

31. *Geschichte der Philosophie*, 2 vols., 2nd ed. (München/Basel: E. Reinhardt, 1953).

32. On the latter see, e.g., the studies by Werner Beierwaltes, in particular *Platonismus und Idealismus* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1972).

33. That is the reason I had left it aside in the Italian translation (Milano: Geurini Associati, 1998). A further problem of the book is that it was so strongly interested in the parallels and similarities between the cycles that it almost ignored their differences; the vertical dimension of the spiral was, although theoretically acknowledged, in reality, despite some general remarks, neglected—a fault I have tried to obviate in a later essay “*Was sind die wesentlichen Unterschiede zwischen der antiken und der neuzeitlichen Philosophie?*” in *Philosophiegeschichte und objektiver Idealismus* (München, C.H. Beck, 1996, 13–36). Still, I am now in a much worse position, for I have here at my disposal a few pages for the exposition of a book of almost 800 pages. Many statements will appear ungrounded that perhaps in the book have found a better justification.

34. See G. Gutting, *Pragmatic liberalism and the Critique of Modernity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 191, on the differences between picture and theory (which is analogous to that between type and its articulation with the conceptual tools of one’s time). While, according to Gutting, theories can be confuted by later developments, the basic pictures cannot, since they can always be repropounded in the form of a more complex theory.

I owe thanks to Peter Martens for correcting my English.

Chapter 11

The “End of History” Revisited: Kantian Reason, Hegelian Spirit, and the History of Philosophy

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Jere Paul O’Neill Surber

Hegel’s notorious thesis of the “end of history” has generated quite a checkered history of its own. It has played itself out upon a sort of matrix determined by two distinguishable “axes.” One is defined by the question of how broadly this idea should be taken, that is, what its scope of application should be; the other by the weight or seriousness that should be accorded it in the overall context of Hegel’s thought. As a brief overview of the contours of this debate,¹ we can say in a general way that most of Hegel’s earlier readers and interpreters tended to regard this thesis as one to be taken quite seriously, as central to Hegel’s work, while also proposing very broad, though radically divergent, interpretations of its significance. For example, the Young Hegelians (including the young Marx) and the Polish aristocrat Cieszkowski took it as the foundation and launching pad for a practical, action-oriented, and generally optimistic “philosophy of the future.” By contrast, Eduard von Hartmann, under the influence of Schopenhauer, managed to develop out of it the bizarre “imperative” that the ultimate “moral” act of history would be the voluntary mass suicide of the human race, an “end of history” indeed. Opposed to these earlier, more “future-oriented” readings of Hegel’s “end of history” was the German Historicist School, which, in one way or another, regarded this thesis as a sort of “regulative idea” specifying the “totality of the past” as the “ideal object” to be reconstructed through the empirical work of the historian. Despite the great diversity among such readings, all were at least agreed that the thesis of the “end of history” was one central to and inseparable from Hegel’s systematic thought, a conviction that continued to

be voiced in the twentieth century in the work of A. Kojève and those influenced by him, as well as in certain strands of "poststructuralism" following on Heidegger's reading of Hegel.

For the most part, however, later interpreters of Hegel, beginning as early as Dilthey and Lotze in Germany, "British Hegelians" such as Bradley, McTaggart, and later Findlay, and "American Idealists" such as Royce, tended to downplay the significance of this thesis for Hegel's overall philosophical position, if they did not discount or ignore it entirely. While it occasionally made an appearance in subsequent discussions, the tendency was to "localize" it to some particular dimension of Hegel's thought, such as his particular interpretation of Christian eschatology (Löwith), his attempts to come to grips with the French Revolution and its Napoleonic aftermath (Kojève joins the discussion here as well), or his alleged role as apologist for the Prussian state (Popper is today probably the best-known propagator of this "myth"). It is instructive that both W. Kaufmann's *Hegel: A Reinterpretation*, an early document in the contemporary renaissance of Hegel studies in America, and K. Hartmann's very influential "non-metaphysical" reading of Hegel's work as a "theory of categories," both dating from the mid-1960s, omit any reference to this thesis at all. Finally, by 1996, although not ignored, Hegel's thesis of the "end of history" came to merit its own chapter in an anthology explicitly devoted to *The Hegel Myths and Legends*.² In general, then, the tendency among later Hegel scholars has been either to deny its significance entirely or, if it be accorded some standing, to equate it (in ways designed variously to support or oppose Hegel's general philosophical position) with some limited, detachable, or even idiosyncratic aspect of his overall philosophical standpoint.

This essay will offer a reading of Hegel's views on this issue that ends up granting something to both general ways of approaching it. On the one hand, I will argue that the thesis of the "end of history" must be taken in a quite strong sense and is, in fact, central to Hegel's overall philosophical standpoint; on the other, I will suggest why this thesis, especially in relation to Hegel's account of the history of philosophy, is nonetheless a limited one and is neither as counterintuitive, ill-conceived, arrogant, or stultifying, as it has seemed to many. The heart of my argument involves a reconsideration of Hegel's understanding of and relation to Kant. It will unfold in three stages:

(1) First, I will argue that Hegel (like Fichte before him) viewed Kant as having articulated a fully adequate concept of "system," but that Kant failed in satisfying the conditions that he himself laid down for this. In his consideration of this systematic issue, Hegel reaffirmed an idea, already suggested by Kant, that Kant's own notion of the systematization of Reason would in fact signal the "end of history" in a certain limited sense.

However, Hegel also saw that a stronger thesis would be entailed by the additional "non-Kantian" assumptions necessary actually to fulfill Kant's own conditions.

(2) On the basis of this, I will suggest that even Hegel's relatively "stronger version" of the thesis remains limited, in important ways, to the sphere of "Reason," as understood by Kant and developed by Hegel, and cannot be properly attributed beyond this to the realm of "Spirit," at least in the same sense.

(3) I will conclude by considering this interpretation of the "end of history" thesis in relation to Hegel's *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, a work in which it appears quite prominently and explicitly. When viewed within its proper limits, Hegel's thesis of the "end of history" no more signals the foreclosure of future possibilities for philosophical reflection than it does the continuation of history itself, although it does imply that the intellectual landscape within which these will unfold will have fundamentally altered.

The "End of History" and The Kantian Roots of Hegel's Concept of System

Hegel himself often reminds us, especially by the frequent references to his *Science of Logic* scattered throughout his works, that he should be understood, first and foremost, as a systematic philosopher. Indeed, as he tells us, even more emphatically and frequently than usual, in the "Introduction" to the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, his Logic provides the fundamental presupposition and underlying rationale for his overall view of history. Representative of these admonitions is:

The logical, and—as still more prominent—the *dialectical* nature of the Idea in general, viz. that it is self-determined—that it assumes successive forms which it successively transcends; and by this very process of transcending its earlier stages, gains an affirmative, and, in fact, a richer and more concrete shape;—this necessity of its nature, and the necessary series of pure abstract forms which the Idea successively assumes—is exhibited in the department of *Logic*.³

Thus, whatever other collateral factors may have been at work in influencing his view of history and the thesis about its completion, we must look principally to the roots of his conception of a philosophical system to understand this idea, and this leads us immediately back to Kant.

While it is an aspect of Kant's thought that has received relatively little attention in comparison with other more restricted issues presented in the three Critiques, Kant had already stated very emphatically his overall

systematic aims in the Preface to the First Edition of the *Critique of Pure Reason*:

In this enquiry I have made completeness my chief aim, and I venture to assert that there is not a single metaphysical problem which has not been solved, or for the solution of which the key at least has not been supplied.⁴

In the following paragraph, he states very clearly the reason for this confidence:

I have to deal with nothing save reason itself and its pure thinking; and to obtain complete knowledge of these, there is no need to go far afield, since I come upon them in my own self.⁵

Lest the reader lose sight of this overarching concern during the laborious journey through the thicket of the work itself, the final major division of the first Critique, entitled "The Transcendental Doctrine of Method," returns to a consideration of exactly this point in much greater detail. There Kant spells out in a more "scientific" manner exactly what he means:

By a system I understand the unity of the manifold modes of knowledge under one idea. This idea is the concept provided by reason—of the form of a whole—in so far as the concept determines *a priori* not only the scope of its manifold content, but also the positions which the parts occupy relatively to one another. The scientific concept of reason contains, therefore, the end and the form of that whole which is congruent with this requirement.⁶

And lest the reader regard the philosophical production of such a system as some ideal, unrealizable, or infinite, goal, Kant even provides a sort of "timetable" in the very last sentence of the first Critique:

If the reader has had the courtesy and patience to accompany me along this path, he may now judge for himself whether, if he cares to lend his aid in making this path into a high-road, it may not be possible to achieve before the end of the present century what many centuries have not been able to accomplish; namely, to secure for human reason complete satisfaction in regard to that with which it has all along so eagerly occupied itself, though hitherto in vain.⁷

I have cited Kant at some length here not only because this aspect of Kant's thought is typically slighted, but especially because it makes clear that

Kant himself, well before Hegel emerged on the philosophical scene, saw the idea of an "end of history," at least of a certain sort, as a necessary consequence of his "Copernican Revolution" in philosophy.

Now we know, from such works as his essay on "universal history" of 1784, that Kant himself would have interpreted this notion of an "end of history" as applicable only to the history of metaphysics as understood and practiced prior to his own "Copernican Revolution." In that essay, Kant presents a reworking of the Enlightenment view of history as one of infinite human progress toward the ideal of a reconciliation of nature and freedom through human political and cultural development. While he maintains, on the one hand, that "the history of metaphysics" can be regarded as brought to an "end" with his Critical Philosophy, he asserts, on the other hand, that "human history" remains an "infinite progression" because it and the empirical "subjective" experiences that underlie it⁸ lie outside the scope of what can be demonstrated through rational principles, which alone is the proper business of philosophy.

These two Kantian limitations, of (collective) "universal history" and of (individual) "subjective experience" as not demonstrable from concepts and hence as lying outside the scope of philosophical comprehension, are precisely what Hegel will proceed to challenge. He takes up the former in one of his first distinctly philosophical writings, the so-called *Differenzschrift* (1800/01), though admittedly still in a schematic and relatively "abstract" manner, and the latter in the Jena *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). However, it is important to recall at this point what I have already suggested, namely, that the thesis of a "conceptual end or completion of history" was already implied by Kant's Critical Philosophy and the idea of a "philosophical" or "scientific system" within which it is framed.

Hegel's central argument in the *Differenzschrift*, so decisive for all his later thought, is well known.⁹ It is that Kant and later Fichte failed to produce the sort of unified system of reason that they themselves had so clearly described and demanded because they remained always within the standpoint of the understanding (*Verstand*) rather than moving to that of reason (*Vernunft*). Referring to their projects as instances of *Reflexionsphilosophie*, Hegel argued that the production of a unified rational system was continually undermined by the very conceptual oppositions employed by the understanding in attempting to articulate this ever elusive unity of reason itself. Hegel's point, then, was actually quite straightforward: a unified system of reason could only be developed beginning from the unity of reason itself, never from an attempt to "construct" that unity from a standpoint that remained external to and opposed to reason.

From this early critique of "Reflexionsphilosophie," or what might otherwise be called Kantian/Fichtean "transcendental philosophy," Hegel drew

several conclusions important for the present discussion. Because Kant and Fichte developed their own systematic projects from the standpoint of the understanding, they naturally tended to read the history of philosophy itself in terms of a more or less random oscillation of various philosophical viewpoints designed to defend one side or the other of dichotomies constantly being generated by the understanding. In other words, the history of philosophy was, for them, merely a history of errors repeated and compounded. While, from Hegel's point of view, their "Reflexionsphilosophie" did represent a new "standpoint" which allowed them to see this and to diagnose the common source of these "errors" in the natural propensity of reason to go beyond the epistemic limits of the understanding, it at the same time prevented them from remedying this defect precisely because it handed the construction of what *could* do so, namely, a unitary philosophical system, over to the oppositional procedures of the understanding. Put simply, both for their own standpoint and for those of their historical predecessors, any distinctions made by the understanding presupposed the efficacy of the activity of reason in providing the "unity" which could then be differentiated and determined, and it would only be an account of this underlying rational unity, in relation to the various oppositions generated out of it, that could satisfy the conditions which they themselves laid down for a philosophical system.

For Hegel, it immediately followed that the history of philosophy was not, in fact, a random catalogue of mutually offsetting errors, but rather an ordered development of attempts to state, with ever more determination ("concreteness"), the "Truth" of the rational unity that lay at the basis of all of them. As Hegel would later say more specifically about the realm of "Absolute Spirit," all past philosophical viewpoints, historically regarded, had the same "content" but differed in the "systematic forms" of its presentation. While Kant and Fichte had seen what this final "form" must be, and hence had anticipated the "end of the history of philosophy," their view of the relative priority of *Verstand* and *Vernunft* barred them from the articulation of such a unitary system because it dictated that the "content" of philosophy remain bifurcated by the procedures of the understanding. The element of Hegel's strong notion of the "end of history," which he sometimes referred to more precisely as the "end of the history of the Concept," thus followed directly from this logical and systematic critique.

Further, Hegel concluded that, if the various philosophical positions were attempts to express an "identical content" (i.e., the "Truth" or the "Absolute"), but they were arrayed in historical time, then it must be their "historical location" that accounted for the differences in the various "forms" in which this "rational content" was presented. It is important to note that Hegel introduces this discussion with words that could have been taken

almost *verbatim* from those of Kant cited above:

Because in philosophy, Reason, which knows itself, has to do only with itself, its entire work, like its activity, also lies in itself; and, with respect to the inner essence of philosophy, there is neither predecessor nor successor.¹⁰

But, he adds shortly thereafter:

The true originality of a philosophy is the interesting individuality in which Reason has organized a form out of the building material of a particular age; therein the particular speculative reason finds spirit of its spirit, flesh of its flesh, and intuits itself in it as one and the same and as another living being.¹¹

More than twenty years later, in the Introduction to his *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (Cf. LHP, 50ff.), Hegel will repeat this idea in arguing that philosophy is the "spirit of the time as spirit present in itself." With the same idea in mind, Hegel distinguishes, in the *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, his own "philosophical history" from earlier forms ("original" and "reflective" history). There he writes:

The only Thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of Reason; that Reason is the Sovereign of the world; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process.¹²

We can therefore say, in summary, that Hegel's argument up to this point consists of the following four theses:

- (1) Since philosophy is *reason* reflecting upon itself, reason both provides its own (conceptual) "content" as well as the "form" in which this "content" must be developed. (This implies the possibility of the sort of "completeness" implicit in the notion of an "end of history" understood as "the history of the Concept.")
- (2) The "complete development" of the "content" of reason in the "form" appropriate to it would constitute the "final philosophical system."
- (3) The *history of philosophy*, rationally considered, presents the sequential development of the "forms" in which reason's own "true content" is expressed.

- (4) Each "stage" of this sequence is, in turn, an expression of the particular "form" assumed by reason within the *culture* from which its philosophical expression arises and of which it is a reflection (or expression).

The "strong version" of the thesis of the "end of history" follows directly from these points. It is, simply put, that Hegel's notion of system, his interpretation of the history of philosophy, and his reading of "universal history" are related in such a way that each mutually implies the other; in other words, that the general thesis of the "end of history" necessarily includes the complete conceptual determination of the sphere of reason, the "completion" of the history of philosophy as a rational (conceptual) enterprise, and the "end" of "universal history" as a temporal sequence capable of "rational comprehension." Any "weaker" view, which would deny one or more of the theses presented above, will not, by the argument offered here, correctly represent Hegel's own position and will tend to destabilize the overall framework of his philosophical position.

The Scope of Hegel's "Strong Thesis" about the "End of History"

Having argued for a "strong version" of Hegel's thesis of the "end of history," particularly in relation to his systematic response to Kantian "Reflexionsphilosophie," I want now to consider, beginning again with its relation to Kant's critical project, what conclusions we are warranted in drawing about its scope of application. In particular, I wish to suggest that underlying the hesitation in embracing such a version of the thesis on the part of more recent Hegel interpreters is a misunderstanding or, in some cases, deliberate revision of Hegel's own systematic project. As an example of such a misreading, I would cite Frederick Beiser's *The Fate of Reason*,¹³ in which he claims that, beginning with Schelling and Hegel, German philosophy reverted to the sort of "speculative metaphysics" that Kant's Critical Philosophy had attempted to put aside once and for all. Suspicious of such "backsliding" on their own part, many more recent interpreters of Hegel have, it seems to me, chosen to "edit out" of Hegel ideas that might tend to confirm this, thus presenting a "more respectable, Kantianized Hegel." In one sense, my reading agrees with them in holding (against a view like Beiser's) that Hegel's project remains, in important ways, limited and profoundly Kantian, but it proposes that the only viable way to make this point is to take Hegel, without emendation, as the completion of Kant's own incomplete systematic project.

While there are a number of approaches that one might adopt, I will here briefly consider two points that, I believe, indicate the limits of the

scope of this thesis, even in its "strong version," in comparison with a very broad reading of it, such as that offered, for example, by Heidegger and some of his "poststructuralist" followers.¹⁴

Kant's "Post-Critical Metaphysics" and Hegel's Response

It is well known that Kant distinguishes, quite often, between (at least) two senses of "metaphysics." The first is that "rational" (though internally conflicted), "transcendent" philosophical project that his Critical Philosophy claims to have finally laid to rest, the demonstration being, primarily, the "Transcendental Dialectic" of his *Critique of Pure Reason*. The second is a new sense of "metaphysics," based on the foundations provided by the Critical Philosophy, which he describes as

the system of pure reason, that is, the science which exhibits in systematic connection the whole body (true as well as illusory) of philosophical knowledge arising out of pure reason, and which is entitled *metaphysics*.¹⁵

Kant contrasts the "old" and "new" senses of metaphysics in a number of different ways, but the principal distinction, to which all the others eventually return, is that, while the former claims (spuriously) to present knowledge of the (alleged) "supersensible" grounds of experience (*noumena*), the latter restricts itself to elaborating the systematic order and interconnection of concepts and their further determinations that ground and can be "exhibited" within the limits of experience itself.

A key question in assessing Hegel's philosophical relation to Kant (and thus in understanding Hegel's project itself) turns upon whether Hegel ultimately reverts to the standpoint of the "old metaphysics" or remains true to the "Kantian revolution" of establishing a "new," limited sense of metaphysics. I want to suggest that a consideration of Hegel's two most mature, explicit, and extended general discussions of Kant's philosophy as a whole clearly indicates the latter.

First, in concluding his lengthy discussion of Kant's philosophical standpoint in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, Hegel, though critical throughout to be sure, notes three major contributions that it has made to the history of philosophy.¹⁶ First, he claims that in Kant's philosophy "we find on all hands the Idea of Thought, which is in itself the absolute Notion, and has in itself difference, reality." Second, he credits Kant with having introduced "the general idea of synthetic judgments a priori, a universal which has difference in itself," as lying at the heart of the philosophical enterprise. Third, he notes that "Kant's instinct" led him to carry out his project "with

the scheme of triplicity . . . in the whole system into which for him the entire universe was divided." He concludes that

Kant has thus made *an historical statement of the moments of the whole, and has correctly determined and distinguished them*: it is a good introduction to philosophy (my emphasis).

Second, in his Introduction to the so-called *Berlin Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*, Hegel reiterates his own allegiance to Kant's basic philosophical standpoint. Frequently employing the Kantian phrase "the old metaphysic" to refer to that tradition that the Critical Philosophy has laid to rest, Hegel's detailed discussion of the "Transcendental Dialectic" adopts the following general view.¹⁷ On the one hand, Kant remained within the "subjective" standpoint dictated by his defective view of the relation between the understanding and reason and hence of the origin and significance of the categories; his "method" of critique was not as rigorous as that required by a genuinely systematic approach; and he failed, as well, to draw the correct conclusions about these matters from his critique of the "old metaphysic." On the other hand, and this notwithstanding, Kant's critique of the "old metaphysic" was right-headed and valid so far as it went, and it remained to later philosophy to remedy Kant's "subjective" notion of the categories, to elaborate them more fully, and to draw the proper "positive" conclusions from the "dialectical critique." Thus, even as Hegel claims that Kant mislocated the real source of the "limits" of Reason, it remains true that Hegel, as well, endorses a "philosophy of limits," at least in relation to "supersensible grounds" invoked by the "old metaphysic," which can no longer henceforth be invoked by the philosopher. Rather, we might say that the "bounds of Reason," as that self-contained conceptual sphere already anticipated by Kant, is "the actual" itself, which is ultimately history philosophically comprehended. Hegel's "metaphysic" is therefore none other than the project proposed by Kant, developed "objectively" and carried to its full conclusion.

This result already represents one important limitation of the thesis of the "end of history," for it invalidates any reading of this thesis that would attribute to Hegel some sort of "pre-Kantian metaphysical" foreclosure of any further possibility for experience or philosophical thought, a version of the thesis best known from Kojève's very influential reading of Hegel as a "historicized Parmenidean-Spinozist."¹⁸ I would also suggest that such a view finds its way into most "poststructuralist" readings of Hegel, which tend to favor Kant over Hegel, ignoring their important connections with one another.¹⁹

Reason and "Universal History"

In the work that has provided the context for most recent discussions of the "end of history" thesis, the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, as well as in those closely related lectures on the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel explicitly formulates this thesis with respect to reason. In perhaps its classic statement, taken from the latter work²⁰ and reaffirmed and elaborated in the introduction to the "Berlin system,"²¹ Hegel is explicit in affirming that "what is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational." It is this insight that first makes "history" possible as a philosophical or "rational" discipline and thus comprehensible from the standpoint of Hegel's broader systematic project, and it is this on which a major part of Hegel's "strong version" of the thesis of the "end of history" is based.

Nonetheless, from the manner in which Hegel distinguishes among various types of history, this thesis also has a limited scope of application. The first form of history, which Hegel calls "original history," consists merely of disconnected narratives of events at which the historian was either present or heard about from those who were, and in this sense it is limited to the "historical present" of the historian. The second, which Hegel terms "reflective history," itself assumes various forms, that share in common the task of making relevant and general connections between past events and institutions and the historian's own later, though still historically limited, "present." Finally, "philosophical (or universal) history" is concerned with that which is "universal" or "rational" in history as directly engaged with the "universality" or "rationality" of philosophy itself. Again, note the terms in which Hegel presents this:

The only Thought which Philosophy brings with it to the contemplation of History, is the simple conception of Reason; that Reason is the Sovereign of the World; that the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process. This conviction and intuition is a hypothesis in the domain of history as such. In that of Philosophy it is no hypothesis.²²

He goes on to argue both that this "hypothesis" becomes "actuality" only with Reason's own systematic completion (with the "end of the history of the Concept") and that the viewpoint with regard to history here announced signals the "end of history" in the sense that it can now be viewed, for the first time, as a "rational totality." Again, however, it is a limited thesis, in the sense that there is no implication whatever that either "original" or "critical" history be regarded as somehow at an end, either with respect to the actual ongoing processes with which they are concerned or as historiographical

disciplines. To restate my principal point, then, Hegel's thesis of the "end of history" must be understood as a claim dependent on and relevant to his view of reason and its systematic completion.

Reason, Spirit, and the "End of the History"

The most obvious objection to this reading of Hegel must now be directly confronted: If Hegel's thesis is limited, as I have claimed, to the sphere of Reason and its systematic completion, how are we to view the broader role of "Spirit" in the context of such an "end of history"? Here I will consider some relevant sections, especially the concluding one, of the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, texts that present this issue quite explicitly.

In Hegel's long Introduction to the main topic, it is striking that he frames his project of a "history of philosophy" almost exclusively in terms of reason, thinking, and "the Idea" as their result, with the notion of "Spirit" appearing rather infrequently and somewhat derivatively. A great deal of the Introduction is devoted to clarifying either what does not fall under the purview of the history of philosophy as Hegel wishes to understand it (e.g., mythology, religion, political history) or similar projects or standpoints with which it should not be confused (which, as Hegel's discussion unfolds, bear unmistakable resemblances to the "original history" and "critical history" we have already discussed). Hegel's "principle of differentiation" on both counts, and thus the "model for philosophical historiography" that he sets before him, is stated very explicitly at the outset:

Now in reference to this Idea [of a History of Philosophy], I maintain that the sequence in the systems of Philosophy in History is similar to the sequence in the logical deduction of the Notion-determinations in the Idea. I maintain that if the fundamental conceptions of the systems appearing in the history of Philosophy be entirely divested of what regards their outward form, their relation to the particular and the like, the various stages in the determination in the Idea are found in their logical Notion. Conversely in the logical progression taken for itself, there is, so far as its principal elements are concerned, the progression of historical manifestations; but it is necessary to have these pure Notions in order to know what the historical form contains.²³

Clearly stated here is the idea that the development of reason's conceptual determinations lies at the basis of Hegel's history of philosophy, as is the direct connection between this and the thesis of the "end of history," sug-

gested by the fact that only when reason has completed its series of "pure Notions" is a genuinely scientific "history of philosophy" finally possible. Shortly hereafter, Hegel adds, further underlining these points:

It is shown from what has been said regarding the formal nature of the Idea, that only a history of Philosophy thus regarded as a system of development in Idea, is entitled to the name of Science: a collection of facts constitutes no science. Only thus as a succession of phenomena *established through reason, and having as content just what is reason and revealing it, does this history show that it is rational: it shows that the events recorded are in reason. How should the whole of what has taken place in reason not itself be rational?*²⁴ [my emphasis]

That reason lies at the heart of Hegel's project of a history of philosophy could not be more emphatically affirmed.

This affirmation of the centrality of reason and "the Idea" (the final determination of both of Hegel's major writings on logic) likewise commences the concluding section of his lectures.

The present standpoint of philosophy is that the Idea is known in its necessity; the sides of its diremption, Nature and Spirit, are each of them recognized as representing the totality of the Idea, and not only as being in themselves identical, but as producing this one identity from themselves; and in this way the identity is recognized as necessary. Nature, and the world or history of spirit, are the two realities; what exists as actual Nature is an image of divine Reason; the forms of self-conscious Reason are also the forms of Nature. The ultimate aim and business of philosophy is to reconcile thought or the Notion with reality.²⁵

Given the origins of Hegel's thesis of the "end of history" as the completion of Kant's systematic project, which I have already suggested, one is tempted to propose that this is a schematic statement of the exact form that Hegel's fulfillment of this project took: whereas Hegel's Logic completes the project begun with Kant's Critical Philosophy, so his Philosophies of Nature and Spirit complete Kant's "Metaphysic of Nature and Morals" (respectively). As the final *coup*, Hegel's view of Nature and Spirit as formed by the "diremption" of the (logical or rational) Idea into self-contained "totalities," each of which produces "this one identity from themselves" and "recognizes it as necessary," satisfies, quite literally, Kant's ultimate criterion for "system": "the unity of the manifold modes of knowledge under one idea."²⁶

But Hegel does not, in fact, conclude his lectures here. Rather, there shortly follows one of his most emphatic statements of the "end of history" thesis, this time framed in terms of Spirit:

In scientific knowledge alone [spirit] knows itself as absolute spirit; and this knowledge, or spirit, is its only true existence. This then is the standpoint of the present day, and the series of spiritual forms is with it for the present concluded.²⁷

Given what he has already said, this passage (and a couple of others in the same vein) raises two questions regarding the "end of history" thesis: first, what does the restatement in terms of spirit instead of reason imply about the thesis; and, second, what are we to make of the phrases "the present day" and "for the present"?

On the reading I would offer, Hegel's position on the "end of history" and the "future of philosophy" amounts to this. The "end of history" is to be thought principally in connection with the final fulfillment of the task outlined by Kant in terms of his Critique of Reason and the "new metaphysic" following from it. This, together with its implications for a specific "rational" philosophical reading of "universal history" and the history of philosophy, constitutes the primary scope of this thesis. In this sense, philosophy as the construction of a "rational conceptual system," its history read as the temporal process by which this construction has arisen, and historiography as a "rational," philosophically driven project are thus all "ended" and, as Hegel writes, "a new epoch has arisen in the world."²⁸ In this sense, philosophy can be regarded as having discharged its task with respect to its own underlying rational structure, the historical genesis of that structure, and the broader historiography of the process within which this developed.

But what, then, is the nature of this "new epoch [that] has arisen in the world"? Certainly Hegel clearly suggests, in this passage and elsewhere, that the dominant "concept" is now, in his own "present day" and "for us" as well, no longer reason but Spirit. But to appreciate the transition from reason to Spirit as defining the "future" of philosophy beyond the "end of history," it is helpful to look back once again to the relation of Hegel's own systematic project to that outlined by Kant. While Hegel, as I have argued, viewed Kant's outline of a "system of Reason" as not only valid but completeable, Hegel also realized that its "completion" would involve additional assumptions, bound up with a "stronger version" of the "end of history" than Kant himself foresaw. I want now to suggest that it is precisely these assumptions, involving the interconnections among systematic philosophy, its philosophical history, its broader context of "universal history," and the cultural forms that constitute the "moments" of the latter, that

become gathered together under Hegel's notion of "Spirit." In other words, the notion of "Spirit," as such, is precisely what lay outside Kantian reason and its formation into the "system of the new metaphysic" and it could emerge as a new philosophical notion or "category" only when the completion of the "rational system" was in sight, appearing as the final assumption (or set of assumptions) necessary for the fulfillment of that project. Thus, whereas history up to Kant and Hegel's completion of his project had been the "history of reason or the Concept," the "new epoch" would be that of Spirit.

Perhaps Hegel himself points toward the sort of philosophical project that lies beyond "the present time" when he immediately proceeds, from the passage last quoted, to mention art, politics, and the investigation of nature as being "various modes of [Spirit's] reality, yet they are only modes." (I assume, on the basis of his earlier discussions, that he omits religion because of the close connection he sees between "revealed religion" and modern philosophy.) While Hegel's discussion here seems casual enough not to be regarded as excluding other possibilities, we might infer that, after the completion of the "system of reason" both in its "conceptual" and "historical" appearance, and after the philosophical consideration of "universal history" as the condition for this, the philosophical tasks remaining will no longer be those of rational system construction or the production of "metanarratives" of reason. Rather, in "the new epoch," with all the work that can be done under the aegis of reason in the areas of logic and history already accomplished, and secure in the knowledge that no further "objective domain" will present itself as alien to Spirit, philosophy must henceforth turn itself toward the ongoing task of mediating between the various cultural and historical forms that Spirit continues to produce through its own internal creative dynamic and the systematically completed sphere of reason that is now philosophy's permanent possession. (Notice that Hegel says, "This then is the standpoint of the present day, and the series of spiritual forms is with it *for the present* concluded," implying that Spirit will continue to assume new forms in the future though presumably reason will not).

To conclude, with yet one more glance back to Kant, it seems especially apt that Hegel would single out the spheres of nature, art, and politics as areas where philosophy, now as philosophical mediator and cultural critic, would intervene, since each represents a dimension of Kant's thought that Hegel regarded as inadequately developed in Kant's "new metaphysic." With regard to nature, for example, Hegel, in the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* (v. III, 456), says of Kant's "metaphysic of nature,"

But this is on the one hand very scanty and restricted in content, containing as it does sundry general qualities and conceptions of

matter and motion, and with regard to the scientific side or the *a priori*, as Kant calls it, it is likewise altogether unsatisfactory.²⁹

He elaborates this critical attitude in the Introduction to the "Berlin Encyclopedia," where he flatly states that "the philosophy of Kant could have no influence on the method of the sciences"³⁰ suggesting instead that

speculative science . . . does not in the least neglect the empirical facts contained in the several sciences, but recognizes and adopts them: it appreciates and applies towards its own structure the universal element in these sciences, the laws and classifications: but besides all this, into the categories of science it introduces, and gives currency to, other categories.³¹

In other words, one of the tasks of philosophy beyond its "conceptual completion" would be that of integrating the ongoing development of the sciences and their more "regional concepts" into the broader logical structure already systematically developed—to show how, despite appearances, the evolving scientific theories and their empirical results "hang together" within the elaborated structure of human knowledge. Likewise, with regard to art, Hegel registers both the inadequacies of Kant's merely "formalistic" treatment of it in the *Critique of Judgment* and the broader point that art, because it is one realm of "absolute Spirit," a concept not yet available to Kant, never finds an adequate home in Kant's "new metaphysic."³² When Hegel himself assumes the role of "philosophical art critic" in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of the Fine Arts*, considering specific works of even contemporaneous art in their relationship to the "Spirit of the times," he is, perhaps, offering examples of the new philosophical task that lies ahead.³³ Finally, because, as I have already argued, Hegel clearly views political history and (at least) "critical historiography" as continuing beyond his own time, the philosopher will now be called on to track its particular developments and critically assess how they succeed or fail in providing conditions for Spirit's own self-expression. Again, this is an area dealt with by Kant in only very scanty and abstract terms.

Conclusion

If this reading of Hegel's thesis of the "end of history" is plausible, three major points follow with respect to current discussions of Hegel's significance for the history of philosophy.

- (1) In agreement with Hegel's earlier readers, his thesis is a strong one and cannot be excised from his thought, nor can it be reduced to some "weaker version" without threatening the integrity of Hegel's overall philosophical project.
- (2) Still, even in its "strong version," it remains within the ambit of Hegel's systematic completion of the Kantian notion of reason, and signals neither the "end" of philosophy as an enterprise firmly rooted in reason, nor the "end" of political history, either in the "nation-state" or in some theory of political action or social change.
- (3) In an important way, Hegel's thesis is diametrically opposed to the interpretation usually given it by "poststructuralists" who wish to reproduce "difference" at every point where "the appearance of unity threatens." Rather, the task of philosophy in the "post-Hegelian" (if not "postmodern") world remains that of mediating forms of difference that necessarily erupt within unity and seeing them as part of this unity. The real difference for philosophy in this "new epoch" is that philosophy is no longer called upon logically or systematically to "produce" a conceptual unity that had not previously existed, but rather to descend into the "diverse content of Spirit" as critic and mediator, armed with what it has already accomplished historically.

Notes

1. For more detailed discussions of some of the figures and their various approaches, which I only mention here in passing, see Rüdiger Bubner, "Hegel and the End of History," *Bulletin of the Hegel Society of Great Britain*, 1991, 15–23. Also, various ways of interpreting Hegel's notion of the "end of history," although surveyed from perspectives differing from my own, are presented in the three essays grouped together in the section entitled "The Myth of the End of History" in Jon Stewart, ed., *The Hegel Myths and Legends* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1996), 18–236.

2. See preceding note.

3. G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History* (henceforth, *PH*), trans. J. Sibree (New York: Dover, 1956), 63; G. W. F. Hegel, *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1976), 12, 86. All subsequent references to Hegel's texts will first cite the English translation used, followed by the corresponding volume and page number(s) of the Suhrkamp *Werkausgabe*.

4. I. Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason* (henceforth *CPR*), trans. N. Kemp-Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965), 10; Axiii. Paralleling the manner of citing Hegel described above, all subsequent references to Kant will first cite the Kemp-Smith

translation, followed by the standard format for citing the corresponding page numbers in the *Akademie-Textausgabe*.

5. CPR, 10; Axiv.
6. CPR, 653; A832/B860.
7. CPR, 668–9; A856/B884 [my emphasis].
8. Cf. CPR, 608; A763/B791.
9. For a more detailed discussion of these issues, see the Introductory Essay included with my translation of the *Differenzschrift* in *Hegel: The Difference Between The Fichtean and Schellingian Systems of Philosophy* (Reseda, CA: Ridgeview, 1978).
10. *Differenzschrift* (my translation cited above), 8; 2, 17.
11. *Ibid.*, 9; 2, 19.
12. PH 9; 12, 20
13. Frederick Beiser, *The Fate of Reason: German Philosophy from Kant to Fichte* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).
14. More specifically, Heidegger, bolstered in part by Kojève and followed by such poststructuralists as Derrida, tended to read Hegel's philosophy in a "strong" but also very broad sense as "the end of the history of metaphysics" (or at least as "the beginning of the end," if one counts Nietzsche as the actual "end of the line"). Such a reading is possible only if one fails clearly to distinguish, as I think Hegel himself did, between the spheres of reason and Spirit. I argue here that while Hegel regarded himself as completing the "historical work of reason," he did not believe that the realm of Spirit was or could be so completed, at least by metaphysics or even philosophy generally.
15. CPR, 659; A841/B869.
16. *Hegel's Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, vol. II trans. E. S. Haldane and F. H. Simson, (London: Routledge, 1968), 476 ff. (hereafter cited as HP); 20, 384 ff.
17. *Hegel's Logic, Being Part One of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences (1830)*, (henceforth cited as HL), trans. William Wallace (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1975), Section 46 ff.; 74 ff.; 8, 123 ff.
18. Cf. "A Note on Eternity, Time, and the Concept," in A. Kojève, *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*, trans. J. Nichols, Jr. (New York: Basic Books, 1969), 100–149.
19. As examples, I would cite various discussions of Kant and Hegel scattered throughout the works of J. Derrida and J.-F. Lyotard that quite consistently cast Hegel as the "philosopher of clôtüre" opposite Kant as the "philosopher of limits."
20. *Hegel: Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 20 ff.
21. HL, 8 ff.; 8, 47 ff.
22. PH, 9; 12, 20. Hegel's distinctions among the various "types" of historiography occur in the sections immediately preceding this remark.
23. HP, v. I, 30; 18, 49.
24. HP, v. I, 31; 18, 50.
25. HP, v. III, 545; 20, 454–55.
26. CPR, 653; A832/B860.
27. HP, v. III, 552; 20, 460–1.

28. HP, v. III, 551; 20, 460.
29. HP, v. III, 456; 20, 364.
30. HL, 92; 8, 144.
31. HL, 13; 8, 52.
32. Cf., e.g., HP, v. III, 471 ff.; 20, 379 ff.
33. Jere Surber, "Art as a Mode of Thought: Hegel's Aesthetics and the Origins of Modernism," in *Hegel and Aesthetics*, ed. William Maker (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2000), 45–59.