

*Teaching the History of Philosophy
in 19th-Century Germany*



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WHEN WE TAKE an interest in philosophy, we are not, by definition, asking for historical information about philosophy. Our study of philosophy, however, makes us consider past philosophers and this, I think, also by definition. Philosophizing has become, ever since the 19th century, an activity deeply devoted to reading older texts. Even those who openly deny this fact do so despite having themselves received an education almost entirely historicizing philosophy. This is not to say that philosophy is of no concern to the present or that it has turned into scholarship. The relation between historiographical work and philosophical interest is not easily explained, not least of all because a well-established legend has made history look irreconcilably different from philosophy—even hostile to it. This legend was produced by historians of philosophy, presenting philosophy foremost as a theoretical activity. We have inherited two traditions from the 19th century, when the history of philosophy was shaped into the preferred way of studying philosophy, when it became the way to do philosophy, but when also the legend was spread that philosophy had its own history, a history of arguments, ideas, and systems.

What does it mean to *do philosophy historically*, and when does the legend of philosophy begin? When Hegel tried to give a logical explanation of philosophy's history, was he doing the same thing as Eduard Zeller in his account of Greek thought, or Kuno Fischer in his narrative of modern philosophy? I do not believe so, and I shall suggest in the following that we should carefully differentiate between the different activities commonly referred to as the history of philosophy.¹ I will point out the enormous productivity of the 19th century in terms of printed books devoted

to the history of philosophy. I will also point to the context in which these were produced and used rather than examining individual works or authors. There is an entirely new context in the 19th century, which is the study of philosophy. A proper culture developed around the historical interest in philosophy, and it is this culture I want to sketch here.

PRODUCTIVITY OF THE 19TH CENTURY

The 19th century is prodigiously rich in historical studies, and studies devoted to the history of philosophy prove no exception. Quoting statistics I undertook several years ago, I can provide impressive numbers for the linguistic areas of German, English, and French. There were 120 German, 37 English, and 86 French authors writing book-length texts on the history of philosophy from 1810 to 1899. Even more telling is the number of works they produced: 155 titles in German, 56 in English, and 108 in French. Many German and French works, few in English, comprised more than one volume, and so we get 248 volumes in German, 77 volumes in English, and 165 volumes in French on the history of philosophy, and those were only first editions. (Überweg, with 8 editions before 1900, and Schwegler, with 15, have not been counted.)²

The history of philosophy was in demand mainly because of teaching necessities; the authors were, in their majority, professors: the German authors at a university or a *Gymnasium*, the English-writing authors and translators as college or university professors in England, Scotland, or Ireland. The French authors were mostly teachers at a *collège* or at a university. What in the 18th century still was an exception—the history of philosophy being a proper part of the *historia literaria* tradition and the historian of philosophy being a scholar before anything else³—became a rule in the 19th century. Even if in France, like in the English-speaking countries, new universities were created later than in Germany, there was an obvious connection between writing a book on the history of philosophy and teaching philosophy.

However, the overall picture is not detailed enough to tell us about the driving forces behind all of this historiographical frenzy. Nietzsche in one of his diagnoses of his time spoke of “the historical man” and made him responsible also for the “erudite appearance of

philosophy.”⁴ This does not lead to detailed observation either. In retrospect, we clearly have to acknowledge different types of the history of philosophy. There is the *general history*, encompassing the whole time span from ancient Greek philosophy to the present time. After Tennemann started his 11-volume account in 1798 and finished it in 1819, in Germany there were Hegel and Heinrich Ritter with several volumes each and in addition, a great many one-volume handbooks, as, for instance, Schwegler, Stöckl, or Windelband, to name but the successful ones. In England, George Henry Lewes and Frederick Denison Maurice were most productive authors; in France it was Pierre-Marie Brin; and, translated from the Spanish, González represented the history of philosophy in several volumes. The greater part again was handbook style and sometimes rather short, but still general in scope. So we find with notable exceptions that general histories of philosophy were often produced according to teaching needs.

As a second genre, *histories of ancient Greek and Roman philosophy* required comparatively more philological skills and were written with scholarly ambition too. The success of Zeller’s *Philosophie der Griechen*, first published in four volumes 1844–1852 and translated into four English volumes and three French volumes, can probably not be explained solely by pedagogical requirements, even if the study of Greek and Roman literature was the common means of higher education. The history of Greek and Roman philosophy was at any rate closely linked to a long-standing tradition of scholarship and erudition, whatever extension the so-called classical education had beyond schools and universities. Ancient history was also the field of religious arguments, as witness in France the works on the school of Alexandria by Jacques Matter, Jean-Marie Prat, Jules Simon, Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, and Étienne Vacherot.⁵

Yet another feature characterized *histories of modern philosophy*, accounting for the philosophy since Bacon, Descartes, or Kant and aiming at the actual situation of 19th-century philosophical thought. These works were written not as presentations of different thinkers or schools, as in the case of ancient philosophers, but mostly as histories of arguments, discoveries, and progress in psychology, logic, and science in general. This type of philosophical history came closest to the type of narrative commonly used in the history of

science. Prominent authors who stuck only to modern philosophy were, for example, in German, Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus, Ludwig Feuerbach, and Karl Ludwig Michelet; in English, Dugald Stewart and John Daniel Morell; and in French, Jean-Philippe Damiron and Adolphe Franck.⁶

Other than these three distinct types of philosophical histories, more specific studies existed on the history of moral, mystic, religious, or other philosophy; of logic or parts thereof; of the philosophy of right; of aesthetics; and so on. There were obviously different historical interests at work and different types of history written about. If there was something like a “powerful urge to appropriate everything,” as Prof. Ignaz Döllinger of the University of Munich, wrote in 1867 with respect to historical studies in general,⁷ the histories of philosophy show different types with specific narratives.

Yet there is indeed one fact evident in the overall picture of the production of histories of philosophies during the 19th century, and that is the tendency toward reproduction. In the second half of the century there were more historical works reprinted than written.⁸ There was no need for originality, but there was need for reliability. This tendency toward reproduction changed the character of philosophical historiography. When the young philosopher Schelling complained in 1798 that philosophy had become “a business of the learned,”⁹ he was prematurely and out of philosophical disdain denouncing a phenomenon that manifested itself later much more visibly. Schelling lived long enough to witness his fear come true. By the beginning of the 1850s, shortly before Schelling’s death, scholarship had overtaken philosophy to such a degree that the Prussian minister Schulze complained in a private letter that nothing much seemed of philosophical interest anymore, except logic and the history of philosophy.¹⁰ As if to certify the new spirit of the time, Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg, professor at the University of Berlin, published in the same year, 1852, a collection of essays under the title *Historical Contributions to Philosophy*, remarrying verbatim philology and philosophy with no problem at all.¹¹ Considering the historiographical activities in the field of philosophy, this title was emblematic of his age, the age of “historical contributions” to philosophy.

My thesis is that whatever the nature or the type of history written of whatever kind or period of philosophy, the historical interest can be separated from the philosophical interest not as being totally independent but as being an interest in its own right, with proper motives, aims, and methods.¹² However, the story goes that philosophy itself turned historical during the 19th century and that it was somewhat unsurprising that *historical* contributions to philosophy could indeed be contributions *to philosophy*. The influence of Hegelianism was thought to be important, even if Wilhelm Wundt, anti-Hegelian par excellence, also defended the history of philosophy as a philosophically important field of exercise. Wundt confessed in his autobiography to have lectured with much enthusiasm on the history of philosophy for mostly systematic reasons.¹³ Two questions arise: Is the history of philosophy part of philosophy? and Is “doing the history of philosophy” a task of the philosopher, and in what way?

I will try to answer these questions in two parts. Starting with the observation that neither Hegel nor Wundt *wrote* about the history of philosophy but *lectured* on it, I will first shortly depict the history of philosophy teaching in 19th-century Germany and show that the history of philosophy was indeed part of philosophy—philosophy understood as an academic discipline. Second, I will consider the task of the philosopher confronting the history of philosophy in teaching, which will show the extent to which historical knowledge played a role in the shaping of the discipline.

PHILOSOPHY TEACHING

The following remarks concern 19th-century Germany, where I studied closely the structure and changes of the philosophical curriculum during the 19th century.¹⁴ I start with three quotations: In 1799 the poet Jean Paul wrote about the study of philosophy that any young teacher would begin by trading the goods of others but will surely sell “his own stuff” after having made progress in his discipline. In 1854 Prof. Karl von Raumer of the University of Erlangen found it not suitable for a philosophy teacher to wear “other people’s gowns” and counseled against the use of compendiums in lecture courses. Reflecting on his lifelong academic career, Ernst Troeltsch resigned in 1921, saying, “All we do is maybe not entirely useless, but epigonic anyway.”¹⁵

Three voices framing the 19th century from its beginning, middle, and end. Three voices coinciding in the acknowledgment that philosophy teaching is endangered by historical knowledge. These are thoughtful voices filled with the hope that it could be otherwise, warning against the perils of historicizing, reflecting on the means to do so, meditating self-criticism. Schopenhauer and Nietzsche in their well-known attacks on university philosophy were unforgiving and apodictic by comparison¹⁶; they left no hope for originality or independent judgment in a discipline that was, this much is true, not bound in a proper sense to any meaningful purpose. In Germany, philosophy was officially unrestricted, since it was not taught in school; it was in no way directly influenced by any concrete demand outside the university. There were of course academic philosophers who lost their jobs for political or religious reasons, as was true for Bruno Bauer, Ernst Ruge, Kuno Fischer, and others.¹⁷ The university was not a place exempt from politics, yet as a scientific discipline, philosophy was unregulated with regard to contents and form.

At the time, however, no student would ever have guessed the freedom the professors had in arranging the curriculum, because it would appear pretty much set at any given semester during the 19th century. There were courses on encyclopedia and logic, serving mostly as introductory courses. In addition, there were courses on psychology and anthropology, on ethics and the philosophy of law, on pedagogy, on the philosophy of religion, and on aesthetics.¹⁸ Throughout the century these courses formed a canon of philosophical subjects offered at all 19 German universities,¹⁹ whatever their size, and taught in intervals by pretty much every professor.²⁰ The canon mirrored a somewhat encyclopedic conception of philosophy, which was also propagated in books but for which no explicit agreement can be found. It was the whole structure of the university that was considered some sort of enacted encyclopedia, at least in the first half of the century. In 1898, university historian Friedrich Paulsen stressed the fact that German universities exchanged students and professors on a regular basis. Paulsen compared this coming and going to a “bloodstream” that was uniting the German institutes of higher learning into one body.²¹ It is most likely due to this commerce of teachers and students that German

universities developed in much the same direction, especially concerning the curriculum.

The canon of subjects regularly taught within the discipline of philosophy would have been incomplete without lecture courses on the history of philosophy and seminar courses on individual philosophers or single philosophical texts. These two “historical” courses taken together accounted for 10 percent of all of the philosophy courses of all 19 German universities at about 1810. At the end of the 19th century, they accounted for 50 percent of all courses. Their increase came steadily, regularly, everywhere in the same undramatic rhythm. Throughout the century, the number of philosophy teachers (professors and Privatdozents) at the university level was 80 to 100; it did not change much. Teaching interests did, however, and philosophy professors taught considerably more historical courses at about 1880 than they did at about 1820. For any student late in the century, philosophy became a historicized discipline. When in 1865 the University of Berlin rearranged its lecture course program and put the lecture on the history of philosophy first—before all other courses in philosophy—this was a fine expression of what was going on everywhere: The historical approach replaced the systematic or encyclopedic one. As Prof. Albert Peip of Göttingen University put it in his inaugural lecture in 1863, the history of philosophy had become the introduction into philosophy itself.²²

Throughout the 19th century, the canon did not disappear, and the systematic appearance of philosophy was upheld, yet at the same time the focus implicitly shifted, and the philosophy teacher became professionalized as a historically learned individual. What this means in terms of intellectual activities is complex again. Outstandingly clear is the fact that historical knowledge required new methods of teaching and learning: the seminar was an entirely new instrument. At the beginning of the century, practically all philosophy teaching was done by lecture courses, although some private lecturing took place and allowed for more intimate didactics. The seminar course became altogether frequent only in the second half of the century, but here again its steady increase shows a slow but unhindered general acceptance of this new form of teaching. These courses

were not announced by the title of any subdiscipline but simply by the name of a philosopher or of a text. So Plato and Aristotle, Kant and Hegel were studied with some of their books, as were Descartes, Spinoza, and Schelling, to give the most frequent names.

Seminar teaching was not necessarily bound to an institutionalized seminar. At the end of the 19th century, only 5 German universities (out of 20) had official so-called philosophical seminars—*seminar* here meaning a room, a library, and scholarships for selected students. But the teaching practice was more widespread, and seminar-style courses were offered everywhere. They were devoted to “source study,” as the young *Gymnasium* professor Julius Deuschle wrote in an article on university teaching in 1855. Deuschle was with those who urged to “expand this principle of teaching to the teaching of philosophy in general.”²³ Twenty years later, Jürgen Bona Meyer, university professor in Bonn, witnessed the success of seminar teaching and called it “one of the two pillars of academic teaching”—the other being the traditional lecture course.²⁴

Seminar teaching consisted really of collective reading, discussing texts, and summarizing them in one’s own words, which meant, also, in the students’ own words. The professor stood back behind the “source” of philosophy, which offered itself to everyone prepared and intelligent.²⁵ If reading Plato under the guidance of a teacher and in the presence of a few chosen fellow students meant doing philosophy historically, it also meant, by way of interpretation, doing it hermeneutically. Bound to an authoritative text, philosophy was received as a strict way of formulating ideas that nevertheless needed translation. This translation went two ways: Every reader had to translate forward his problems into the language of the philosopher under study, only to translate backward whatever “answer” there was in those texts. Seminar teaching meant engaging in historical dialogue—and in the end it meant exchanging the authority of the teacher with the authority of an examiner. Historical knowledge had already become proof of qualification in the 19th century. The doctoral dissertation as the first demonstration of the scholarly expertise of a student had its origin in the seminars. French reports on German universities, written in the ’70s and ’80s of the 19th century—for instance, by Gabriel Séailles, Louis Léger, and Edmond Dreyfus-Brissac—underlined seminar teaching as a modern way to

overcome frontal lecturing and praised them as a specific richness of German academic teaching.²⁶

So we have arrived at the answer to the first question: Was the history of philosophy part of philosophy itself? It was indeed part of it as an academic discipline, as a newly developed structure of *the study of philosophy*. However, this fact of European cultural history did not and still does not go undisputed. Nineteenth-century lecture courses on the history of philosophy as well as seminar courses slowly built up a canon of great philosophers who were in turn linked to a canon of important philosophical topics. To study these topics historically meant getting to know them and thereby entering into philosophy itself. To know the history of philosophy in detail was seen as a prerequisite for philosophizing. This was a widespread belief in the 19th century. We can turn to a critic of university philosophy as fervent as Eduard von Hartmann to see it confirmed. Hartmann wrote in 1889, “In order to go your own way in philosophy, you have to have at least studied in detail one period of the history of philosophy in someone else’s view and at least one system in its original language.”²⁷ This seems to have been common opinion among philosophy professors in Hartmann’s time. They saw an immediate passage from historical studies to philosophy itself, and so we get a different answer to the question of whether the history of philosophy was part of philosophy itself. Philosophy professors believed the history of philosophy was a part of philosophy in much the same way they presented it in their lecture—that is, as dealing with identical problems and topics.

Our previous answer must be modified accordingly. The history of philosophy is not only an integral part of the study of philosophy—which did not exist prior to the 19th century; it is also ideologically part of it. The very practice of teaching philosophy historically involved spreading the legend of philosophy as something theoretical and even timeless in nature. The 19th century produced this legend along with the system of philosophical study; it linked the history of philosophy not only practically to philosophy as a discipline but also ideologically to it as an idea.

Many things have been said about the connection between philosophy and its history. It has been a topic of serious debate ever since historical knowledge played a role in the education of

philosophers, meaning, since the 19th century. Different approaches are still much discussed, ranging from historical or historicist understanding to rational or systematic reconstruction. At any rate, philosophers have accepted to cope with the history of philosophy and to find out on their own whatever significance lies in it. This precisely is the outcome of *the study of philosophy*, which has been in place since the 19th century. The history of philosophy is made to contain philosophically interesting material and nothing much else, especially not the teaching system or the disciplinary structure that demands such a restriction in the first place. So the legend works. But how does it work exactly? This is the second question mentioned before: Is “doing the history of philosophy” a task of the philosopher, and in what way?

There is probably no better example than Hegel if one wants to check what Harold Bloom would call “a strong reading”—in this case, of the history of philosophy. Heidegger was certainly right and expressed the opinion of many when he wrote that no one since Hegel had been able to muster the whole of the history of philosophy in a similarly convincing way.²⁸ Moreover, Hegel actually believed in the idea that the history of philosophy can be read philosophically.²⁹ Kant had asked himself whether an a priori history of philosophy was at all possible.³⁰ Hegel plainly wrote it down in his introduction to his lecture courses on the history of philosophy. He turned the reading of the history of philosophy into a legend in the proper sense of the word—a *legenda historiae philosophiae*.

THE LEGEND OF PHILOSOPHY

Hegel lectured several times on the history of philosophy. He was one of the first philosophy professors to do so. His lecture courses were put out in print a couple of years after his death in 1831, and the edition was based partly on his own manuscripts, which were, however, detailed only in the introduction (*Einleitung*). Here Hegel presented his listeners with the concept of a “living spirit,” which would give a second birth to principles laid out in old texts. History represents, Hegel said, “the coming into being of our science [that is, philosophy].” And he borrowed from Schelling the expression *system in development* as another name for the history of philosophy. This is rather well-known and much discussed, ever since Feuerbach

and Marx doubted Hegel's logicohistorical parallelism.³¹ What is less well-known and yet patently apparent to any reader of the published lecture course—of which we have now also several earlier versions based on students' notes—is the fact that his philosophy of the all-understanding spirit *played no role at all* in his actual lecturing. Hegel's introduction and his lecture course had little in common except the belief that it was principles that characterize and differentiate philosophies one from the other.³²

Hegel was a rather merciless lecturer, dismissing harshly the work of historians of philosophy—on which he nevertheless relied heavily, like Brucker and Tennemann. He openly disliked the idea of attributing insights to past philosophers, since it was a matter of thinking reasonably to have insights, not any individual achievement. So many past philosophers were to him so many “structures of thought” (*Gedankengebäude*), and this is why he wanted to cut short all biographical detail. Hegel cut short, but in the way of a commentary. He selected from available sources only what was, for instance, “pertinent to Plato's philosophy.” He was always looking for the main principle, which he also called “the philosophical” (*das Philosophische*), “standpoint” (*Standpunkt*), “the general” (*das Allgemeine*), “the main question” (*die Hauptfrage*), “the main point of view” (*der Hauptgesichtspunkt*), “the main interest” (*das Hauptinteresse*), “fundamental interest” (*Grundinteresse*), “main determination” (*Hauptbestimmung*), and “main maxim” (*Hauptgrundsatz*).³³ Hegel's pupil and friend Karl Rosenkranz, also one of the editors of his works, pointed to the effect of this hermeneutics of principles: “For Hegel philosophy could associate concepts and names like any other science. Thus the Eleatic standpoint and the concept of immutable being, Plato and the concept of true affirmative dialectics, Aristotle and the concept of teleology were identical and so forth.”³⁴ What Hegel did in his lecture course was to give the information provided by historians of philosophy and to strip it down to what he considered essential. He did not adopt the structure of his *phenomenology of spirit* in narrating the story of the living spirit. It is very plain that he just commented on historical knowledge.

One could look for similar undertakings and choose, for example, Samuel Taylor Coleridge and his lecture course on the history of philosophy in 1819 in London or Victor Cousin and his lectures in

Paris in 1828. Both based their comments on Tennemann's history, much like Hegel himself. Although completely different in address and in method, between those two and Hegel there are possible areas of comparison. Coleridge talked as much of great men as Hegel did, and he also used his lecture course to dwell on the relation between religion, mysticism, and philosophy.³⁵ Coleridge had no concept of spirit reading itself into history, which in turn Cousin had, although he did not characterize his spirit hermeneutically. Cousin saw the former one-sidedness of philosophy exemplified by competing systems in the 18th century come to an end in his own eclectic philosophy, which he considered a force of the future.³⁶ Hegel never dared to go that far and maintained to the contrary that "a living spirit" residing in any past philosophy needed a "kindred spirit" to be reborn.³⁷

Hegel was less a prophet than a critic. Faithful to his criteria of the philosophical essential, he dismissed as "philosophically not interesting" the mythical form of truth in Plato, the Roman Stoics, Epicur's metaphysics, the whole of Arab and Jewish philosophy in the Middle Ages, scholasticism, the religious and political writings of Hobbes and Locke, and the popular writings of Fichte, to give a few examples. It is not at all astonishing to hear these verdicts: it is just another mark of the typical, and not extraordinary, character of Hegel's lecture course that those verdicts were *spoken*. In front of his Berlin audience, Hegel was fighting the philosophical past; he wanted to revive and bring to life what he thought was actual thinking. He did a great job, considering the extent to which he was willing to go: he almost never finished his course properly, even when lecturing more than four times a week. He also spent more than half of his time on Greek philosophy and later jumped whole centuries and many systems, because they would not bring new principles. Whatever Hegel was doing while lecturing, he was not putting forward any convincing philosophy that would absorb, so to speak, the history of philosophy and make it part of the system. This is just what he pretended in his introduction. In lecturing, Hegel did what most other philosophy professors would do: he commented on what was known about past philosophies.

Two consequences follow, it seems to me, from this observation. First, the philosophy of history cannot really digest historical

knowledge. This knowledge can be cut, rearranged, narrated otherwise, and so on. It cannot be justified or accounted for, as Hegel claimed in his introduction.³⁸ Historical knowledge cannot be deduced from anywhere else—not even historical knowledge about philosophy from the idea of philosophy. What existing links there are among past philosophies is material enough to deal with: philosophers relate mostly one to another by criticism or adherence. And Hegel was right in demanding that the present must know what kind of history it produces. In the end, a truly philosophical history of philosophy is possible only if the term *history* is replaced by the term *development*. That much we can learn from Hegel.

So the positive insight we gain from the observation of Hegel's lecturing technique is that during the 19th century, the history of philosophy acquired pedagogical importance. Historical work was not primarily scholarship exercised in private, as was the case in the 18th century, but it is scholarship exercised in public. The success story of lecture courses on the history of philosophy during the 19th century made for an entirely new context for historiographical activities: historical narrative became an intellectual challenge for the lecturer who had to struggle for coherence in his presentation of past philosophies.

A last remark on Hegel and the mark he left on the 19th century. It is still widely believed that it was due to him and his immediate pupils that the interest in historical studies grew considerably, roughly around the middle of the century. However, with regard to the increase in lecture courses on the history of philosophy, this view does not hold. Johann Eduard Erdmann, a true Hegelian and a professor at Halle University, lectured there with fellow Hegelians Julius Schaller and Hermann Hinrichs, but they did not contribute more to historicizing philosophy than their non-Hegelian colleagues Rudolf Haym and Johann Gottfried Gruber. When Erdmann wrote in 1870 that many contemporary works in philosophy were read intensely in their historical parts, "whereas the speculative part is not cut at all," this applied to many more than just Hegelians, who by then were declining in numbers anyway.³⁹ We have to switch from the history of ideas—where Hegelianism is a factor—to the history of institutions—where it is the disciplinary status of philosophy and its respective academic practice that accounts for the historicization of philosophy.

CONCLUSION: ACTIVITY AND PRACTICE

Writing a history of philosophy was, before the 19th century, something quite remarkable as a literary activity, exercised mostly by private scholars and historians. It is only in the 19th century that philosophy professors started to take greater interest in this kind of literature. This is true on the whole for the English, the French, and the German production of histories of philosophy. Those histories played a role in the teaching of philosophy—most of all in Germany, where the university system was pretty stable after the closure of smaller institutions following the Napoleonic wars and the subsequent foundation of the Prussian universities at Berlin (1810), Breslau (1811), and Bonn (1818). Since in Germany the number of philosophy teachers did not vary much during the 19th century, we have reliable statistical material to prove the gradual but steady increase in lecture courses on the history of philosophy as well as in seminar courses. This process determined a new context for the literary production of works treating philosophy historically.

Most authors of historical works were then also professors of philosophy, and historical knowledge played an ever-more-important role in the curriculum. A legend arose at the same time, making the history of philosophy an introduction to or a part of philosophy itself. The legend implied that philosophy had “a special relation to intellectual history” or even that it “owned its history.” However, the legend could not account for the new discipline that was created during the 19th century: *the study of philosophy* as a field of regular activity on both the teachers’ and the students’ sides. This new discipline was called philosophy by those who worked in it, and university philosophy by its critics like Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. The study of philosophy reframed historical knowledge about philosophy within the seminar through collective reading and interpreting, and within the lecture course through renarrating and commenting.

When Victor Cousin addressed his audience in 1828, he opened his lecture on the history of philosophy as follows: “We should first clarify, gentlemen, why we are here. Are you driven by vain curiosity and I myself by simple habit, or should we unite our forces to satisfy a higher need?”⁴⁰ Unfortunately, Cousin neither gave an answer nor specified what he meant by *higher need*. It has become clear, I hope,

that the manifold activities that constituted *the study of philosophy* and that made the history of philosophy an important factor in the education of students—who aimed at philosophy and were confronted with the historical approach—can be summarized as activities of teaching and of commenting on historical knowledge, not producing it. But teaching and commentary became the new condition under which the production of histories of philosophy continued. Ever since, there has been no way to conceive of the history of philosophy as being the task of only the historian. And this is the condition we still work in. In going back to the 19th century, we follow the traces of our own discipline. We discover there no “distant” or “foreign” past, but our very own ways of reconstructing it.

NOTES

1. Research in the history of the history of philosophy was started by Martial Gueroult (*Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie* [Dianoématique I], vol. 1: *En occident, des origines jusqu'à Condillac*, vol. 2: *En Allemagne, de Leibniz à nos jours*, vol. 3: *En France, de Condorcet à nos jours*, Paris 1984 and 1988; see also his *Philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie* [Dianoématique II], Paris, 1979) and Lucien Braun (*Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie*, Paris, 1974; see also his *La théorie de l'histoire de la philosophie*, Strassburg, 1985) and much elaborated by Italian researchers led by Giovanni Santinello (*Storia delle storie generali della filosofia*, ed. G. Santinello, 1979 sqq., vol. 1: *Dalle origini rinascimentali alla "historia philosophica,"* Brescia, 1981; vol. 2: *Dall'età cartesiana a Brucker*, Brescia, 1979; vol. 3 (in two parts): *Il secondo illuminismo e l'età kantiana*, Padova, 1988; vol. 4, part 1: *L'età hegeliana. La storiografia filosofica nell'area tedesca*, Padova, 1995; part 2: *L'età hegeliana. La storiografia filosofica nell'area neolatina, danubia e russa*, Padova, 2004; vol. 5: *Il secondo ottocento*, Padova, 2004.
2. Friedrich Karl Albert Schwegler's *Geschichte der Philosophie im Umriss* (first published 1848) went through 15 editions within five decades, and Friedrich Überweg's *Grundriss der Geschichte der Philosophie* (first published in 2 vols., 1862–64) was constantly revised and enlarged and appeared in 1897 in 4 vols. in its eighth edition.
3. U. J. Schneider, *Die Vergangenheit des Geistes. Eine Archäologie der Philosophiegeschichte*, Frankfurt am Main, Germany: Suhrkamp, 1990.
4. F. Nietzsche, *Unzeitgemäße Betrachtungen*, Zweites Stück: *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*, in *Kritische Studienausgabe*, ed. Giorgio Colli and Mazzino Montinari, vol. 1, 2nd edition. Berlin, 1988, repr. Munich, 1999, 255, 282.
5. Jacques Matter, *Essai historique sur l'école d'Alexandrie*, 2 vols. Paris, 1820; 2nd edition entitled *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie, comparée aux principales écoles contemporaines*, 2 vols. Paris, 1840–44; Jean-Marie Prat, *Histoire de l'éclectisme alexandrin, considéré dans sa lutte avec le christianisme*, 2 vols. [in one], Lyon and Paris, 1843; Jules Simon, *Histoire de l'école d'Alexandrie*, 2 vols. Paris, 1844, 1845; Jules Barthélemy-Saint-Hilaire, *De l'école d'Alexandrie. Rapport à l'Académie des sciences morales et politiques, précédé d'un Essai sur la Méthode des Alexandrins et le Mysticisme, et suivi d'une traduction des morceaux choisis de Plotin*, Paris, 1845; Étienne Vacherot, *Histoire critique de l'école d'Alexandrie*, 3 vols. Paris, 1846–51.
6. Heinrich Moritz Chalybäus, *Historische Entwicklung der speculativen Philosophie von Kant bis Hegel. Zur näheren Verständigung des wissenschaftlichen Publikums mit der neuesten Schule dargestellt*, Dresden,

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7. Johann Josef Ignaz von Döllinger, *Die Universitäten einst und jetzt*, Munich, 1867, 44.
 8. U. J. Schneider, "A Bibliography of Nineteenth-Century Histories of Philosophy in German, English, and French," in *Storia della Storiografia* 21 (1992), 141–69; slightly revised also in *Philosophie und Universität* (see below n. 12), 317–55.
 9. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling, "Allgemeine Übersicht der neuesten philosophischen Literatur" [first published in *Philosophisches Journal* 1797 and 1798], in *Schellings Werke*, ed. Manfred Schröter, vol. 1, Munich, 1927, 379.
 10. Letter by Johannes Schulze quoted in Max Jacobson, "Zur Geschichte der Hegelschen Philosophie und der preußischen Universitäten in der Zeit von 1838 bis 1860," in *Deutsche Revue* 30 (April 1905), 120.
 11. Friedrich Adolf Trendelenburg, *Historische Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 3 vols., Berlin, 1852, 1855, 1867.
 12. U. J. Schneider, *Philosophie und Universität. Historisierung der Vernunft im 19. Jahrhundert*, Hamburg, 2000.
 13. Wilhelm Wundt, *Erlebtes und Erkanntes*, 2. Auflage Stuttgart, 1921, 314–22.
 14. U. J. Schneider, "Philosophy teaching in nineteenth-century Germany," in *History of Universities* XII, ed. L. Brockliss, 1993, 197–338; with revisions now also in *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 41–150.
 15. Jean Paul [Friedrich Richter], "Brief über die Philosophie. An meinen erstgeborenen Sohn Hans Paul, den er auf der Universität zu lesen hat [1799]," in *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Norbert Miller, Abt. I, vol. 4, Munich, 1962, repr. 1996, 1014; Karl von Raumer, "Kathedervortrag. Dialog," in *Die deutschen Universitäten*, Stuttgart, 1854 (Geschichte der Pädagogik

- vom Wiederaufblühen klassischer Studien bis auf unsere Zeit, part 4), 207; Ernst Troeltsch, "Meine Bücher," in *Die deutsche Philosophie der Gegenwart*, ed. R. Schmidt, vol. 2 (1921), 13.
16. Arthur Schopenhauer, "Über die Universitätsphilosophie" [first published 1851], in *Sämtliche Werke*, vol. 4, Stuttgart and Frankfurt am Main, 1986, 173–242; Friedrich Nietzsche, "Über Universitätsphilosophie" [written 1867f.], in *Werke und Briefe* (Historisch-Kritische Gesamtausgabe), ed. H. J. Mette and K. Schlechta, vol. 3, Munich, 1935, 395.
 17. Cf. Heinz and Ingrid Pepperle, eds., *Die Hegelsche Linke. Dokumente zu Philosophie und Politik im deutschen Vormärz*, Leipzig, 1985, 200–11 (Ruge), 235–372 (Bauer); *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 281–85 (Fischer).
 18. This rubrication follows in fact the titles as announced in printed lecture programs that were published first in Latin giving the names of the professors for all faculties, arranged according to seniority, with their respective courses, published in the mid century also in German, and later only in German, detailing the disciplines within faculties by a systematic order of courses, with names of professors attached.
 19. *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 81–103; universities in German territories from 1800 to 1900: Berlin (founded 1810), Bonn (f. 1818), Breslau (f. 1821), Erlangen, Freiburg, Giessen, Göttingen, Greifswald, Halle, Heidelberg, Jena, Kiel, Königsberg, Leipzig, Marburg, München, Münster (only 2 faculties), Rostock, Strassburg (f. 1872), Tübingen, and Würzburg. Münster and Strassburg were not considered for statistical evaluation.
 20. The lecture programs clearly show that professors took turns in teaching to avoid individual specialization and to cover the canon for the students on a regular basis. Big philosophy departments could not avoid doubling and tripling courses on offer, whereas small departments omitted some canonical courses for a single semester but rarely longer.
 21. F. Paulsen, *Die deutschen Universitäten und das Universitätsstudium*, Berlin, 1902, 561: "Die Gesamtheit der deutschen Universitäten bildet eine nach außen abgeschlossene, nach innen zusammengeschlossene Welt; ein beständiger Wechsel der Studenten, aber ebenso auch der Dozenten durchrinnt sie, wie den Körper der lebendige Blutstrom. Den ausländischen Universitäten, namentlich denen des englischen Typus, ist diese Erscheinung fremd."
 22. Albert Peip, *Die Geschichte der Philosophie als Einleitungswissenschaft. Eine Antrittsvorlesung*, Göttingen, 1863.
 23. Julius Deuschle, "Über den Unterricht der Philosophie auf Universitäten," in *Zeitschrift für das Gymnasialwesen* 9 (1855), 118: "So ist nach meinem Bedünken die beste Grundlage des philosophischen

Unterrichts ein wohlgeordnetes Studium der Quellen selbst—eine Art Quellenstudium.”

24. J. B. Meyer, *Deutsche Universitätsentwicklung. Vorzeit, Gegenwart und Zukunft*, Berlin 1875 (*Deutsche Zeit und Streitfragen* 48), 84.
25. Seminars in German universities meant in most cases that there was (a) a room with books and a table to study them together, (b) a course held in such a room, and (c) sometimes also a budget for books and scholarships for excellent students. Seminars in the institutional sense (a) and (c) were established early for philological and historical disciplines, whereas in philosophy there were only three at the end of the 19th century. But seminar teaching (b) was common even before, taking place in lecture rooms or at the professors' houses. Cf. Wilhelm Erben, “Die Entstehung der Universitäts-Seminare,” in *Internationale Monatsschrift für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Technik* 7 (1913), 1224–64, 1336–48; E. Pfeleiderer, “Philosophische Seminare,” in *Im Neuen Reich* 7 (1877), 147; cf. *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 114–19.
26. Edmond Dreyfus-Brisac, *L'université de Bonn et l'enseignement supérieur en Allemagne*, Paris, 1879, 157; Gabriel Séailles, “L'enseignement de la philosophie en Allemagne,” in *Revue internationale de l'enseignement* 6 (1883), 972; Louis Léger, “Les programmes des universités allemandes,” in *Revue des cours littéraires de la France et de l'étranger*, Année 6, no. 44 (Oct. 1869), 735 sq.
27. E. v. Hartmann, “Wie studiert man am besten Philosophie?” in *Nord und Süd* 51 (1889), 61: “Erst derjenige kann philosophisch gebildet heißen, der mindestens eine Periode der Geschichte der Philosophie in fremder Darstellung und mindestens ein philosophisches System aus den Originalwerken gründlich bis in alle Falten kennengelernt und durchgedacht hat. Daß keiner hierbei stehenbleiben kann, der in der Philosophie ernstlich weiter kommen will, versteht sich von selbst; aber ein solcher ist dann genügend vorbereitet, um sich seinen Weg allein zu suchen.”
28. See Martin Heidegger, *Beiträge zur Philosophie (Vom Ereignis)* [written 1936–39], Frankfurt am Main, 1989 (Gesamtausgabe vol. 65), 213 sq.
29. G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie*, 3 vols. [first published 1833–36], repr. in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Frankfurt am Main, 1970, vols. 18–20, see vol. 20, 466; cf. the manuscript edition of Hegel's introduction: Hegel, *Vorlesungsmanuskripte* vol. 2: 1816–31, ed. Walter Jaeschke (*Gesammelte Werke* 18), Hamburg, 1995, 38.
30. Immanuel Kant, “Lose Blätter zu den Fortschritten der Metaphysik” [notes concerning the question if there had been any progress in metaphysics since Leibniz and Wolff, published first by Friedrich Theodor Rink, Königsberg, 1804], in *Kants Werke* (Akademie-Ausgabe),

- vol. 20 (Kants handschriftlicher Nachlaß, vol. 7), Berlin, 1942; cf. Giuseppe Micheli, *Kant Storico della Filosofia*, Padua, 1980; "Filosofia et storiografia: la svolta kantiana," in *Storia della Storiografia* (n. 4), vol. 3/2, 879–957; *Die Vergangenheit des Geistes* (n. 3), 297–309.
31. About Hegel's claim to have read the history of philosophy philosophically, cf. Ludwig Feuerbach, "Hegels Geschichte der Philosophie," in Feuerbach, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Wilhelm Bodin and Friedrich Jodl, vol. 2, 2nd. edition, Stuttgart, 1959, 4; Rudolf Haym, *Hegel und seine Zeit. Vorlesungen über Entstehung und Entwicklung, Wesen und Wert der Hegelschen Philosophie*, 2nd edition, ed. Hans Rosenzweig, Leipzig, 1927, 448, 454.
 32. Walter Jaeschke pointed out this discrepancy in his introduction to Hegel, *Geschichte der Philosophie. Orientalische Philosophie*, Hamburg, 1993 (Philosophische Bibliothek 439), cf. xxiii, xxvii, cf. *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 212–46.
 33. *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 223.
 34. Karl Rosenkranz, *Hegel als deutscher Nationalphilosoph*, Leipzig, 1870, 218: "Hegel will sagen, dass die Philosophie, so gut als jede andere Wissenschaft, mit einem Namen, oder wie man auch spricht, mit einer Autorität einen notwendigen, ewig wahren Begriff in Erinnerung bringen könnte... Der elatische Standpunkt und der Begriff des sich selbst gleichen Seins, Plato und der Begriff einer wahren affirmativen Dialektik, Aristoteles und der Begriff der Teleologie usw. sind identisch."
 35. Coleridge lectured in a London tavern about the history of philosophy: Kathleen Coburn, ed., *The Philosophical Lectures of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, hitherto unpublished, London and New York 1949; cf. *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 158–80.
 36. Cousin lectured several times about the history of philosophy; his course of 1828 gained him a widespread audience, having been, shortly before, reinstated as professor at the Sorbonne: *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie* [first published 1828], repr. 1991 (Corpus des Oeuvres philosophiques en Langue Française); cf. *Philosophie und Universität* (n. 12), 180–212; Patrice Vermeren, *Victor Cousin—Le jeu de la philosophie et de l'État*, Paris, 1995.
 37. Hegel, "Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems der Philosophie," in *Gesammelte Werke*, vol. 4: *Jenaer Kritische Schriften*, ed. Hartmut Buchner and Otto Pöggeler, Hamburg, 1968, 9; also in *Werke in zwanzig Bänden*, Frankfurt am Main, 1970, vol. 2, 16.
 38. Hegel claims his own introduction was a "justification" of the history of philosophy: cf. *Werke*, vol. 18 (n. 29), 18.
 39. Johann Eduard Erdmann, "Die deutsche Philosophie seit Hegels Tod," in *Grundriß der Geschichte der Philosophie*, vol. 2, 2nd edition, Berlin, 1870, 839. In 1861 Karl Rosenkranz counted altogether 71 German Hegelians,

among them 24 professors of philosophy; cf. Rosenkranz, *Alphabetische Bibliographie der Hegel'schen Schule*, in *Der Gedanke* 1 (1861), 77–80, 183–263.

40. Cousin, *Cours de l'histoire de la philosophie* (repr. edition, 1991), 23. “Il faut d’abord, Messieurs, que nous sachions si nous sommes amenés ici, vous par une curiosité vaine, moi par une simple habitude, ou si en effet nous mettons nos efforts en commun, non pour tourmenter plus ou moins ingénieusement des chimères, mais pour satisfaire un besoin plus élevé.”

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