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## Chapter 9

### *Systematicity and Experience: Hegel and the Function of the History of Philosophy*

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Is there a place for the history of philosophy within the Hegelian system? To pose the question in this way is already to acknowledge that the function of the history of philosophy, for Hegel, can only properly be measured by its standing with respect to the systematic character of reason. But this means that what is at stake here is nothing less than the relationship between the historicity and systematicity of philosophical thought and it is precisely with this problem that this essay is fundamentally concerned.

Now the first edition of the *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (1817) would appear to answer our question quite plainly. Despite the fact that Hegel had already begun to lecture on the subject both in Jena and in Heidelberg in the preceding years, the history of philosophy simply occupies no place in the body of this work. One might assume that the reason for this is that the history of philosophical reflection is, at its core at least, concerned solely with the merely contingent, the external, the finite, the domain of empirical singularity: that it is, in short, like the other disciplines excluded from the system proper, merely positive and that, as such, it bears no intrinsic relationship to the sphere of philosophical thought, the domain of the necessary, the internal, the infinite, the universal, the realm of what Hegel called genuine science.<sup>1</sup>

And yet, throughout the set of lecture courses Hegel devoted to the history of philosophy in his mature period, he consistently held that "philosophy is a system in development, and this is the history of philosophy."<sup>2</sup> Philosophy is unique, says Hegel. It has a history, like other areas of inquiry,



but its history is not merely a succession of arbitrary events. It is instead, like the histories of art and religion, a rational process, a movement of formation. But what is being forged in and through this development is not a mere representation of truth, as it is in the realms of art and religion, but rather truth itself. Hegel thus claims that philosophy is distinct from these other spheres in that its history is itself the system of science in development. Now, is this claim to be dismissed as some aberrant position Hegel maintained in his lectures but was never able to justify to his own satisfaction and thus never defended in his published writings? Or is this an articulation of some esoteric doctrine reserved solely for the most committed disciples? Or might this statement perhaps, despite appearances to the contrary, in fact express the central insight of Hegel's published work?<sup>3</sup>

I will argue in what follows that the history of philosophy, for Hegel, is indeed the development in the order of time of the system of philosophy and that it is precisely as such that it fulfills a function Hegel maintains is necessary for a distinct form of justification of the system. Specifically, I will show that Hegel distinguished two basic requirements that the system of philosophical science had to meet to satisfy the demands of reason: first, it had to provide its own justification of itself from within itself, and, secondly, the system had to demonstrate that it accords with actuality. The former, which can be called the speculative proof, is fulfilled by the intrinsic circularity of the system of philosophical sciences. The latter, what I shall call the experiential proof (Hegel refers to this in the lecture courses as the "empirical proof"), is preeminently fulfilled by the history of philosophy. In what follows, I will demonstrate that this justificatory function for the history of philosophy is already present in the first edition of the *Enzyklopädie* (1817), but that it only becomes prominent with the revisions and additions Hegel made for the second edition (1827).

Hegel believed that, for the history of philosophy to fulfill the role just outlined, a solution had to be achieved to the fundamental dilemma that stands at the very core of this science. If the ultimate object of philosophy is truth, an object at once both timeless and eternally valid, then why does the historical record present us with series of doctrines constantly succeeding and disagreeing with one another? How is the oneness of truth to be reconciled with the diversity of actual philosophical systems? Do all such systems have equal value and equal weight? Or are they all simply ill-begotten mistakes of the past? In short, we could ask, is the history of philosophy a history of mere opinion or is it a history of error? Hegel argues that this problem is a result of a fundamentally impoverished conception of truth and it is precisely the overcoming of this conception that constitutes, for him, the philosophical challenge posed by the history of philosophy.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, he believed it was this problem that properly determined the relationship between

the system of philosophical science and the discipline of the history of philosophy itself.

The aim of what follows is thus twofold: (1) to identify the function of the history of philosophy in relationship to the system of philosophical science, and (2) to understand specifically how the historical character of this discipline uniquely enables it to serve this role. I will begin by developing an account of the speculative and experiential requirements that reason places on the system of philosophical science. The basis for this will be a comparison of the first and second editions of the Introduction to the *Enzyklopädie*. Its purpose is to show, from Hegel's published writings, how his understanding of the history of philosophy and its relationship to the system of philosophical science is framed by the problem of justification. I will then turn to the challenge posed by the history of philosophy proper, showing how in his lectures Hegel attempted to resolve the contradiction embodied in the concept of a history of truth. I will conclude by demonstrating how this resolution determined, for Hegel, the relationship between the speculative and experiential proofs of the system.

#### *Circularity and History: The Introduction of 1817*

Hegel's most complete account of the concept of the history of philosophy in the writings of his mature period is to be found in the revisions he made for the Introduction to the second edition of the *Enzyklopädie* (1827). There he writes, "the same development of thinking that is presented in the history of philosophy is presented in philosophy itself, but freed from that historical externality, purely in the element of thinking."<sup>5</sup> This statement clearly appears to be a repetition of the claim that Hegel had been making in his lecture courses, identifying the system of philosophy with the history of philosophy. But it would also seem to indicate just as clearly what was only hinted at in that statement, namely that a fundamental distinction exists between these domains. The emergence and development of philosophy in history is its progression in time, what Hegel here calls its occurrence in "external history," but this is quite distinct, he says, from its "unfolding of itself within itself" as a systematic whole, and the inner concreteness and determinacy of the latter is something it achieves precisely insofar as it is freed from the externality of the former. As a result, a rather rigid distinction would seem to be put in place here between the system of reason and its historical development, and as such the history of philosophy would appear, despite the importance Hegel attributed to it, to be denied anything more than a mere cursory function in his thought. However, an examination of the context of this statement suggests otherwise. This can be made clear if

we consider the Introduction as a whole first, focusing upon its initial formulation in the 1817 edition, and then examine more carefully the revisions and additions Hegel introduced in the second edition, especially as he refined the claims he had made concerning the justification of the system itself. I believe it is in this light that the precise function for Hegel of the history of philosophy in relationship to the system can best emerge.

The Introduction to the *Enzyklopädie* is concerned with a problem quite familiar to students of Hegel's work, and it addresses this issue within the context of an equally familiar distinction. The problem is the beginning (*Anfang*) of philosophy. The distinction is that between representation (*Vorstellung*) and genuine science (*Wissenschaft, Erkenntnis*).

Hegel holds that what are generally called sciences (for example disciplines such as mathematics, jurisprudence, and zoology) all have their foundation in the immediacy of the power of representation and as such are able to take the legitimacy of the matters that they investigate for granted. This affords them two quite significant advantages. First, insofar as what they examine is immediately ascertainable—be their object number, law, or animals—the beginning of these sorts of inquiries is never in doubt. They can be, in a word, presupposed as accessible and familiar to all. Accordingly, the justification of such pursuits is always readily available. Secondly, because their object is already given and is thus susceptible to examination, these sorts of inquiries can proceed analytically, uncovering the various defining attributes of the matter under investigation purely through a combination of inspection and experimentation under the guidance of the basic rules of logic. Reaching scientific conclusions thus amounts to nothing other than discovering what is already there in the object. Consequently, neither the validity of engaging in such projects nor the results obtained thereby are ever really in doubt. Representation provides an ever renewable resource for their justification.

Genuine knowledge, and accordingly genuine science, however, cannot be restricted to the domain of representation. It must grasp truth itself, not its mere portrayal. Genuine science must, in short, go beyond the order of representation and it must do so in terms of both its object and its method of elaborating the essential determinations of the various matters it investigates. It thus cannot enjoy the advantages available to inquiries that are erected upon the foundation of representation. Hegel holds philosophy to be just this sort of science. Consequently, neither its object, nor its methodology, nor in turn its results can be validated by the immediacy of their givenness. The norms of evaluation that the science of philosophy must satisfy to justify itself cannot be external to it. Philosophy must be uniquely self-justifying. Reason must set its own standards, and it must itself judge whether it has in fact complied with them, thereby demonstrating its right standing before its

own tribunal. This is what Hegel means when, in the 1817 Introduction, he writes, "its [philosophy's] concept as well as the concept of philosophy itself can only be comprehended within philosophy" (*Enz.* [1817], §4), or in the version of 1827 that "[t]his thinking itself in the philosophical mode of cognition needs to be grasped in its necessity, as well as justified in respect of its ability to become cognizant of the absolute objects. But any insight of this kind is itself philosophical cognition, and therefore it can only fall within philosophy" (*Enz.* [1827], §10). To justify such a system as this thus requires that philosophy be inherently circular. The system must circle back upon itself so as to validate its beginning, its methodology, and, in turn, its completion, the whole it forms.<sup>6</sup> This is what was termed above the speculative proof of the system of philosophical sciences. Having reached this conclusion, Hegel proceeds, in the 1817 edition, to lay out a preliminary account of the nature of philosophy, arguing in particular that philosophy is the science of reason insofar as reason is conscious of its unity with itself in and through that which is other than it, namely being (*Enz.* [1817], §5), and thus that such a science must specify its various moments in and through the necessity of this fundamental self-relation (§6) and thereby form a genuine encyclopedia presenting the systematic totality that is rationality itself (§7).

However, before concluding his preliminary account, Hegel pauses momentarily to consider the relationship of the system he has just proposed to the diverse sorts of enterprises that comprise the history of philosophical reflection. He remarks that it would be a mistake to confuse the system just projected with what had been, at least since Kant, the accepted understanding of a philosophical system, namely, the unity of a manifold of knowledge under a simple fundamental principle. The principle governing a genuine system of philosophical science, such as that elaborated in the Introduction, is unique in that it integrates within itself all other principles, including those that at least initially appear radically opposed to it. Hegel maintains, as evidence in support of this claim, that philosophy "shows this *in itself* and also *in its history*" (*Enz.* [1817], §8 [emphases added]). The former, of course, falls under the general task of the self-justification of the system. With regard to the latter, however, Hegel says that what appear in history to be different, even opposed, philosophies are only "one philosophy at different stages of development" (*Enz.* [1817], §8). He notes, in the Remark to this paragraph, that the existence of so many conflicting philosophies is typically used to justify contempt for philosophical reflection itself. He thus links the problem at issue here to the cultural skepticism he cites in the Preface to this edition as one of the factors that has helped cultivate a mood of fundamental indifference to philosophy as a distinctively scientific endeavor (cf. *Enz.* [1817], 5–6).<sup>7</sup> In the Remark, he identifies the root of this problem as an abstract and rigid separation of universality and particularity, invoking in



reply an example that he repeats again in the lecture courses: who, when they've asked for fruit, refuses cherries, pears, and grapes because they are not fruit itself?<sup>8</sup>

These rather tentative formulations obviously served as the immediate predecessors to the more fully articulated claim from the 1827 Introduction with which we began. Hegel nevertheless remains silent here as to the import, if any, of the history of philosophy. And yet, even in this undeveloped condition, these assertions clearly hold open the possibility that the unique systematic character of philosophy can be established in two ways: in itself, that is to say the system can justify itself, and in history, that the temporal course of philosophical exploration can provide its own unique and distinctive validation of the systematic character of philosophy, that all philosophies are but different stages in the development of one philosophical system. What still remains unclear here, however, is, of course, precisely why a demonstration that appealed to the history of philosophy in this way might be needed, what could be the motivation for it, and if it were needed, how it could be successfully carried out.

Now it is this set of problems that makes the revisions and additions Hegel produced for the Introduction in the 1827 edition so important, for it is there that he began fundamentally to rethink the basic problem of the justification required for the system of philosophical science and, in so doing, introduced two distinct norms that reason places upon such a project. As we shall now see, the speculative and experiential proofs flow from these requirements.

#### *Systematicity and Ordinary Consciousness: The Introduction of 1827*

The Introduction of 1827 is certainly concerned, just as the Introduction of 1817 was, with demonstrating that the system of philosophy can only be justified by itself and from within itself, what was called above the speculative proof. But it also introduces a quite different consideration into this preliminary account. Whereas the 1817 Introduction had been focused almost exclusively, with the exception of the brief remarks discussed above, on establishing the necessarily circular character of the system, that is to say with the speculative proof of the system, the matter at issue in the 1827 Introduction is primarily the problem of the relationship between philosophical science and experience, what Hegel calls here, retrieving a concept that had played such an important role in the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, "ordinary consciousness" (Enz. [1827], §4), and it is precisely in the context of justifying the system before the touchstone of actuality that he returns to the relationship between the historicity and systematicity of the science of philosophy.

The locus of the problem has to do with the objects with which philosophy is concerned. Hegel initially defines philosophy here as "a thinking consideration (*denkende Betrachtung*) of objects" (Enz. [1827], §2). This leads him into a discussion of the nature of these objects and he notes that, although thought is the defining feature of human beings, and that as such everything that is human is so as a result of thought itself, the objects that are most at issue for us do not appear in the form of thoughts, but rather are given precisely in and through feeling, intuition, and imagination. The fundamental problems that philosophy seeks to investigate do not initially present themselves in the form of concepts.<sup>9</sup> They are instead felt, intuited, and imagined; in short, they are, says Hegel, matters that present themselves to us in and through representation.

However, rather than simply invoking the distinction between genuine science and representation, as he had in the 1817 Introduction, Hegel here lingers over this problem, recognizing that it presents a genuine obstacle to understanding the systematic character of philosophical science. In particular, he focuses on the peculiar nature of the philosophical mode of knowing and acknowledges that the need for such a standpoint must not only be awakened, but justified as well, precisely in relationship to what for Hegel is the highest form of representation, namely religious faith. Consequently, philosophy as a thinking consideration can only be a "thinking over or in accordance with (*Nachdenken*)" (Enz. [1827], §5) the objects of fundamental concern as they present themselves in and through our feelings, our intuitions, our images, our opinions. Thus the content of philosophy is the whole arena of what humans produce as both their inner and outer world, and this, Hegel says, is nothing other than "actuality (*Wirklichkeit*)," which, of course, as encountered by consciousness, is "experience (*Erfahrung*)" (Enz. [1827], §6). Hegel thus concludes that since philosophical cognition and ordinary consciousness are but two ways of confronting the same object, namely actuality, and, in particular, since the former at least initially would seem in some sense to depend on the latter, as a thinking-after, philosophy must necessarily accord with that which is experienced in and through ordinary consciousness; as Hegel says, "its [philosophy's] correspondence (*Übereinstimmung*) with actuality and experience is necessary," claiming that this correspondence stands as an "external touchstone (*äubern Prüfstein*) for the truth of a philosophy" (Enz. [1827], §6).

Hegel is careful to note though that this requirement is not merely some sort of appeal to brute experience as the ultimate arbiter of philosophical truth. The consideration of the relationship between philosophy and ordinary consciousness clearly places a significantly different demand on the system of philosophical sciences, but in so doing, it does not require that the science of philosophy be justified as a fundamentally empirical discipline.

Hegel is not here invoking some form of a simple empiricist criterion. Three points make this clear. First, the concept of experience (*Erfahrung*), for Hegel, is not restricted, of course, to the immediacy of the senses, but includes as well the distinct objects of the ethical and religious domains: freedom, spirit, and God (*Enz.* [1827], §8). The content of experience is as wide then as the various modes of encountering made possible in and through representation. Secondly, Hegel holds, of course, that actuality is not identical with whatever appears, the insignificant, the contingent, or merely transient. It refers instead to the reciprocal interrelation of things that is necessary for them to be what they are. Accordingly, actuality must be taken here in what Hegel calls an “emphatic sense” (*Enz.* [1827], §6A), i.e., as designating the essential interdependence of things. Thirdly, and most importantly, experience itself requires that for something to be accepted and held as true, i.e., held to be valid, it must be an object in and through which reason can come into relationship with itself; that is to say, it must be, as Hegel puts it, a content that reason can find “in oneness and in union with the certainty of its own self” (*Enz.* [1827], §7A).

Consequently, the requirement that philosophy accord with actuality means that for the system of philosophy to be found to be in right standing in the court of reason, it must fulfill a twofold burden: on the one hand, it must show that the objects with which it deals are grasped in such a way that their essential characteristics and necessary systematic interrelations are in agreement with the way in which reason experiences them in actuality, and, on the other, it must show that in and through the systematic presentation of these objects, reason is able to bring itself into union with itself. As Hegel says, the aim of this is “through the cognition of this correspondence to bring about the reconciliation (*Versöhnung*) of self-conscious reason with existent reason, i.e., with actuality” (*Enz.* [1827], §6). These burdens constitute what I have called the experiential proof that reason demands of the system of philosophical sciences. And the elaboration of this norm is the fruit of the revisions and additions found in the Introduction of 1827. Now it is precisely this advance that leads Hegel to expand and reformulate his earlier statements concerning the history of philosophy, and it is in these revisions that the special function of such a history is revealed.

In fact, it is in light of these considerations that Hegel returns, in the 1827 edition, to a problem that had been of central concern throughout the writings of the Jena period, but that had nevertheless gone missing in the Introduction of 1817: the need (*Bedürfnis*) for philosophy itself. Hegel defines this as the desire of spirit to relate itself to itself precisely in terms of its highest manifestation, namely in the form of thinking (cf. *Enz.* [1827], §11). Now although philosophy essentially arises out of this need, the condition that prompts its historical emergence and subsequent development is, Hegel

claims, nothing other than experience itself. Since this designates a region that is not properly speaking within the sphere of philosophy, that is to say within the realm of thought, experience cannot be the sought-for beginning (*Anfang*) for philosophy, but only what Hegel calls its “starting point (*Ausgangspunkte*)” (*Enz.* [1827], §12). Philosophy is therefore a constant striving to move beyond the domain governed by the power of representation, a yearning that raises itself out of this condition so as to enable thought to come into relationship with itself. And yet, it is precisely a consideration of the course of this coming to be, i.e., the course of philosophy’s historical development, that fulfills the burdens of the experiential proof set forth above.

Hegel indicates this by distinguishing between two ways of understanding the history of philosophy. On the one hand, considered simply as a series of successive temporal events, the coming to be that is the history of philosophy could only possess the defining mark of mere immediacy and externality, contingency. Such a presentation would thus portray the philosophical systems and the principles upon which they are erected as an arbitrary collection, a mere aggregate; it would provide these systems with what Hegel calls here “a kind of mere diversity (*Verschiedenheit*)” (*Enz.* [1827], §13) and, as a result, it would only serve to feed the contempt and skeptical indifference that he believes plague the pursuit of genuine science. However, when, on the other hand, this same coming to be is understood as a necessary formative process born of the desire of reason itself, then it demonstrates the inherent oneness of philosophy and shows the diversity just exposed to be nothing other than “stages of its [the one philosophy’s] formation” (*Enz.* [1827], §13), and the variety of conflicting principles so prevalent in history to be “only branches of one and the same whole” (*Enz.* [1827], §13).

The proximate cause of Hegel’s appeal to the history of thought is thus the threat of skepticism that the apparent diversity of the historical record poses. A wholly circular justification is unable to deal satisfactorily with this sort of threat, at least directly, on its own terms, and thus a genuinely scientific history of philosophy must be advanced so as to overcome the challenge posed by such randomness and conflict. In accomplishing this, such a history establishes in turn the distinctive systematic character of philosophy itself. The history of philosophy thus shows that the intrinsic self-related whole, the mutual and necessary interdependence of things that constitutes what reason holds to be the defining mark of a truly rational totality, is discernable under the apparent transience of the externality of mere temporal succession. Given this, reason is able to be in union with itself in and through the domain of temporal exteriority, the realm of representation. The function of such a history then is clear. It is nothing less than the reconciliation of reason as it is in itself with reason as it exists in actuality. The motive



underlying it is the requirement that the system correspond to actuality, that it accord with experience. And to do that the challenge of skepticism must be overcome. This then is the function of the history of philosophy for Hegel, and consequently it is the experiential proof reason requires to establish the inherent rationality of its systematic presentation.<sup>10</sup>

Hegel's reformulations in 1827 of the claims about the history of philosophy made in the Introduction of 1817 thus mark a significant advance in at least his public account of the role of such a history. But beyond the conclusions just reached, what is of particular note is that what Hegel had specified in the 1817 Introduction as being the sole role for the history of philosophy, namely the demonstration that what appear to be various and opposed philosophical systems are but different stages in the development of one philosophy, is broadened in the 1827 version. It now includes the proof that all philosophical principles are but branches of one whole, that knowledge as such forms a systematic totality, a function he had clearly ascribed exclusively to the circular nature of philosophy in 1817. In short, our analysis suggests that, with regard to the function of the history of philosophy, Hegel held in 1817 to a developmental thesis, whereas by 1827 he had come to embrace what would appear to be a much richer organic position concerning this discipline.

But does this mean, then, that the distinct requirements for a speculative and for an experiential proof can be collapsed in the history of philosophy? Could such a history then, properly constructed, accomplish both tasks? What is the relationship between the experiential and speculative proofs? The answer to these questions lies in the lectures Hegel devoted to the history of philosophy in the period between the first and second editions of the *Enzyklopädie*, and, in particular, in the resolution offered there to the fundamental dilemma at the heart of such a history.

#### *Truth, Time, and Necessity: The Lectures of 1820*

It will be best to begin this discussion by recalling the antinomy posed by the history of philosophy. If the ultimate object of philosophy is truth, and this is at once both timeless and eternally valid, then why does the historical record present us with series of doctrines constantly succeeding and disagreeing with one another? Are these but so many equally valid opinions, or so many equally invalid errors? If they are neither, then how is the oneness and eternity of truth to be reconciled with the diversity of philosophical systems? How can we even speak of a historical formation of truth? Moreover, how could such a process as this possess any sort of necessity to the sequence of events that comprises it? Most simply, how is the legitimacy of the history

of philosophy to be established in the face of the skeptical challenge posed precisely by this history?

Hegel addresses these questions in some form or other in all the available material from the various lecture courses on the history of philosophy. However, Hegel's manuscript for the Introduction to the lecture course of 1820 demands our special attention.<sup>11</sup> There Hegel states that the key to resolving the contradiction at issue is that "the philosophical knowledge of what both truth and what philosophy are allows us to know this diversity itself as such in a totally different sense than that in accordance with the abstract opposition of truth and falsity" (GW, 18, 44/V 6, 20 [15a]). The key to our problem then is clear: we must gain the philosophical knowledge both of what truth is and of what philosophy is. As we shall see, this resolution will necessarily lead us back to the question of the relationship between the experiential and the speculative proofs of the system.

What then is this philosophical knowledge about truth and about philosophy itself? And how can this knowledge reconcile the oneness and eternity of truth with the historical diversity of philosophical systems? Hegel's answer revolves around the concepts of concreteness and necessity.

Hegel argues that the threat of skepticism arises prompted by the diversity of philosophical systems, as the result of an abstract conception of truth. The claim that truth is one, that it is an invariant identity, is certainly correct, but it is nonetheless a wholly vacuous and formalistic conception. What it fails to capture, for Hegel, is precisely the inherent concreteness of truth.

To be concrete is to be determinate, to possess specificity and density, to have depth, richness, and fullness. It is to be, in a phrase, a singular articulated whole. Now the concreteness of a concept can be achieved in two ways for Hegel. A concept could be contrasted with, or, more properly, opposed to some other concept such that each of the opposed relata depends on the other for its own identity. This is the primary concern of the philosophical science of logic. However, a concept could also become concrete by being embodied in some particular substance. It would appear, at least initially, as it does to ordinary consciousness, that the latter form of gaining determinacy would be a richer source of concreteness than the former. Hegel, of course, argues that they are in fact mutually dependent. The concreteness that results from conceptual distinction enables the intrinsic identity of a concept to emerge precisely in its mutual dependence on that concept specifically opposed to it. This in itself, to be sure, still remains abstract, a mere empty universality. Thus, for it to be more determinate, a concept and that to which it is opposed must both be embodied in that which is opposed to universality as a whole, namely the domain of particularity. But the determinacy possessed by such things in the order of being depends precisely

on the categorial determinacy of the concepts they embody, and the determinacy of the categorial, the universal, in turn, itself depends on its being embodied in and through that which is other than it, namely the particular. As a result, the dependent opposition, both of concepts with respect to one another and of the universal with respect to the particular, thus gives to each the concreteness they require. Hegel therefore defines concreteness as the union of universality and particularity in the singularity of fully determinate actuality, or as he says in the lecture course, "something is concrete that contains in itself not only its own one immediate determination, but its own other as well" (GW, 18, 47/V 6, 23 [16b]).

Hegel draws two conclusions from this line of argumentation. First, the inherent concreteness of truth means this concept must be embodied in the domain of particularity, and this can be nothing other than the order of contingency, the realm of history, the sphere of the temporal. Truth, the object of philosophy, must appear then in the domain of semblance (*Schein*). Secondly, the concreteness of truth also means that it bears an essential relation to that which is other than it, namely falsity. As Hegel has shown, this conceptual opposition, in the order of the universal, must become actual, i.e., embodied in the domain of the particular. At the conceptual level, truth on its own is insufficient, as is falsity. Each in itself lacks what it requires for it to be itself, i.e., each suffers negativity. Accordingly, truth and falsity each bear an essential need to be in relationship to that which opposes it and this need to become determinate in and through opposition must itself become actual. This is what Hegel means when he says that "the true, thus determinate in itself, has the drive (*Trieb*) to develop itself" (GW, 18, 47/V 6, 24 [17a]). Consequently, because truth is concrete, it must appear in the domain of history, and this appearance must be a course moved by the drive to develop in and through the opposition between truth and falsity. The concreteness of truth thus entails its historical formation and the history of philosophy is nothing other than a record of its course.

However, a rather formidable problem arises at this juncture. To demonstrate that truth must develop in the order of the temporal is not yet to say that there is an intrinsic necessity to this development. Hegel claims that the conflictual nature of the historical embodiment of truth guarantees only that there must be succeeding stages in its occurrence in actuality, that the generative force of such history is the "drive to develop" endemic to the concept of truth itself. But this does not entail that the temporal succession will follow a necessary path, that it will be a rational process, that it will, in short, be a movement of progressive development towards some ultimate aim. Nothing within the domain of time, in fact, could establish that the succession of philosophical systems will conform to any sort of necessity other than the simple sequential ordering provided by time itself. And yet,

Hegel tells us, reason requires not only that truth appear in history, and that this appearance be conflictual, it also demands that the temporal order obey the necessity of development that governs the order of conceptual progression. Only then could such a history show itself to be rational, rather than a mere random movement of constant battle between truth and falsity. Only then would the contradiction at the core of the history of philosophy have finally been resolved. But if the establishment of such necessity cannot be produced from the order of time, how can it be shown?

In answering this question, Hegel uncovers a dependence that he argues must be operative in the construction of any sort of scientific history. "There must from the start," he tells us, "be a rational belief (*vernünftiger Glaube*) that contingency (*Zufall*) does not govern human affairs; and it is the matter of philosophy to know that so far as its own appearance in history is historical, this is only determined through the Idea" (GW, 18, 51/V 6, 29 [20a]). This belief incorporates all the claims that have been operative in the resolution of the antinomy of the history of philosophy: that truth is inherently concrete, that as such it has a drive to develop, and that the course of such a succession is governed by the necessity of conceptual development. As a result, its justification cannot be accomplished by appeal to the domain of history itself. Its justification is precisely the task of the science of philosophy. It is a rational belief to the extent that philosophy is able to establish its validity independently of any appeal to experience. This assumes that philosophy is itself capable of being wholly self-justifying. This then is why Hegel said that the philosophical knowledge about what philosophy is, and not just what truth is, is the key to resolving the contradiction at issue. And it is this recognition—that the history of philosophy rests on a belief that no discipline within the order of representation can establish—that ultimately determines, for Hegel, the relationship between the experiential and speculative proofs of the system.

### Conclusion

Let us return now to the question with which we began by recalling the claim that served as our point of departure: "the same development of thinking that is presented in the history of philosophy is presented in philosophy itself, but freed from that historical externality, purely in the element of thinking" (Enz. [1827], §14). The context that we have been able to reconstitute for this statement teaches two basic lessons.

The first is that although the history of philosophy indeed operates in the domain of externality, it nevertheless serves a quite crucial and special function within Hegel's thought. It is the system's experiential proof. It is



nothing less than a testing and validation of the systematicity of reason precisely in the domain of representation, in the order of time. It demonstrates that the system of science accords with actuality, the “external touchstone.” But why would a self-justifying system require such a proof? Our study has shown that the need for such a demonstration arises precisely as a result of the cultural skepticism concerning the very project of a scientific philosophy. Given that this phenomenon is rooted in an appeal to the apparent irrationality of the history of human inquiry, only a refutation of this appearance from within the domain of semblance can adequately alleviate such doubt and, in so doing, establish the very possibility of such a project. A genuinely rational history of philosophy thus justifies reason’s systematic character before the court of ordinary consciousness, and it does so in a way that no other histories could do, neither those of art, nor those of religion. For only the scientific history of philosophy is the history of the necessary formation of thought, and only such a history as this could reconcile reason as it is most fundamentally, i.e., as thought, with reason as it exists.

Nonetheless, despite these important achievements, we must heed this study’s second lesson: that the speculative and the experiential must not be confused. Only the system’s circularity, the self-justification of reason, can ultimately establish the systematic character of reason to the satisfaction of reason itself. The experiential proof is only possible under the governance of the system, only the system can establish the rational belief upon which the history of philosophy stands, and, as such, it of necessity presupposes the speculative proof of the system. *Nachdenken*, as Hegel reminds us, must always rest upon *spekulatives Denken* (cf. *Enz.* [1827], §9). Thus, when the system finally does circle back on itself, reason’s most basic demand—that it become its own object—is met. This movement, as Hegel says, “finds itself already completed, when at its conclusion philosophy grasps its own concept, i.e., it only looks back (*zurücksieht*) on its knowledge (*Wissen*)” (*Enz.* [1827], §573). For this to occur is for thought to unite itself to the process of knowing, in and through which it becomes determinate. Philosophy’s looking back on itself is not philosophy’s grasping of its own heritage, its own history, but rather thought’s looking back onto its path of formation, and, for Hegel, this is nothing other than the system of concepts that form philosophical science itself.

What then is the relationship of the history of philosophy to the system of philosophical science? The calm and deliberate time in Berlin may not really have been so far away from the turbulent and explosive days of Jena. The history of philosophy stands perhaps in the same place as the *Phänomenologie des Geistes*: the path of experience is the way to science that must itself already be science.

## Notes

1. Cf. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1817), ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Klaus Grotzsch, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 13 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 2000), § 10A [Anmerkung]. All further references to this work are included in the text designated as ‘*Enz.* [1817]’ followed by the appropriate paragraph number, or, where necessary, the appropriate page number.

2. For this claim, see Hegel’s manuscript for the introduction to the lectures he delivered on this topic in Berlin in 1820: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungsmanuskripte II (1816–1831)*, ed. Walter Jaeschke, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 18 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1995), 48 [Ms. 1820, 18a], *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie. Teil 1. Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie. Orientalische Philosophie*, ed. Pierre Garnion and Walter Jaeschke, *Vorlesungen. Ausgewählte Nachschriften und Manuskripte*, Bd. 6 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1994), 25 [Ms. 1820, 18a]. All further references to this manuscript are included in the text, the former edition, designated as ‘GW 18,’ followed by the latter edition, designated as ‘V 6,’ each followed by the appropriate page number. I also provide the manuscript pagination common to both editions.

For similar statements, see the following student transcripts of the lecture courses: V 6, 25 [Kolleg, 1820–21, 3], 117 [Kolleg, 1819], 220 [Kolleg, 1825–26], & 293–294 [Kolleg, 1827–28].

For an important examination of the various editions and extant manuscripts of these lecture courses, both those included in the *Vorlesungen* edition cited above, as well as those left out, see Dietmar Köhler, “Hegels Vorlesungen über Geschichte der Philosophie. Anmerkungen zur Editionsproblematik,” *Hegel-Studien* 33 (1998): 53–83.

3. For different treatments of Hegel’s account of the place of the history of philosophy within the system of philosophy, see W. H. Walsh, “Hegel on the History of Philosophy,” *History and Theory* Beiheft 5 (1965): 67–82; A. Robert Caponigri, “The Pilgrimage of Truth Through Time: The Conception of the History of Philosophy in G. W. F. Hegel,” in *Hegel and the History of Philosophy*, ed. Joseph J. O’Malley, K. W. Algozin, and Frederick G. Weiss (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1974), 1–20; Remo Bodei, “Die ‘Metaphysik der Zeit’ in Hegels Geschichte der Philosophie,” in *Hegels Logik der Philosophie*, ed. Dieter Henrich and Rolf-Peter Horstmann (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1984), 79–98; Martial Gueroult, *Dianoématique. Bk. I: Histoire de L’histoire de la philosophie, vol. 2: En Allemagne de Leibniz a nos jours* (Paris: Aubier, 1988), 427–465; Félix Duque, “Le temps du logos—Considérations sur la place systématique de l’histoire de la philosophie chez Hegel,” in *Hegel-Jahrbuch 1997. Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophiegeschichte. Erster Teil*, ed. Andreas Arndt, Karol Bal, and Henning Ottmann (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1998), 83–89; and Christophe Bouton, “L’histoire dont les événements sont des pensées: Hegel et l’histoire de la philosophie,” *Revue philosophique de Louvain* 98 (2000): 294–317.

4. For a discussion of several historical and contemporary attempts to resolve this contradiction, see Vittorio Hösle, *Wahrheit und Geschichte. Studien zur Struktur*

der *Philosophiegeschichte unter paradigmatischer Analyse der Entwicklung von Parmenides bis Platon* (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1984).

5. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse* (1827), ed. Wolfgang Bonsiepen and Hans-Christian Lucas, *Gesammelte Werke*, Bd. 19 (Hamburg: Felix Meiner, 1989), §14. All further references to this work are included in the text designated as 'Enz. [1827]' followed by the appropriate paragraph number, or where necessary, the appropriate page number.

6. In both versions, this requirement leads Hegel to note the problematic status of the account of philosophy that he is providing in the Introduction. It can be at best, as he says in the 1817 Introduction, "indeterminate, tentative, and historical" (Enz. [1817], §4), or still more forcefully in the 1827 formulation, "unphilosophical" and as such a mere "tissue of presuppositions, assurances, and argumentations, i.e., of contingent assertions, against which the opposite assurances could be made with the same right" (Enz. [1827], § 10).

For a useful discussion of the concept of circularity in Hegel's work, see Tom Rockmore, *Hegel's Circular Epistemology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1986).

7. In an otherwise penetrating study of Hegel's relationship to skepticism, Michael Forster fails to notice that not only is skepticism, in both its ancient and modern forms, an historical philosophical system—a fact he discusses at great length and quite well—but that it is also Hegel's underlying motive for engaging in a history of philosophy in the first place. See his *Hegel and Skepticism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989).

For examinations of the problem of the self-justification of reason as a response to the threat of skepticism, see Frederick C. Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987); Rolf-Peter Horstmann, *Die Grenzen der Vernunft. Eine Studie zu Zielen und Motiven des Deutschen Idealismus* (Frankfurt am Main: Anton Hain, 1991); and Michael Baur, "The Role of Skepticism in the Emergence of German Idealism," in *The Emergence of German Idealism*, ed. Michael Baur and Daniel O. Dahlstrom (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1999), 63-91.

8. For an overview of the specific intellectual context within which Hegel took up the problem of a history of philosophy, see Rolf-Peter Horstmann, "Selbsterkenntnis der Vernunft. Zu Hegels Verständnis von Philosophiegeschichte," in *Hegel-Jahrbuch 1997. Hegel und die Geschichte der Philosophiegeschichte. Erster Teil*, 46-54. For broader accounts, see Johannes Freyer, *Geschichte der Geschichte der Philosophie im achtzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig: R. Voigtländer, 1911); Lutz Geldsetzer, *Die Philosophie der Philosophiegeschichte im 19. Jahrhundert* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anon Hain, 1968) esp. Part I; Lucien Braun, *Histoire de L'histoire de la philosophie* (Paris: Editions Ophrys, 1973), esp. ch. 5 & 6; and Martial Gueroult, *Dianoématique. Bk. I: Histoire de L'histoire de la philosophie, vol. 2*.

9. Hegel tells us that the matters at issue here are such problems as the nature of the soul, the world, and God, as well as the concerns of ethical conduct and religious conviction.

10. Rockmore in general dismisses what I have called here the experiential proof of the system (cf. *Hegel's Circular Epistemology*, 84-102). Thus, in his account of circular justification and the history of philosophy, he focuses on how this structure differs from or is anticipated by the various accounts of justification given by the other philosophers that Hegel discusses or to which he alludes (cf. ch. V). He therefore never gives serious consideration to the relationship between the inherent circularity of the system and the demand of reason that such a system accord with experience, that historical actuality be shown to be inherently rational.

11. There are two reasons for this: one philological, the other philosophical. Although Hegel never himself published this text, and thus it cannot be accorded the same status as his published writings, it nonetheless is in his own hand and as such must be given preference over the student transcriptions of the oral presentations. Secondly, this text contains Hegel's most precise formulation of his resolution to the contradiction at the core of the history of philosophy.