

brilliant era of literature, and the whole of Europe was illuminated by the light of science which emanated from Paris during the first third of this century. History of philosophy has little to say about Goethe, though his work embodies for us probably the deepest thought of modern times. Again, the only great and novel system of philosophy which France has produced during this century is that of Comte, but it has had only small influence in its own country; and who would say that it reflects French thought of the period as Voltaire and Montesquieu reflected the thought of the last century? Hegel himself, who was intent upon tracing the working of the human mind in the systems of philosophy, declared that philosophy is the latest fruit of civilisation,—that the special idea which governs any period is already dying out when it appears in a system.¹

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¹ The principal passage expounding this idea of Hegel's is to be found in the introduction to the course of lectures which he delivered at Berlin repeatedly during the years 1816 to 1830. See his collected works, vol. xiii. p. 66: "Philosophy makes its appearance at the time when the mind of a nation has worked itself out of the indifferent dulness of the early life of nature, as well as out of the period of passionate interest; inasmuch as the direction towards detail has spent itself, the mind transcends its natural form—it passes on from practical morals, from the force of real life to reflection and comprehension. The consequence is, that it attacks this actual form of existence, these morals, this faith, and disturbs them; and with this comes the period of decay. The further stage is, that thought tries to collect itself. One may say, that where a

people has come out of its concrete forms of life, where distinction and separation of classes has set in, where the nation approaches its fall, where a rupture has taken place between the inner desires and the external reality, where the ruling form of religion, &c., &c., does not satisfy, where the mind shows indifference towards its living existence or lingers discontentedly in it, where moral life is in dissolution—then only does one philosophise. The soul takes refuge in the realms of thought, and in opposition to the real world it creates a world of ideas. Philosophy is then the reparation of the mischief which thought has begun. Philosophy begins with the decline of a real world: when she appears with her abstractions, painting grey in grey, then the freshness of youth and life is already gone; and her reconciliation is not one in reality, but in an ideal world."