

has led to so many different and even opposite interpretations, being on the one side extolled beyond measure as the highest and last possible step in the evolutionary process of Thought, and on the other side virulently attacked, and represented as a delusive and dangerous doctrine.

V.

Many influences worked together in the development of Hegel's mind, which, more perhaps than that of any other philosopher, passed through various stages, repeating those that are marked in the history of German Idealism by a succession of brilliant and independent thinkers.

One of the most important of these influences was that of the Kantian philosophy, which had allied itself with the exclusively rationalising process which governed the eighteenth century, with the desire of leading thought out of the dangerous and subjective regions of the sentimental and the mystical into the clear daylight of logical definition. Hegel repeated in a more elaborate manner the process which Socrates in ancient times employed in the refutation of the Sophists and Rhetoricians of his age. In fact, he attempted to fix the meaning of those abstract terms which we employ in dealing with the elusive phenomena of the inner world.

He followed Kant in establishing an independent philosophical science which in recent times was by one of Hegel's own pupils termed *Erkennt-*