consisted in associating with all and sundry, with people of different ages and of quite diverse vocations ... getting individuals involved in thinking things over [*Nachdenken*]” (LHP 2: 130 [7: 134]). His unfortunate end, however, would signal the incompatibility of Socratic reflection with its “right of consciousness, the right of knowing, of subjective freedom” with

“the divine right of unquestioned custom, the law of the fatherland, and religion” (LHP 2: 127 [7: 130]), the context within which Greek *Heimatlichkeit* had flourished. As we know most about the famous “Socratic method” through the dialogues of Plato, we will discuss this below in the context of Plato’s account of dialectic.

3. Hegel’s *Deplatonized* Plato

It might be thought that Plato, along with him the Pythagoreans who had influenced him, would present the greatest challenge for Hegel’s general construal of Greek philosophy as a manifestation of the Greek spirit of “being-at-home” in the world. The attitudes that we typically think as “Platonic” seem marked by a yearning for the transcendent or “otherworldly” typical of Eastern thinking, and to express anything but *Heimatlichkeit*. Hegel thus pursues a certain “deep reading” of Plato’s texts in an effort to separate the essential features from those obscuring superficial ones that, he claims, have led to the misunderstanding of his philosophy. To appreciate Hegel’s argument here we must invoke a distinction that is crucial for him between the German words “*Darstellung*” and “*Vorstellung*”, often translated as “presentation” and “representation” respectively.

“*Vorstellung*” had been the term used in German philosophy to translate the subjective “ideas” characteristic of philosophy in the 17th and 18th centuries, but in Hegel’s usage, to think in *Vorstellungen* is to draw on images from everyday life and employ them to express some conceptual content in an indirect, metaphorical way. Such thought is ubiquitous and, importantly, is typical of how a more “universal” content is expressed in *religion*. In contrast, *philosophy* demands that the true conceptual content be somehow extracted from this superficial, imagistic form. The term “*Darstellung*” had come to be used in a more realistic and *non-psychologicistic* mode to refer to the way in which some *objective* content could be *presented* in thought and knowledge.⁹

⁹ On a history of this notion see, Martha B. Helfer, *The Retreat of Representation: The Concept of Darstellung in German Critical Discourse* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996).

Hegel acknowledges that Plato had freely used everyday *Vorstellungen*, especially from contemporary religious myth, to convey philosophical content. This may make them attractive, but it is the source of misunderstanding as there is “the inevitable danger of taking what belongs only to representation [*was nur der Vorstellung angehört*], and not to thought, as the essential element” (LHP 2: 182–3 [8: 7]). Reading Plato without this distinction results in the popular picture of Plato as an otherworldly thinker—the “Platonist” of tradition. Consider, for example, the slave boy in Plato’s *Meno* whose seemingly innate knowledge of geometry recovered by Socrates’ questioning is explained by the doctrine of the soul’s “remembrance” of forms the soul, once unencumbered by corporeality, had been able to “perceive” directly.¹⁰ While Plato’s texts speak of the incorporeal soul and the transcendent realm within which it originally moved, such an idea should not be taken as part of his philosophy (LHP 2: 183 [8: 8]). Such representations are meant to convey that *thinking*, in the way involved in geometric proofs, grasps its content in a *universal*, that is, conceptually mediated, manner. Rather than expressing an ontological thesis about the mind *qua* soul having a timeless existence amid the “Ideas” or “Forms” in some Platonic realm—a decidedly *oriental idea*—these pictures are meant to refer to the way we know *the truth* about the *this-worldly* reality we *actually* inhabit.

We will also appreciate the *positive* sense in which Plato’s philosophy manifests Greek *Heimatlichkeit* if we remember how this notion is to be understood in terms of a certain optimism and confidence concerning the receptiveness of nature and externality to human thought and purposeful activity. Thus when Plato in the *Republic* posits the rule of the state by *philosophers* this signals the rule in human affairs of *philosophy*—reason—itself. That communal life is capable of being governed by universal principles in this way signals its congeniality to being shaped by rational thought. Ultimately, however, this will not be achievable in the ancient polis, the contradictions within which will be revealed in Plato’s political thought.

¹⁰ Plato, “Meno”, trans. G. M. A Grube, in *Complete Works*, John M. Cooper, ed. D. S. Hutchinson, assoc. ed. (Indianapolis, Hackett, 1997).

Hegel discusses Plato's philosophy under the headings "dialectic", "philosophy of nature" and "philosophy of spirit". Clearly, he thinks that Plato's importance lies primarily in the first and last of these areas, and in both of these areas the profound influence of Socrates is apparent.

Plato's major significance lies in his development of a "dialectic" that had first made its appearance in Zeno. Plato had grasped the "movement" of pure categories of thought that had earlier been presented in "static" ways in the approaches of the Pythagoreans and Eleatics. Zeno had, inadvertently, broken through this static Eleatic approach: attempting to show the *unreality* of motion, he had effectively showed the *reality of contradiction*. It is Socrates, however, who was the crucial forerunner to Plato in regard to the development of this dialectic, and Socrates must be understood in relation to the appearance of cultural figures who accompanied the rise of Greek democracy—the Sophists.

Influenced by both the Sophists and their critic, Socrates, Plato had linked the *dialectic* of thought to the *dialogical* use of language. Hegel notes the important development in Athens of an urbane *conversational* culture among the leisured Athenian males in which participation in conversations was governed by "the ongoing recognition of the rights of other persons" (LPWH 410 [371]). Conversation had been the medium employed by the Sophists to show how, on questioning, particular ideas could become transformed into their opposites. Here they relied on the fact of the perspectivity of many everyday claims: "Some of us freeze in the wind and others do not. So we cannot say that the wind is cold or warm, for it is warm and cold according to its relationship to a subject" (LHP 2: 122 [7: 125]). Socrates *too* had used these apparent contradictions to produce confusions or *aporiae* in which assumptions unreflectively held by the interlocutor were confounded (LHP 2: 134–5; 196 [7: 139–40; 8: 23]), but whereas the Sophists used this confusion to *deny* the ultimate distinction between truth and falsity, Socrates used technique to free the interlocutor from the constraints of the immediate certitudes of empirical consciousness and to draw "something universal from the particular", from "experience or representation,

whatever is in our consciousness in a naïve way” (LHP 2: 134 [7: 138]).¹¹

However, this goal was by no means always achieved in Plato, especially in his early dialogues, which often ended with only the confusion of opinion and the awakening (rather than the satisfaction) of a need for knowledge. However, in the later dialogues, such as the *Sophist*, *Philebus* and, especially, *Parmenides*, Plato had achieved more positive results, unravelling the categorical structure of the universal “Idea” in more concrete ways. Thus, in his *Parmenides*, the absolute is grasped as *being*, but, in a departure from Parmenides himself, as no longer understood in abstract opposition to *non-being*. Rather it is *becoming*.¹² This means that *being* is to be understood as having *non-being* as internal to it: “In the One, being is non-being and non-being is being; the unity of the two is in becoming” (LHP 2: 206 [8: 35]).¹³ The Neoplatonist Proclus had taken this doctrine from Plato’s *Parmenides* as “the authentic theology, the authentic unveiling of all the mysteries of the divine essence”, but Plato’s dialectic is “not complete in every respect” as it starts from what are themselves *fixed* categories such “the One” and “being” and cannot ultimately capture their authentically *dialectical* relation (LHP 2: 207 [8: 36]).

Hegel is largely dismissive of Plato’s philosophy of nature, but for different

¹¹ For a more recent reading of Plato that stresses the role of the dialogue see Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Plato’s Dialectical Ethics: Phenomenological Interpretations Relating to the Philebus*, translated and with an introduction by Robert M. Wallace (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991; first German edition 1931).

¹² That is, Plato has here worked his way through the initial set of “thought-determinations” as Hegel himself sets them out in the first book of the *Science of Logic*, the “Logic of Being”, advancing thought’s grasp of itself beyond the earlier efforts of the likes of Parmenides and Heraclitus.

¹³ Gadamer has argued that the conception of the dialectic attributed to Plato by Hegel rests on some clear *misreadings* of Plato’s approach to contradiction. Gadamer, “Hegel and the Dialectic of the Ancient Philosophers” in *Hegel’s Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, translated and with an Introduction by P. Christopher Smith (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976).

reasons to those commonly encountered. Rather than *criticizing* Plato for ignoring the sensory world, Hegel sees this refusal of “the given” as central to his achievements. The problem with Plato’s approach is that it doesn’t use contradictions *within* the empirical to guide reason’s way beyond it. It was Plato’s *practical* philosophy that was of greater significance. In particular, Plato’s achievement had consisted in his understanding of the links between man’s moral nature, the nature of justice, and the state, as developed in *The Republic*. This, however, must be understood within the context of the limitations on the realization of the Greek capacity for freedom. To remind us of Plato’s historical context, Hegel employs a saying familiar from his *Philosophy of Right*: “one cannot overleap one’s own time; the spirit of one’s age is one’s own spirit too” (LHP 2: 219 [8: 51]),¹⁴ and appeals to this nexus between the spirit of Plato’s philosophy and the historically specific spirit of the Greeks to explain the grounds of what is commonly taken to be the “totalitarian” dimension of Plato’s political philosophy—Hegel’s explicitly *critical* explication of this dimension seeming being lost on many of Hegel’s political critics.¹⁵

For Hegel, we moderns are attracted to the life and culture of the ancient Greeks because of the expression of freedom found there, but that freedom was not what we moderns typically think of as freedom, with our stress on its *subjective* and *individual* dimensions. The principle of subjective freedom had entered into Greek life with Socrates’ individual questioning approach to morality, but was “the principle that destroyed the Greek states and Greek life generally” (LHP 2: 220 [8: 52]) and was in tension with the collective “at homeness” of Greeks in their world. Plato had recognized this disparity between the principle of subjectivity represented by Socrates and the unquestioning adherence to its customs that life in the polis required, and for that reason had sought “to exclude and banish this new principle, to preclude all possibility of it” (LHP 2: 220 [8: 53]). This suppression of subjective freedom can be

¹⁴ C.f., G. W. F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, edited by Allen W. Wood and translated by H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 21.

¹⁵ E.g., Karl Popper, *The Open Society and Its Enemies, New One-Volume Edition* (Princeton N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2013).

seen reflected in various features of life as set out in there: in the denial to individuals of a *choice* as to which class they belong; in the abolition of all private property; and in the abolition of marriage and the family. From the perspective of the present and in the light of the Christian idea that “the soul of the individual is the absolute end ... we can see that the Platonic constitution is of a lower order; it cannot fulfill the higher requirements of an ethical organization” (LHP 2: 225 [8: 58]). However, no-one, Plato included, can overleap their own time, and while from it matters for the *modern* state whether or not individuals have freedom of conscience or are able to pursue their particular interests in their own way, such considerations are “excluded from the Platonic idea” (LHP 2: 220 [8: 53]). That he fully expressed the limitations of the spirit of his time in thought is not a sign of the failure of Plato as a philosopher, but rather a sign of his greatness.

4. Hegel’s *De-Empiricized* Aristotle

As we have seen, Hegel’s Plato is not really the Plato with whom we are familiar, and the same might be said of Hegel’s Aristotle.¹⁶ Hegel rejects the commonplace contrasting of Plato and Aristotle as representatives of antithetical extremes such as idealism and realism, or rationalism and empiricism (LHP 2: 226 [8: 59–60]). Aristotle was a *developer* of Plato’s speculative philosophy, a follower who took dialectic beyond the limitations found there and who, like the later neo-Platonists, made the divine “*noesis noeseos noesis*”,¹⁷ thought thinking itself, the pinnacle to his metaphysics (LHP 2: 254 [8: 91]). While the unity of being and non-being had been implicit but somewhat hidden in Plato, who had focused on the “affirmative principle” concerning the idea’s abstract self-identity, Aristotle had made explicit this hidden moment of negativity (LHP 2: 236 [8: 70]).

The priority of change and movement over the static that had first emerged in Zeno is expressed in Aristotle’s metaphysics in terms of the conception of *energia*.

¹⁶ For a careful and critical evaluation of Hegel’s reading of Aristotle, see Alfredo Ferrarin, *Hegel and Aristotle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

¹⁷ Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, in Hugh Tredennick (trans.), *Loeb Classical Library, Aristotle XVIII*, bk. 12, ch. 9.

Like Heraclitus, Aristotle treated *change* as fundamental, but in contrast to Heraclitus, for Aristotle change was not mere alteration but “self-preservation within identity with self” or “within the universal” (LHP 2: 235 [8: 69]). While Heraclitus captured the way “a stream is ever-changing”, Aristotle captures the fact that it is “also ever the same” (LHP 2: 235 [8: 68–9]). This dynamic and concrete equivalent to the abstract “Idea” of Platonic philosophy is found in Aristotle in various forms: as the separable *form* of sensuous perceptible substances, as the “higher kind of substance” that we think of as the souls of plants, animals and humans; and as *absolute* substance which, in contrast to Plato and the Pythagoreans, is conceived as *pure activity*, thought thinking itself. Nevertheless, the commonplace construal of the essentially speculative Aristotle as a type of empiricist, interested primarily in “natural history” is not entirely wrong. His procedure of “bringing into thought the determinations from the ordinary representation [*gewöhnlichen Vorstellung*] of an object and then combining them in unity, in the concept” had an empirical dimension which works counter to the *necessity* required for the “passage of one determination [*Bestimmung*] to another”. This approach of *at first* considering objects in the way they are apprehended in *Vorstellungen* leads him to treat the whole universe in its spiritual and sensible dimensions as an “aggregate”, a “series of objects” (LHP 2: 233 [8: 66]). His divine conception of substance seems thus overlaid and ultimately compromised by a static conception of individual substantial forms underlying appearances and devoid of self-negation. But there were nevertheless clearly *positive* benefits of Aristotle’s “empiricism” for the development of Greek philosophy. To appreciate these we need to return to the limits of Plato’s quasi-sophistical linguistic or “*dialogical*” form of presentation of the essentially *dialectical* content of his thought.

Michelet’s edition of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* has Hegel summing up Plato’s standpoint as that of, first, “the contingent form of speech, in which men of noble and unfettered nature converse without other interest than that of theory which is being worked out” (H&S 2: 116 [M, 2: 226])—a conversational form of life that, as Hegel was aware, was dependent on the existence of slaves to free the few for the leisure time to devote to such conversations (LPWH 404 [362–3]).¹⁸ For

¹⁸ Thus, while freedom is seen as an essential element of Greek life, there only

Aristotle, by contrast, philosophy was more to be identified with the thoughtful response to being struck by the world in sensuous experience: “Aristotle appears as a thoughtful observer of the world who attends to all aspects of the universe” (LHP 2: 232 [8: 65]). This “empirical” dimension allowed Aristotle to make distinctions among the relations of “negation” between predicates of judgments that had *not* been apparent within Plato’s more “conversationally” based analyses.

The first phase of the Socratic method was, as we have seen, intended to dissolve the force of particular claims by showing how a claim could be turned into its opposite so as to allow the “universal” to emerge out of this confusion and so replace the sensuous givens *as* the true object of knowledge (LHP 2: 196 [7: 22–3]). But Plato’s Socrates did this by transiting from sensuous existence directly to that which *could not* be sensibly perceived: “An action, viewed empirically, can be said to be just, whereas from another aspect it can be shown to have quite the opposite character. The good or the true, however, is to be apprehended by itself, devoid of individuality or empirical concretion of this sort; it alone is what *is*” (LHP 2: 200–1 [8: 28]). The element that is “universal and true” that emerges out of this dissolution, however, remains “very general and abstract” (LHP 2: 201 [8: 28]), and while Plato had endeavored to go *beyond* the abstract idea of “the good” and to give it concrete determination, his problem was that of unifying the opposing determinations of universality and determinateness. But this is just where Aristotle “surpassed Plato in speculative depth” by bringing the determination supplied by the *empirical world* to the “idealist tradition” initiated by Plato (LHP 2: 226 [8: 20]).

Plato had resisted the skeptical conclusions that the Sophists had drawn from the relativity of perceptual judgments by shifting the focus of philosophical investigation away from sensuous experience to the *ideas themselves*, but in so doing he had effectively *conceded* the Sophists’ skepticism about the empirical world, and had tacitly accepted their conception of the objects of perception as the unity of different subject-relative qualities that were “indifferent” to each other and thus

some are free.

indifferently applied in claims about the sensible world.¹⁹ But, as Hegel points out in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, “if the many determinate properties were strictly indifferent to one another, if they were simply and solely self-related, they would not be determinate; for they are only determinate in so far as they *differentiate* themselves from one another, and *relate* themselves to others as their opposites”.²⁰ It had been Aristotle’s explicit focus on the *empirical world* that allowed him to discover the operations of the dialectic *in empirical experience itself* and so grasp the universal as generated *from* this starting point. But Aristotle’s limits are revealed in the fact that for him thinking could not reflect on itself *directly*, but only in the form of the thinkable forms of objects taken from the empirical world.

Hegel considers Aristotle’s corpus in terms of the classification: *Metaphysics*, *Philosophy of Nature* (physics), *Philosophy of Spirit* (psychology and practical philosophy (ethics and politics) and, finally, *Logic*. We have noted central features of Aristotle’s *metaphysics* above, and as for his *physics* it is clear that this concept meant something much more general to Aristotle than the name suggests today. Aristotle’s fascination with every facet of the empirical world will ensure that the study of movement is not limited to *physical* movement narrowly understood: it will extend to the movements of particular types of things, and, importantly, *animals* and *ourselves qua* spiritual being. Thus this fascination with the empirical will be continued into his *Philosophy of Spirit*, which divides into theoretical (*De Anima* and other psychological treatises) and practical parts, the latter dividing into ethics

¹⁹ This conception of sensuous qualities Hegel discusses in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* as simple positivities related only to themselves and so “indifferent to one another, each ... on its own and free from the others”. G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A. V. Miller (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), §113. Allan Silverman argues for a conception of sensuous objects in Plato as constituted by bundles of mutually indifferent *trope-like* proto-properties in *The Dialectic of Essence: A Study of Plato’s Metaphysics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2002), p. 21.

²⁰ Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, § 114.

(*Nichomachean Ethics*, *Magna Moralia*, and the *Eudemian Ethics*) and politics (*Politics*). As his speculative *logic* is at the core of all these areas of his philosophy, however, we will concentrate on this to try to appreciate what for Hegel represented Aristotle's surpassing of Plato in the realm of dialectic.

We might learn something of the complex relation between the *logics* governing the respective dialectics of Plato and Aristotle from a passage in the Michelet edition of the *Lectures* where Hegel quotes from Aristotle's *Categories* when discussing his logical *Organon*. Here Aristotle, discussing "things that are said" effectively distinguishes two different underlying conceptions of predication—the distinction between predicates that are "in" the subject and those that can be "said of" the subject.²¹ Hegel renders the "said of" relation thus: "There are determinations (*onta*), that are said of a subject (*kath hypokeimenou legetai*), but are in no subject, as 'man' [said of] a determinate man, but is not in a determinate man" (H&S 2: 212 [M 2: 358]).²² A suggestion by E. J. Lowe as to the general point may help here: while, say, the existence of the universal *doghood* relies on the existence of *particular dogs*, it will not rely upon *any specific* dog, say, Fido or Rover, that one could point to as *this dog*.²³

Following Socrates, Plato, we might say, had been too quick to pass from such imperfect empirical instances as Fido or Rover to the idea of *doghood* itself, while in contrast the "thinking empiricist" Aristotle had assigned a more positive place to the consideration of such specific instances. This was reflected in their different logics. Plato had proposed the process of "division" or "*diarexis*" by which a genus concept

²¹ Aristotle, *Categories*, in H. B. Cooke (ed. and trans.), *Loeb Classical Library, Aristotle I*, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996), ch. v, 3b18-22.

²² This dualism of "is in" and "is said of" conceptions of predication, which reappears in Hegel's own dialectical logic in his *Science of Logic* as the difference between "inherence" and "subsumption". Hegel, *Science of Logic*, Volume Two, Section One, Chapter 2, "The Judgment".

²³ E. J. Lowe, *The Four-Category Ontology: A Metaphysical Foundation for Natural Science* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 36.

is divided into different species concepts by adding differentiating features, as when humans, say, are distinguished from other animals by the feature of their *rationality*. As Plato thinks of “the idea” as what is ultimately real, this descent from the idea to its particular instantiations will be understood as a type of gradual *privation* of reality. Moreover, the process of division shies away from empirical reality in another sense: the divider passes from, say, *generic* doghood to more particular *species* of doghood, but not to *specific actual dogs*, which are not arrived at by division. Aristotle’s “said of” / “is in” distinction, however, signals a distinction between things and their statuses *as* instances of species. While the universal *doghood* can be *said of* Rover, it is equally said of Fido. It should not be thought of as “in” Rover *as* Rover himself, in the way that, say, Rover’s particular colour is “in” Rover. What are properly “in” Rover are akin to what Plato had treated as particular property instances “bundled” together in objects,²⁴ but for Aristotle such properties are conceived as “in” something that they cannot exist without—the *substantial form* of the individual that the Medievals later spoke of as its “*thisness*” (“*haecceity*”, as opposed to its “whatness” or “*quiddity*”). And reflection upon empirically given objects makes it apparent that a *thisness*’s possession of one determinate quality *excludes* its simultaneous possession of that property’s *contrary*. (The *redness* of an object can coexist with its roundness but not its *blueness* just as its *roundness* cannot coexist with its *squareness*.) With this, those property instances no longer “indifferent” to each other, as they seem to be in Plato’s “bundles”. Aristotle thus affirms a peculiar logical form that applies to these individual empirical substances—a claim effectively repeated a century ago by the logician W. E. Johnson who wanted to separate the genus–species relation, derived from Platonic *diarexis*, from what he described as the “determinable–determinate” structure of a thing’s *qualitative* properties.²⁵ In this way Aristotle’s logic instantiates a capacity to grasp the relations of negation that exist *among* empirical properties,

²⁴ See above, footnote 19.

²⁵ W. E. Johnson, *Logic* (Dover, 1964), vol. I, 9–17 and Ch. XI. For Johnson that: “the several colours are put in the same group and given the same name colour, *not* on the ground of any partial agreement, but on the ground of the special kind of difference which distinguishes one colour from another; whereas no such difference exists between a colour and a shape”. *Ibid.*, vol I, p. 176.

allowing what Hegel took to be a dialectical progression at the level of empirical phenomena that was missing in Plato. Nevertheless, the underlying substantial form itself will be *without* negation—a limiting consequence of Aristotle’s methodological “empiricism”.

Underneath the quasi-empiricist appearance of Aristotle’s *formal* logic, Hegel thus sees a properly speculative content that is continuous with the *concrete* conceptions of logical structure developed later by the *neo-Platonists*.²⁶ But the limitations of Aristotle’s dialectic will only become obvious with the emergence of a type of thought giving a more explicit role to the category of “singularity” [*Einzelheit*], that Hegel sees emerging with the Stoics.

5. Post-Scientific Philosophy and the Decline of the Polis: Stoicism, Skepticism, Neo-Platonism and Christianity

From a contemporary perspective aspects of Aristotle’s treatment of empirical judgments can look unreflectively egocentric. While the propositional content of a judgment, if true, now tends to be thought of as *eternally* or *timelessly* true, this was not Aristotle’s view: “‘He sits’ may, for instance, be true” says Aristotle, but “if he rises, it then becomes false”.²⁷ While now the bare assertion “this man is sitting” is likely to be understood as short for “this man is sitting *at such and such a time*”—that proposition remaining true when the man later stands, for Aristotle, the belief is complete as it is, and *changes truth value* with time.²⁸ This “presentist” approach to time in fact seems to reflect the generally ego- and geo-centric worldview expressed

²⁶ John N. Martin, *Themes in Neoplatonic and Aristotelian Logic* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004). Hegel’s own logic, with its “concrete universals”, was to owe much to this implicit dynamic logic he saw running below the surface of the *merely* formal logic that is commonly taken from Aristotle’s *Organon*.

²⁷ Aristotle, *Categories*, 4a17-23. See also Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1051b8-18.

²⁸ As A. N. Prior expresses it, “Instead of statements being true and false *at* different times, we have predicates being timeless true or false *of* different times.” Arthur N. Prior, *Time and Modality: Being the John Locke Lectures for 1955-6 delivered in the University of Oxford* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p. 25.

in Aristotelian thought overall—a type of thought that seems irreducibly “terrestrial” in contrast to the “celestial” dimensions of Plato’s thought as it is commonly understood. This was the dimension of Aristotelian thought that would come to be seen as incompatible with science in the early modern period.²⁹

In *this* sense, Aristotle’s theoretical philosophy seems to reflect the collective “at-homeness” that Hegel purports characterizes Greek thought in general in contrast to thought of the east. Thought is *at home* in the midst of the givens of empirical existence, and conceives of its objects in the way they are given in perception.³⁰ Just as with *practical reason*, this attitude will turn out to be incompatible with the “subjective” and “reflective” turn introduced by Socrates, a reflective turn developed within *logic* by the Stoics.³¹

For Hegel, the eclipse of Greek “speculative” philosophy and the move to more formal and abstract, and therefore “eastern”, philosophies like Stoicism and Skepticism was bound up with the historical decline of the democratic life of the Greek polis itself and the loss of Greek *Heimatlichkeit* (LHP 2: 265 [7: 102–3]). Socrates had already represented the emergence of a type of individual, reflective point of view that would ultimately prove incompatible with the form of life found in the Greek polis, and the speculative form of thought articulating it. Stoicism, and later Christianity, would come to give expression to an alienated subjective point of view characteristic of the unfree Roman form of life that replaced that of the polis. But for Hegel, prior to the modern world there would be no *actual* place in either everyday life or in philosophical culture for *non*-alienated versions of the reflective or

²⁹ See, for example, Alexandre Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore, Johns Hopkins Press, 1957).

³⁰ As Hegel points out the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, chapter 2, this type of thinking treats perception [*Wahrnehmung*] as the taking [*nehmen*] of the truth [*Wahrheit*] of things.

³¹ Thus the Stoics, more in line with Plato’s principle of division, held to the principle of bivalence that every judgment must be “eternally” either true or false and held decidedly more “modern” conceptions of the logical structure of judgment.

subjective position that had first emerged with Socrates. One problem was the level of abstraction at which the free individual came to be conceived. In Michelet's edition of the *Lectures*, Hegel, describing the Stoics' abstract conception of the reflective individual subject—the Stoic sage—repeats a saying from Cicero to the effect that nobody can say *who this sage is* (H&S 2: 250–1, 256 [M 2: 395, 401]). The idea of the sage was that of an abstract ideal with no identifiable concrete instantiations, like the idea of perfect *doghood* without a Rover or a Fido. But Hegel's comments clearly signal the later appearance of a *specific concrete* figure who would be the analogue of the otherwise abstract “sage” and who would bring about an historical change in human consciousness. For the *Christians*, *Jesus Christ*, or more properly, *Jesus the Christ*,³² would replace the Stoics' sage—God becoming an actual and identifiable “*this* and (taking) the character of the *this* into the character of the divine concept”. Such an event would be necessary for the development of an idea of which the Greeks were incapable, that “*this* person, each and every person, should be redeemed and eternally blessed” (LPWH396 [351]).

The stories about Christ as “son of God” would form the *content* of Christian philosophy in the Middle Ages, but *qua philosophical content* this would only be thought at the level of *Vorstellungen* representing the historical person, *Jesus*. Overcoming these limitations would require the reconciliation of the categories that could never be reconciled in ancient thought: singular *thisness*, particular *whatness* and universality. Such a reconciliation would be predicated on the religious radicalism of Luther and other Reformers.

³² “Christos” was the ancient Greek equivalent of “messiah” and was literally “the anointed one”. But as with Greek proper names, *Christos* comes with a definite article, *O Christos*. In Hegel's category theory the name itself conflates the “particularity” of a description and the “singularity” (*thisness*) of a proper name. It needs, however, to be integrated with universality, and this would mark the later transition to *protestant* Christianity, *all* humans become *this person* recognized by God.

6. Waiting for Philosophy's Return: Rome and the Middle Ages

As with Greek philosophy, we must understand the philosophy of Rome and the Middle Ages in terms of the historical conditions that had given rise to those forms of thought. The collapse of the Greek polis had broken that nexus between individual and the community in which that individual could recognize him or herself as a member, and an individualistic but alienated self-conception in which one's identity was now bound up more with the contents of an "inner" life had emerged. Hegel sees this as increasingly reflected in the post-scientific philosophical movements of Stoicism, Skepticism and Epicureanism and, finally medieval Catholicism. In Catholicism in particular this gave rise to a type of anti-naturalism that ran contrary to the earlier Greek attitude to the actual world. Hegel lists consequences of the rise of this form of Christianity that would further undermine the basis of the type of social life found in ancient Greece. Christianity ruled out slavery—clearly a plus for freedom, but at the same time destroying the cultured life of the Athenians on which philosophy had depended (LPWH, 396 [432–3]). Among the casualties here was the type of "beautiful ethical life" found in those particular "plastic" Greek individuals like Socrates, Pericles and Thucydides—individuals who had worked on themselves, *producing* themselves like great works of art, by shaping themselves into characters whose features expressed some underlying "idea" (LHP 2: 129 [7:133]). Most dramatically, however, Greek at-homeness in the world was replaced by "the establishment of two worlds"—Christianity's imagined *other world* stepping in to fill the void as source of an individual's self-conception, consolidating the break initiated by Socrates between "the unconscious unity of my will with the state" that had been essential for Greek democracy. In Rome, political domination by a single person, the emperor—"the god of the world" (LPWH, 451 [424])—now characterized the temporal realm motivating a fearful oriental "flight" to the imagined *other world*. All this, however, provided a type of worldly, if alienated, support for the *idea* of the reflective subjectivity first introduced by Socrates.

Hegel portrays Rome and, in particular, Alexandria as places where "the principles of East and West coalesce in virtue of conquest" (LPWH, 452 [426]), the abstract singularity that we have seen in pythagorean numericism and the Stoic

philosophy that bloomed in Rome becoming combined with the speculative philosophy of Plato and Aristotle to produce the neo-Platonism of Plotinus and Proclus. For its philosophical foundations, the early Christians would look to neo-Platonism from which they would forge a framework for their doctrines, especially that of the Holy Trinity, but this philosophy was now pressed into the service of an “external” content, the freedom of the earlier philosophy shackled by its being limited to providing *justification* for this content. This would result in neither the Church Fathers nor the later scholastics making any real progress in philosophy *as philosophy*, giving to philosophy in the Middle Ages the type of monotonous *lack* of dialectical development that, Hegel thinks, characterizes all philosophical culture between Greek speculative philosophy and the philosophy of modernity.

Rome had come to an end with an “onrush of foreign people” making up the great migrations of the early Middle Ages, and central to Hegel’s narrative are those Nordic and eastern barbarians called “*Germanen*” (LPWH, 460 [438]). The situation resulting from the ways in which these Germanic tribes assimilated what was left of the crumbling Greek and Roman cultures can be starkly contrasted with the ways in which the *earlier* Greeks had transformed foreign religious and cultural material to create something new. Rather than recognizing themselves in something newly created from materials derived from elsewhere, the new nations found themselves burdened by this richly developed foreign material (H&S 3: 47 [M 3: 130–1]). While the imposition of Christian spirituality on the barbarian people was necessary to discipline them out of their barbarous state, the price to be paid for this would be the shackling of free thought that had emerged in the polis. For its part, the new Christian church, which had been founded on other-worldly principles, soon became dragged into the power-plays of “worldly existence”, effectively imposing the “rule of passion” onto the church’s *supposedly* spiritual rule, leaving these spiritual and worldly realms “mutually estranged”. This period thus witnesses a split between “two kingdoms” operative on a number of levels. First, the rules of emperor and pope are estranged, but there also arises an *internal split* within the life of the Church itself between its external practices and the inner subjective life of its followers—a split that would burst the Church asunder in the Reformation. Philosophically, this was to be expressed in the “Cartesian” split between body and mind that would seem so natural

in the early modern period.

In line with these splits, Hegel portrays Medieval Catholicism as dominated by the performance of “external acts” directed against one’s own sinning external nature, such as in fasting, pilgrimaging and so on. The great contribution of Catholic dogma to philosophy had been that of the Holy Trinity resulting from an amalgam of Christian and neo-Platonic thought, but the figure of the Trinity itself provides Hegel with a way of periodizing the history of philosophy from a theological point of view. Thus he notes that the Medieval period is marked by the “lordship of the Son, not of the Spirit” (LHP 3: 39 [9: 28]): “the Son, the mediator, is known as *this man*; this is the identity of spirit with God for the heart as such” (H&S 3: 57–8 [M 3: 141]). Clearly, we are to think of the “Oriental” religion of the Old Testament as the “dominion of the Father”, with God conceived as a type of other-worldly Patriarch-King. The conception of Jesus of Nazareth as divine, of course, signals that the gap between the Patriarch and his creations has been somehow bridged. From a philosophical point of view, Jesus conceived as the Christ represents a further step in the change in the world-spirit that had started with Socrates’ internalization of morality. “The reflection of consciousness into itself begins here [with Socrates], the knowledge of the consciousness of self as such, that it is real existence—or that God is a Spirit, or again, in a cruder and more sensuous form, that God takes human form” (H&S 1: 407–8 [M 2: 63]).

But the period of the “dominion of the Son” would contrast with the later period of the *domination of the Spirit*, a period which will only properly commence with the Reformation. Prior to that, the fact that “the Christ” was exclusively identified with a particular historical being—*this man*, Jesus—would reflect the limitations of the excessively concrete and “external” nature of Medieval Catholicism along with the (still Greek) categorial nature of scholastic thought, in which “thisness” was not extended universally. Such fixation on the external would be reflected in the medieval search for traces of the historical Christ in the Crusades as well as the honoring of the Host—the consecrated bread and wine as body and blood of Christ—“as an external thing”. For Luther, however “all externality with reference to me is banished, including the externality that was present in the sacramental host. Only in

communion and in faith am I connected with something divine” (LHP 3: 76–7 [8: 63]). In this new form of Christianity, “the person must himself or herself feel penitence and remorse; the heart must be filled with a genuinely holy spirit. ... Within the inmost aspect of the human being, therefore, a place was posited that is all that matters and where a person is present only with self and with God. I must be at home in my conscience [*Im Gewissen muss ich zu Hause sein*]” (LHP 3: 76–7 [8: 63]). Effectively, the protestant move to finding the *truth* of religion within consciousness would repeat, but now within a *universalized* Christian culture, the world-historical event first introduced within the Athenian polis by Socrates, and the changes brought about would be just as great. Ultimately the outcome of this would be re-emergence of scientific speculative philosophy, but now shed of the restricting relation to an external sensuousness as well as the failure to mediate the universal and the singular that had compromised its classical form.³³

³³ I am grateful to Dean Moyar and Karin de Boer for helpful comments on an earlier draft of this chapter.