

Philosophy of History

by Hegel

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Introduction

O The subject of this course of Lectures is the Philosophical History of the World.

SECTION ONE: Original History

§ 1 They simply transferred what was passing in the world around them, to the realm of representative intellect.

§ 2 The influences that have formed the writer are identical with those which have moulded the events that constitute the matter of his story.

§ 3 What the historian puts into the mouths of orators is an uncorrupted transcript of their intellectual and moral habitudes.

§ 4 Among the ancients, these annalists were necessarily great captains and statesmen.

SECTION TWO: Reflective History

§ 5 Reflective history's mode of representation is not really confined by the limits of the time to which it relates.

___1 Universal History

§ 6 It is the aim of Universal History to gain a view of the entire history of a people or a country.

§ 7 History must foreshorten its pictures by abstractions.

___2 Pragmatical History

§ 8 Pragmatical History takes the occurrence out of the category of the Past and makes it virtually Present.

___3 Critical History

§ 9 In Critical History, it is not history itself that is presented, but a History of History.

§ 10 Critical History adopts an abstract position; yet forms a transition to the Philosophical History.

SECTION THREE: Philosophic History

§ 11 Philosophy of History means nothing but the thoughtful consideration of it.

§ 12 Reason is the Sovereign of the World; history therefore, presents us with a rational process.

§ 13 The World of intelligence and conscious volition is not abandoned to chance, but must show itself in the light of the self-cognisant Idea.

§ 14 Two points of view that concern the generally diffused conviction that Reason rules in the world.

I: Reason Governs World

§ 15 Anaxagoras was the first to enunciate the doctrine that Reason governs the world.

§ 16 That Nature is unchangeably subordinate to universal laws, appears nowise strange to us.

§ 17 Religious holds that the world is not abandoned to chance, but that a Providence controls it.

II The Essential Destiny of Reason

§ 18 The question, what is the ultimate design of the World?

§ 19 Spirit is our substantial object. Our task does not require us to contemplate Nature as a Rational System in itself.

§ 20 The three parts of the Destiny of Reason.

___(1) The Abstract Characteristics of the Nature of Spirit

§ 21 As the essence of Matter is Gravity, so, on the other hand, the essence of Spirit is Freedom.

§ 22 Eastern nations knew that one is free; the Greeks and Romans that some are free; whilst we know that all men are free.

§ 23 The final cause of the World, we allege to be Spirit's consciousness of its own freedom.

___(2) The Means Spirit Uses to Realise Its Idea

§ 24 The first glance at History convinces us that the actions of men proceed from their needs,

their passions, their characters and talents.

§ 25 Aims, principles, &c., have a place in our thoughts, but not yet in the sphere of reality.

§ 26 Nothing great in the World has been accomplished without passion.

§ 27 A State is powerful, when the private interest of its citizens is one with the common interest.

§ 28 The universal Idea exists as the substantial totality of things, and as the abstract essence of free volition.

§ 29 The passions of men are gratified and build up the edifice of human society, for Right and Order.

§ 30 The agent's aims are limited but the agents themselves are intelligent thinking beings.

§ 31 History has to do with those momentous collisions between existing, acknowledged duties, laws, and rights.

§ 32 The particular aims of great historical men involve those large issues which are the will of the World-Spirit..

§ 33 Such individuals had no consciousness of the Idea they were unfolding, but were practical, political men.

§ 34 They are great men, because they accomplished the needs of the age.

§ 35 A World-historical individual is devoted to the One Aim.

§ 36 It is not the Idea that is exposed to danger. It remains in the background, untouched and uninjured. This may be called the cunning of reason.

§ 37 When speaking of the realisation of great ideals by individuals, the subjective element in them has an infinite right to be consulted..

§ 38 We must not fall into the Litany of Lamentations, that the good and pious often fare ill in the

world.

§ 39 The means which the World-Spirit uses for realising its Idea involves the activity of personal existences in whom Reason is present; but still obscure and unknown to them.

___(3) The Embodiment Spirit Assumes — the State

§ 40 What is the material in which the Ideal of Reason is wrought out? - Personality itself - human desires - Subjectivity generally.

§ 41 The Idea is the inner spring of action; the State is the actually, existing, realised moral life.

§ 42 The first error is that man is free by nature, but that in society, he must limit this natural freedom.

§ 43 Freedom does not exist as original and natural — it must be first sought out and won.

§ 44 The patriarchal condition is one of transition, its unity not advancing beyond the merely

natural.

§ 45 No law can be valid without the approval of all.

§ 46 The State is an abstraction; but it is an actuality, and must embody itself in individual will.

§ 47 The necessity of a particular constitution is made to depend on the condition of the people as if it were accidental.

§ 48 The State is the embodiment of rational freedom, realising itself in an objective form.

§ 49 The State is the Idea of Spirit in the external manifestation of human Will and its Freedom.

§ 50 We observe a union between the objective - the Idea, - and the subjective- the personality that conceives and wills it.

§ 51 The definite substance that exists in the State, is the Spirit of the People itself.

§ 52 Freedom can exist only where Individuality is recognised as having its real existence in the

Divine Being.

§ 53 While the State is based on Religion, Religion supposes the State already to exist.

§ 54 Religion is by no means a thing to be so produced; its self-production lies much deeper.

§ 55 An opposite folly is that of pretending to invent and carry out political constitutions independently of religion.

§ 56 The State constitutes the rights of its members; its natural features are their country, their outward material property.

§ 57 This matured totality constitutes the spirit of one People. Each individual is the Son of his Nation, the Son of his Age.

§ 58 Each particular National genius is only One Individual in the process of Universal History.

§ 59 Nothing further remains for this introductory section to contemplate but

III The Course of World History

§ 60 History is an advance to something better, but Nature exhibits only a perpetually self-repeating cycle.

§ 61 The principle of Development finds actual existence in Spirit; which has the History of the World for its theatre.

§ 62 The Spirit's expansion is not the harmless tranquillity of mere growth, but a stern reluctant working against itself.

§ 63 The analysis of the successive grades, in their abstract form, belongs to Logic; in their concrete aspect to the Philosophy of Spirit.

§ 64 Possibility points to something destined to become actual.

§ 65 The investigation of the history of ancient peoples, to trace their annals up to the point where fragments of primary revelation are to be met with.

§ 66 We have to thank this interest for many valuable discoveries in Oriental literature.

§ 67 An advanced condition of science, and the assertion that such a condition occurred at the very beginning of History.

§ 68 The only method philosophical investigation can adopt, is to take up History where Rationality begins to manifest itself in the World's affairs.

§ 69 The period before history was written are destitute of objective history, because they present no subjective history.

§ 70 The progress of Nations assumes importance for concrete Reason, only when they have co in contact with States, or begin to form constitutions.

§ 71 We now have to state the direction of its course: though here only formally.

§ 72 The logical, and dialectical nature of the Idea, viz. that it is self-determined — that it

assumes successive forms which it successively transcends; and by this very process gains a richer and more concrete shape.

§ 73 A doubt has been suggested whether in the progress of history and of general culture, mankind have become better.

§ 74 The History of the World occupies a higher ground than that on which morality has properly its position.

§ 75 The condition of Philosophy's existence is the taking up of the object of thought, and at the same time clothing it with the form of universality.

§ 76 Language attains on its own particular ground a high intellectual development, prior to the commencement of civilisation.

§ 77 Philosophy also must make its appearance where political life exists.

§ 78 Among all world-historical peoples, art, science,

even philosophy show not only diversity in style, but still more remarkably in subject-matter.

§ 79 Those spheres of intelligence which lie beyond the limits of this consciousness are a common ground.

§ 80 It is the concrete spirit of a people which we have to recognise, and it can only be comprehended spiritually.

§ 81 History is the development of Spirit in Time, as Nature is the development of the Idea in Space.

§ 82 With a vast expenditure of power a trivial result is produced; while from what appears unimportant, a tremendous issue proceeds.

§ 83 What traveller among the ruins of Carthage or Rome has not reflected on the transience of kingdoms and men.

§ 84 Spirit manipulates itself, multiplying the material for

future endeavours and gratifying its desires in a variety which is inexhaustible.

§ 85 The very essence of Spirit is activity; it realises its potentiality and becomes an object to itself; contemplates itself as an objective existence.

§ 86 The Spirit of a people exists as a genus, and consequently carries within it its own negation.

§ 87 It is not of the nature of the all-pervading Spirit to die this merely natural death.

§ 88 The highest point in the development of a people is this: to have reduced its laws, its ideas of justice and morality to a science.

§ 89 We have then before us a real and an ideal existence of the Spirit of the Nation.

§ 90 We are sure to see a people putting talk about virtue partly side by side with actual virtue.

§ 91 At the same time the isolation of individuals from each other and from the Whole makes its

appearance.

§ 92 Zeus and his race are themselves swallowed up by the very power that produced them — the principle of thought.

§ 93 Time is the negative element in the sensuous world. Thought is the same negativity.

§ 94 Thought is that Universal - that Species which is immortal.

§ 95 Spirit, in rendering itself objective and making this an object of thought, destroys the determinate form of its being, but gains a comprehension of its universal element.

§ 96 The individual traverses as a unity various grades of development, and remains the same individual; in like manner also does a people.

§ 97 The life of a people ripens a certain fruit. But this fruit does not fall back into the bosom of the people that produced it, but becomes a poison-draught

to it.

§ 98 The principles of the successive phases of Spirit that animate Nations, are only steps of the one universal Spirit.

§ 99 Philosophy, as occupying itself with the True, has only to do with the eternally present..