

“What, If Anything, Has Not Been Called Philosophy or Philosophizing?”¹ On the Relevance of Hegel’s Conception of a Philosophical History of Philosophy

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Identity politics and its call for justice for marginalized social groups has also entered academic philosophy. Its curriculum and historiography are criticized for being far from inclusive, and its canon is supposed to be a mere social construct made by white men about dead white men.

It seems to me that in this discourse—which covers only a very small aspect of the expansive and important discourse on diversity and inclusiveness—it is insufficiently reflected that in the call for philosophical diversity and inclusiveness, a certain concept of philosophy and its history is presupposed. I shall show this by analyzing arguments concerning the integration of non-western philosophy as well as female philosophers into the

¹ V 6, p. 14. Hegel is cited as follows: *Wissenschaft der Logik. Erster Teil* = I; *Wissenschaft der Logik. Zweiter Teil* = II; *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse (1830)* = E; *Phänomenologie des Geistes* = PG; *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* = R; *Werke in zwanzig Bänden* = TWA; *System und Geschichte der Philosophie* = SG; *Einleitung in die Geschichte der Philosophie. Orientalische Philosophie*, in *Vorlesungen* Vol. 6 = V 6; *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte*, Vol. 12 = V 12; *Vorlesungsmanuskripte II (1816-1831)*, in *Gesammelte Werke* Vol. 18 = GW 18. See the bibliography for additional information on the editions used. All translations from German texts into English are mine, although I have benefited from consulting current translations.

historiography of philosophy and confronting them with Hegel's conception of the history of philosophy. It is important to note that my deliberations are solely methodological in nature. I do not deal with the quality of the products of the marginalized groups. As philosophers, we all like to be inspired by the best, and integrating them can only be favorable. But what does it mean to belong to the best?

I. Philosophical Presuppositions of the Contemporary Debate

Let me start with an argument stemming from *social epistemology*. It contains, at its core, the problem of the contemporary debate on philosophical diversity. In its extreme form, the argument even suggests giving up the philosophical canon as such, the reason for this being that philosophy would profit if not everybody possessed the same prior knowledge. By combining diverse insights, more comprehensive knowledge would emerge.²

Obviously, this argument presupposes a certain understanding of what philosophy and its history are. In this case, philosophy is implicitly conceived of as a science that does not

² Bright 2020. As the debate on diversity is strongly politicized and hence dealt with in newspapers, too, I refer to such media. Kocka (2020) pointed out that the standards of good scientific practices (in the broadest sense of the word—referring to the natural sciences, arts and humanities, and the social sciences) should also be taken into account in media aimed at a broader audience. Against this background, consider the following remarks from an interview with philosophers regarding the canon of philosophy (Dutilh Novaes, Heij, and Peels 2020): Whereas one of them (Heij) is of the opinion that Hegel could be deleted from the canon, as he is incomprehensible—merely turning Heij's own lack of understanding into the standard of philosophy—, another (Peels) holds Kant to be overrated and proposes the inclusion of Elizabeth Anscombe in the canon, because of her work about intentionality—an extreme example of how in postmodern times flashes of insight can take the place of philosophical systems of thought. As if we already knew what the place of the problem of intentionality in the edifice of philosophical thought was!

differ fundamentally from the special sciences. That is to say, the development of philosophy consists of adding new knowledge to the already existing bulk of knowledge. Hegel calls this type of progress of knowledge “juxtaposition.” In contrast to this view of development, many idealist philosophers stress that philosophy is a science of principles or foundations and thus not a special science but a science of the whole, or of totality. The history of such a science continuously shows the change of this totality (V 6, p. 12).³ The argument seems to misjudge the specific subject matter, method, and system of philosophy. Rather, it follows the line of reasoning of a sociology of knowledge and is therefore not philosophical but *empirical* in nature.⁴

This non-philosophical, empirical dimension also prevails in discussions about, for instance, the *(non)presence of women in the history of philosophy*. Based on empirical research, it is easy to show that in terms of the quantitative relation of the sexes, women are underrepresented in the canon of philosophy.

³ From the perspective of transcendental philosophy, see, for instance, Rickert’s thorough 1931 study on the differences between the special sciences and a science of totality in light of their relationship to their own history.

⁴ This is, of course, not an objection against addressing the significance of diversity for increasing the quality of scientific research. Intemann (2009, p. 261) distinguishes seven advantages of diversity in scientific research, based upon the idea that the complexity of scientific problems requires a plurality of perspectives of research. His plea for improving the formation conditions of scientific knowledge first presupposes a concept of philosophy, as well as a concept of its relationship to the history of philosophy. Second, improving formation conditions at best systematically leads to a new philosophy (or several new philosophies), which would itself become a part of the history of philosophy. Thirdly, the “great philosophers,” e.g., Plato, Aristotle, Kant, or Hegel, have been the subject matter of diverse research for centuries, millennia even. Radder (2019, pp. 224 ff.) also emphasizes the importance of diversity in scientific research, but with the more elaborate claim that diversity as a means to achieve scientific progress should always be subjected to critical analysis and not become a new dogma. It goes without saying that everybody with sufficient talent is welcome in science in general, and philosophy in particular. What is decisive here is the quality of their contribution.

Nevertheless, this empirical insight is insufficient to justify a modification of the philosophical canon. A modification would require an assessment of whether the underrepresentation is justified by the quality of the respective contributions to philosophy. Thus, it is rather surprising that in important studies which plea for a greater involvement of women, an analysis of the quality of the content of the philosophical thought of women is missing. I refer here to the famous 1998 study by O'Neill or the more recent publication by Ebbesmeyer (2020). Whereas the latter analyzes the reasons for female absence and relates the growing involvement of women to the process of emancipation, and hence to a political and thus an empirical development,⁵ the former additionally presents a model of the historiography of philosophy and, fortunately, intends to address the issue of the truth of the philosophical thought developed by women (O'Neill 1998, pp. 39 ff.). Nevertheless, she does not really analyze those thoughts, and she particularly does not develop a concept of philosophy and its history that might function as a criterion for the assessment of thoughts and, consequently, as the basis for determining the history of philosophy. Such a concept remains presupposed. It is a desideratum of the contemporary debate on diversity and inclusiveness. It should be developed, otherwise integrating women would boil down to mere decisionism. On top of this, if the analysis focuses on the so-called "issues" of philosophy, e.g., the role of feelings and emotions in ethics, the history of

⁵ It is telling that Ebbesmeyer (2020, pp. 451 ff.) praises Brucker for including women in his *Bilder-Sal heutiges Tages lebender und durch Gelahrheit berühmter Schriftsteller*, whereas she reproaches him for not presenting them in his monumental *Historia critica philosophiae*. For Hegel, by contrast, the *Historia* is a deteriorated type of history of philosophy because it is a presentation from the perspective of Wolff's philosophy and therefore "highly unhistorical." The history of philosophy should be historical; it should contain what a philosopher said. "Premises and consequences" belong to the further development of philosophy; they are the "philosophy of somebody else" (V 6, pp. 361, 43 f.). In this respect, Hegel continuously criticizes attempts to renew older philosophies.

philosophy is apparently conceived of as a history of “problems” (*Problemgeschichte*). Philosophical problems, however, only exist within the framework of an overarching concept of philosophy that can account for them as philosophical problems.

This problem of a presupposed concept of philosophy and its history also appears when we switch from the dimension of gender to the *cultural-geographic dimension* of the debate. In 2019, Arnzen published an interesting study on integrating non-western, particularly Arabic-Islamic, philosophy while at the same time shedding the Eurocentric focus. Although in this study concepts such as “philosophy,” “history of philosophy,” “philosophical historiography,” “philosophy in the Islamic world,” etc., are explicitly dealt with, Arnzen’s deliberations have the form of an empirical-historical approach and are characterized by the pragmatic decisionism that goes along with it. Hence, the conceptual clarifications do not result from philosophical thoughts. From a mere historical point of view, the historiographer is confronted with non-identical and even interfering “definitions” of philosophy. Instead of clarifying why this is the case, if there are specific philosophical reasons for it, the historiographer just feels forced to decide or choose what meaning of philosophy suits her purposes best, in particular the purpose of coming to a non-Eurocentric universal history of philosophy (Arnzen 2019, p. 81). The concept of philosophy that results from this decision is not a concept justified philosophically. Such a concept, again, remains presupposed. Moreover, philosophical issues are reduced to social, cultural, and economic constellations; a genuine philosophical determination of philosophy is missing. By contrast, if one focuses on philosophy’s claim to truth, it becomes clear that the basic questions of philosophy also evolve from the normative claims effective in such empirical constellations. The question of what philosophy is, is always also a philosophical question. Moreover, what has been said about the external determination of the concept of philosophy also applies to the concept of the history of philosophy.

It turns out that, finally, the history of philosophy is conceived of as a mere historical appearance, which, like any other human endeavor, can be studied by various disciplines (Arnzen 2019, pp. 83 f.). Obviously, a philosophical concept of the history of philosophy is what is lacking.

Interestingly enough, in this context a philosophical question arises that is very important for Hegel's conception of the history of philosophy and thus in need of a philosophical treatment. Namely the question of whether the historiography of philosophy is itself a philosophical activity and if so, what its method and status are (Arnzen 2019, pp. 85 f.). Any empirical approach to these questions has always already presupposed a philosophical answer—although the empirical approach is not able to justify its answers in a methodical sound way.⁶ A mere decision for a pluralistic and combined approach to the history of philosophy does not suffice. The plea for plurality presupposes a concept of philosophy and the history of philosophy in which the diverse philosophical and non-philosophical approaches have their particular place.⁷

⁶ Beaney, too, offers an empirical approach to the problem of the history of philosophy. From this perspective, history shows a manifoldness of perceptions of the history of philosophy, lines of reception, preferences and styles of philosophy, as well as new discoveries. The last has recently concerned female philosophers, whereas the philosophical canon according to Beaney (2019, p. 727) has for centuries offered merely a “handful of great white dead male Western philosophers.” Beaney, then, presents seven conceptions of philosophical historiography. His presentation presupposes a concept of what it intends to present, without addressing this presupposition explicitly, let alone justifying it philosophically.

⁷ A broader audience has become acquainted with the cultural-geographic dimension of the debate on diversity by the much-discussed article written by Garfield and van Norden (May 11, 2016). They expanded their ideas, including the reactions to their article, in the form of a book (see van Norden and Garfield 2017). Van Norden and Garfield claim that non-western philosophies offer solutions to problems current in western philosophy; however, they do not elaborate on this in detail. For Marchal (2018), *Taking Back Philosophy* is not an

An additional argument for diversity, often mentioned in texts for a broader audience (van Norden and Garfield 2017; Bright 2020) as well as those aimed at academic philosophers (Beaney 2019, p. 727; Bax and Halsema 2017, p. 3) is that it is “interesting,” “inspiring,” “beneficial,” etc., to study ideas beyond the canon. This *argument of the interesting*, however, just presupposes a criterion for assessing ideas as “interesting,” etc., i.e., a determination of the concept of philosophy that is supposed to be enriched by these ideas. This abstract idea of the “interesting” was—with respect to a scientific clarification of the issue at stake—so vapid and cheap even in Hegel’s time that Hegel (V 6, pp. 15 f.) himself sarcastically remarks that it is the common view (in particular of historicism) that the history of philosophy consists of a “stock of philosophical opinions,” having the consequence that studying the history of philosophy is reduced to an idle curiosity or erudition that results in knowing many superfluous things. By contrast, according to the proponents of the argument of the interesting, philosophy can only gain by allowing more perspectives than presently dominate. Again, this argument presupposes a concept of philosophy and its history that is in need of meticulous philosophical determination. For Hegel (V 6, p. 16), the protagonists of this view reduce (be it intentionally or unintentionally) philosophical knowledge to mere opinions. If it is held that it is “beneficial” to become “acquainted” with the “opinions and thoughts of others,” that it “stimulates our thinking power and leads to this or that good thought,” then this is just a more sym-

academic treatise but a book that wants to create a political impact. Yet hymns to multiculturalism are not philosophical arguments speaking for a revision of the philosophical canon. Of course criticism from a multicultural perspective should not be excluded *a priori*, but its claims should be assessed, too, instead of preempting its correctness. Assessing its claims requires a standard, including an adequate concept of philosophy and the history of philosophy. Such a standard is not restricted to a specific culture but emerges from reason and hence from the instance that binds diverse cultures as cultures.

pathetic way of saying that it “initiates another opinion” and that “science consists of unfolding opinions from opinions.” Yet in science as science there are no opinions, no δόξα.

This tendency to make particularity absolute, which is intrinsically related to identity politics and its urge for diversity, is probably most succinctly brought to light in what we could call the *argument of recognizing*. According to this argument, it is supposed to be a disadvantage of the present canon that it discourages (potential) students of philosophy because they do not recognize themselves in a canon of white males (Bax and Halsema 2017, p. 3; Bright 2020).⁸ Hegel (GW 18, p. 141), again, comes to the opposite appraisal: to be eager for rational insight, cognition (*Erkenntnis*), not mere acquaintance (*Kenntnis*), is that which should be presupposed as the “subjective need,” (V 6, p. 9), i.e., the need of the student in studying science. A university is not a wellness center but an institution of education. More precisely, the subjective aim — the aim of the agent studying philosophy — is that the student is introduced to philosophy by studying the history of philosophy. Philosophy (like any other science) is, in its content, independent of subjective preferences and the well-being of the agents studying it. It is the other way around: the history of philosophy is the point of orientation for studying philosophy.

Of course this only concerns the pure content-related, objective dimension of the matter at hand. A concrete canon is never determined fully from the “concept.” For Hegel, here the general, the concept, is directed into empirical singularity, into the realm of “variability and contingency,” in which not the concept but “reasons” (*Gründe*) are asserted, final decisions that are beyond the determination of the concept in and for itself (E, note on § 16; cf. notes on §§ 250 ,214). Also regarding history, the distinction between idea and appearance is relevant, notwithstanding the

⁸ It is noteworthy that even using a supposedly “wrong” word can lead to acts of dismissal, especially in academic contexts. See for instance Allen 2020.

fact that traces of the concept can be diagnosed throughout. This latitude is particularly relevant, as the argument of recognizing is primarily applied with regard to the curriculum of philosophy, whereas the debate about the canon primarily concerns the history and historiography of philosophy. In the design of a philosophical curriculum, it is not only scientific perspectives that are dominant, especially not in our times of neoliberalism, which conceive of a university, basically, as a company aiming for profit and having profit as its standard. But I leave this issue aside here (see instead Krijnen 2011; 2018). To be sure, for idealism—and strictly speaking philosophy is only possible as idealism—the idea is the principle that shapes reality. Therefore, I shall now focus on the idea of a history of philosophy. It is presupposed in any canon of philosophy, our spiritual activities can be more or less in compliance with it.

II. Philosophical and Non-Philosophical Contemplation of History

In light of the non-philosophical character of the contemporary debate and its presupposed concept of philosophy and its history, I will first highlight Hegel’s distinction between philosophical and non-philosophical history. Hegel distinguishes three different types of contemplating history, which interrelate in a systematic and methodical fashion (hence not chronologically or culturally): two non-philosophical types of historiography—“original history” and “reflective history”—and a “philosophical history” (GW 18, pp. 121 f.).⁹

In Hegel’s elaborations, it is of special interest that historical knowledge is guided by interests, or is, so to speak, value-laden. In the course of the development of the different types of

⁹ On Hegel’s conception of historiography, see Rojek 2017 and Winter 2015.

non-philosophical contemplation of history, historiography becomes more sensitive to its own methodical determinacy too. It turns out that a particular content is addressed from general (*allgemeine*) perspectives. Finally, in what Hegel calls a history of particular objects (*Spezialgeschichte*), it seems even possible to determine something historically in a way that, at the same time, its relationship to the whole (of history) becomes clear. In Hegel's philosophical contemplation of world history, then, it is the concept of freedom that functions as the overarching absolute general perspective. The principle of freedom overcomes the relative-generality of the perspectives of an original and reflective history, their "particular generality" (V 12, 14). The philosophy of history determines history in the perspective of freedom and its progression.

Yet not only does the generality of the determining perspective distinguish a philosophical from a non-philosophical contemplation of history, it is the epistemological character of philosophical knowledge too. Like the other sciences, philosophy is a thinking study of objects. More precisely, its thinking is a peculiar mode of thinking: comprehending thought (*begreifendes Denken*) (E, § 2). It is thought that also knows the principles or presuppositions of its own activity, and hence a doctrine of radical foundations. As a science, philosophy is obliged to posit its own presuppositions scientifically (E, § 1). With regard to a non-philosophical contemplation of history, this means that the idea or reason that guides it remains a mere presupposition. Its knowledge remains presupposed and is only conscious on the level of acquaintance, a result of a mere belief or decision. This is not the case in philosophy (GW 18, 140, cf. 146). Philosophy is the science of the idea, of the absolute idea. In history, this absolute idea appears not in the element of pure thought but in the element of spirit (E, §§ 377 ff.). A history of philosophy, as a history of thinking the absolute idea, thus has to present the absolute-ideal determinacy of the idea historically. Strictly speaking, the most

basic problem of philosophy is its own determinacy. It is also the basic problem of a philosophical history of philosophy, whose history is the history of this determinacy.

The perspectives that guide a non-philosophical contemplation of history are addressed in Hegel’s speculative idealism and comprehended from “thought,” the “idea,” the “concept,” or “subjectivity” as the principle of any objectivity. The same applies to philosophical knowledge of the history of philosophy: the perspective of the activity of its determination has to be clarified scientifically. In this respect, Hegel supplies us with a well-thought-out conception of a philosophical history of philosophy (I refer to the conception from the so-called “Berlin lectures”).¹⁰ What are its essentials?

III. Philosophical History of Philosophy

They become clear by taking Hegel’s famous thesis of the parallelism of pure, logical determinations of thought and the historical succession of philosophies into account. This thesis shows the radicality of Hegel’s approach to a philosophical history of philosophy.

The least we should expect from a philosophical history of philosophy is that it recognizes the problems a past philosophy intended to solve, takes into account its claim to truth and the arguments belonging to it, and is finally capable of presenting a comprehensible relationship between the philosophies that have occurred in history. In all these respects, Hegel’s attempt still seems relevant today. Hegel not only justifies the history of philosophy as a philosophical problem, he also shows how historical understanding and philosophical comprehension merge.

¹⁰ Hegel’s Berlin lectures contain the final version of his doctrine of the history of philosophy. On its development from the earlier conceptions, see Düsing 1983, pp. 7 ff.; 1989.

They interrelate conceptually, are founded in the matter at hand in philosophy, not in external factors of a specific age or philosophies in a specific age. Hegel elevated the philosophical history of philosophy to the level of a science: such a history is neither a collection of curious opinions, decorated with the curriculum vitae of their protagonists, nor does it add new insights to an already fixed subject matter, typical of the progress of the special sciences. Rather, the philosophical history of philosophy presents the process of the philosophical self-knowledge of spirit over the course of time, the development of philosophical thought in time.

According to Hegel, the “succession of the systems of philosophy is the same [...] as the succession of the logical deduction of the conceptual determinations of the idea”; the “basic concepts” of the systems of philosophy appearing in history stripped off from “externalities” are shown to be the “various levels of the determination of the idea itself in its logical concept” (V 6, p. 27; cf. E § 14). Conversely, in its “main moments,” the progress of logic taken in itself is the progress of historical appearances.¹¹

¹¹ Hegel’s thesis on parallelism has been criticized from the start. For early criticism, see Düsing 1983, pp. 7 ff.; Schneider 1968, pp. 47 ff.; Schneider 2007. Basically, nothing has changed. It is still rejected widely. See Jaeschke 1993, pp. XV ff.; Jaeschke 2000, pp. 487 ff.; Düsing 1983, pp. 1 f., 38 f. and 244 f.; Düsing 1989, pp. 136 f., 142 ff.; Höhle 1988, p. 211, note 107; Höhle 1984, pp. 85 ff. Although Fulda (2007) emphasizes that Hegel’s parallelism should not be interpreted in a narrow sense, he also criticizes Hegel harshly (Fulda 1999). In his criticism, Fulda focuses so much on historicism as the background of Hegel’s thesis that he underestimates Hegel’s distinction between a non-philosophical and a philosophical contemplation of history. Despite its critical point against historicism, Hegel’s basic concern is to clarify the peculiarity of the historicity of philosophy. His criticism of historicism is a part of this more encompassing project. Historicism, Romanticism, Postmodernism—from Hegel’s perspective they all celebrate a philosophy of a non-binding nature that dissolves itself. Hegel’s “basic point” (*Hauptpunkt*), which he elaborates on in his history of philosophy, is that the history of philosophy, like philosophy itself, is a “system in development” (V 6, p. 25). Hence, the basic point concerns the determinacy of philosophy itself.

It is important to note that Hegel comes up with this thesis in the context of the problem of a philosophical history of philosophy. This presupposes parallelism. Whereas from the perspective of identity politics or a sociology of knowledge this might count as the monstrosity of an unworldly perverse exclusionary desire for power or an unfruitful narrowing of research perspectives respectively, from the perspective of reason Hegel’s parallelism makes good sense.

First, every philosophy has an educational historical dimension in the sense of a *Bildungsgeschichte* (V 6, p. 8; cf. pp. 5–9, 39 f.): it is part of the “holy chain of tradition” (Herder). It absorbs, preserves, and reproduces the tradition on the one hand and transforms it on the other. As a consequence, it elevates the subject matter of philosophy to a new level of its determinacy.

Second, this dimension of determinacy involves any historical appearance being able to be *identified* as philosophy if and only if a concept of philosophy is presupposed. This concept is thus not justifiable in a historical fashion but only systematically by means of philosophical deliberations (V 6, pp. 9, 14, 19 f.; SG, pp. 261 f.). Without a criterion of the matter at hand, a historiographer of philosophy would be unable to identify the manifoldness of appearances as philosophy: “What if anything has not been called philosophy or philosophizing?” (V 6, p. 14; cf. pp. 45 f.). What a philosophical appearance is, is not something at the whim of a philosophical historiography of philosophy, the result of a mere decision or assumption. Rather, “the first question” is, “if something is philosophical or not” (SG, p. 262). More precisely, without presupposing a system of philosophy—as the standard of the matter at hand—it is impossible to write a history of philosophy (*ibid.*, pp. 261 f.).

Third, this applies to the construction of progression in the history of philosophy too. The system of philosophy is not only necessary for identifying philosophical appearances; these appearances also need to *relate* to one another as appearances of one

and the same subject matter (i.e., philosophy). That is to say, the “place” a certain philosophy obtains in the history of philosophy has to be determined (SG, p. 262).¹² The many philosophies in the history of philosophy are ordered according to the measure that is philosophy.

This makes apparent a fourth essential: the *fundamental status of philosophical logic*. For philosophy, taken seriously as “the objective science of truth” (V 6, pp. 9, 18), only the philosophical discipline of logic—from Hegel’s point of view, Hegel’s logic—can supply the principle of identification and ordering of a philosophical history of philosophy. The logical determinations of thought form a system that develops itself in the element of pure thought from the indeterminate immediate of the beginning to its complete determination (in Hegel’s logic, from pure being to the absolute idea). This development is necessary (in Hegel’s logic, organized “speculatively”). Truth, as Hegel says, has the “drive” (*Trieb*) to develop itself. Its development is the development of its own determinacy, self-determination (ibid., pp. 23 f.). The concrete thus develops from the abstract.

In short, philosophy is a “system in development” (ibid., p. 25). The same applies to the history of philosophy. In their main moments, the system and the history of philosophy are identical. Here, too, the beginning is “most abstract,” most indeterminate, the first philosophy “the most general, indeterminate thought,” and the last, the most “concrete, developed” (ibid., p. 40; cf. pp. 44 f.). For Hegel, the history of philosophy as philosophy is the systematization of thought in time, a systematization that is equivalent to a concretization. For this reason, the latest philoso-

¹² For an “external” history of philosophy, not composed according to the standards of philosophy, everything is a historical deed. In contrast to this view, the philosophical one: what a philosophical deed (or fact) is and where it should be placed, is the “*question*” (SG, p. 262). Therefore, without thorough philosophical knowledge, even a system of philosophy, a history of philosophy cannot be written.

phy must sublimate all past philosophy. It needs to be a “mirror of the whole history” (ibid., p. 45).

As the history of philosophy is the development of One idea, it is not merely about something past or an object of mere historical contemplation (V 6, pp. 46 f.). From the perspective of philosophy, philosophy is not at all past; its history is not the history of something past. Rather, the history of philosophy is present in the present as philosophy. Just like in the logical system of thought every determination of thought has its particular place in the whole, every historical appearance of philosophy represents a certain level of development.¹³ Having such a place is exactly what constitutes the “true value and meaning” of a past philosophy (ibid., pp. 47 f.). The history of philosophy is the “systematization of thought” (SG, p. 119) in time according to the system of pure determinations of thought, and its order is only justifiable by the system of logic.

Of course, the idea of a system of philosophy nowadays does not have many friends.¹⁴ Hegel, however, for good reasons, holds that a historiographer of philosophy cannot be “impartial” but is in need of a “system,” must “judge,” and “add” something of his or her own (ibid., p. 261).¹⁵ The requirement of presenting the history of philosophy impartially, put differently in contemporary terminology, in its own right, seems a matter of fairness. Yet the “peculiarity” of the history of philosophy is that only a historiographer “who does not understand anything of the subject matter” can fulfill this condition, resulting in “mere historical acquaintance” (*Kenntnis*) (ibid.). As a science, the historiography of

¹³ “Representation” in the sense of Fulda’s “wide interpretation.” See footnote no. 11.

¹⁴ For a criticism of this tendency, see Krijnen 2008.

¹⁵ Hegel has Tennemann in his mind here, see the hints by Düsing (1983, pp. 24 f.) In the line of a rather extensive note by Hegel (E, § 549), we could say that the historiographer of philosophy has to be interested in truth as his subject matter and the standard for addressing the deeds of spirit.

philosophy presents in the mode of necessity the development of thought, of the idea, of truth in time. For identifying and ordering philosophical appearances, the historiographer needs to have knowledge of the idea (V 6, pp. 28 ff.).¹⁶ The historiography of philosophy is a science not as a doxography of philosophies (let alone philosophers), an “unordered bunch of opinions,” but as a system of the idea or the truth in time: the idea in its “empirical shape” (ibid., pp. 28 ff.).

Fifth, the deliberations so far also imply that philosophies can be traced back to a *basic constellation* that functions as the foundation for everything else. Traditionally, this constellation is logical-ontological in nature. It represents the current status of philosophy as a science of foundations. Hegel identifies it with a principle or a group of principles of his logic. Against this background, Hegel is often reproached for imposing a system to the history of philosophy externally, leading to a distortion of its empirical dimension. This reproach itself, however, does not do justice to Hegel’s deliberations about, among other things, the concreteness of the concept, the presupposedness of the idea, the differences between a philosophical and a non-philosophical history, and the urge for a radical justification of presuppositions.

Finally, Hegel’s distinction between an *internal and an external history* is relevant for capturing what a philosophical history of philosophy is (V 6, pp. 9 ff.). It becomes clear how philosophy, having truth as something eternal and imperishable as its subject matter, can have a history at all. The external history of philosophy is a history of constellations that explain the reality of “emergence, dissemination, flourishing, degeneration, resurgence, a history of its teachers,” etc. (ibid., p. 11). The internal history of philosophy, in contrast, is the history of its subject matter. Whereas the subject matter of Christian faith, for instance, is non-historical and hence

¹⁶ Determining and justifying this idea is a concern of philosophy (see, e.g., V 6, pp. 20, 22, 26).

remains the same (ibid., pp. 10 ff.), the special sciences progress through “juxtaposition” (ibid., p. 12), that is, by attributing new determinations to the same subject matter. Unlike the latter, the subject matter of philosophy is the whole as the principle of everything. In philosophy, everything is at stake, the totality and not a part of the whole. In a philosophical history of philosophy, it is shown that the various philosophies, each of them a conception of totality, turn out to be relative totalities, only moments in the development of philosophy. Thus, the subject matter of philosophy continuously changes fundamentally in its content. No substantial philosophy has ever been refuted, while at the same time they are all refuted by the latest philosophy: their basic principle or constellation is transformed as it is no longer the absolute it was supposed to be (SG, p. 128; cf. TWA, p. 8, § 86, Z 2; II, pp. 217 f.).

IV. Conclusion

The contemporary debate about the canon of philosophy lacks a sufficient clarification of the relationship between philosophy and its history. It may be the case that Hegel’s conception of a philosophical historiography of philosophy is in need of an internal differentiation of several types of philosophical research (see Düsing’s proposal in Düsing 1983, pp. 2 f., 245). Yet understanding past philosophies should not be conducted only historically, in the sense of the discipline of history or, as Hegel says, as a “reflective” contemplation of history. It should also be conducted philosophically. This involves a well-founded concept of philosophy and the schemes of interpretation of the history of philosophy it implies.

Moreover, Hegel’s conception of contemplating history even allows a mere historical, “reflective” approach to the history of philosophy in the perspective of diversity and inclusiveness. It

would concern a history of a particular object (*Spezialgeschichte*). The history of philosophy as a history of philosophy, however, has a different format: the format of a history of conceptions of the totality of objective thought, starting with its most immediate, abstract shape, and becoming more determined and concrete, both in terms of its internal multiplicity and its unity. Unity and multiplicity are, so to speak, the criteria of the progress of philosophy. This refers to logic—the doctrine of objective thought—as the fundamental discipline of philosophy in which its dynamics are developed. Only as a mirror of the history of philosophy can philosophy be what it is supposed to be according to Hegel: “its time captured in thought” (R, § 16 f.). That for this reason the history of philosophy should continuously be scrutinized with regard to its potency to capture our time in thought, is an insight Hegel would wholeheartedly embrace.

The history of philosophy is too important for philosophy to leave it to “reflective” historians. The origin of a philosophical history of philosophy emerges from philosophy itself. A reflective history of philosophy deals with philosophy as an objective shape of spirit, a part of world history. As a shape of philosophy, in contrast, the history of philosophy concerns the truth claim of objective thought. In dealing with this concern, it relates the history of philosophy to contemporary philosophy or, more precisely, to the presupposed system of philosophy of the historiographer. Our beloved Sophia is not a figure of unabashed mores anybody can fiddle around with.¹⁷

¹⁷ Referring to discussions with participants of the conference *Hegel's 250th Anniversary: Too Late?*, which took place in Ljubljana from September 7th to 9th, 2020, it is important to note that to future philosophy, it also applies, for example, that it will be a conception of the absolute idea in the element of spirit, that it will be the science of unity, etc. There is no such radical change of philosophy possible that would transform philosophy as philosophy. It will always be a shape of the absolute idea in the element of spirit. It will consist of comprehending thought, knowledge of spirit as spirit in the mode of the concept

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and thus necessity. In this respect, freedom is the overarching perspective of any future philosophy, both from the logical perspective and that of spirit. For other endeavors of spirit, the label “philosophy” is just misplaced. What if anything has not been called and will be called philosophy! This implies, too, that in Hegel’s philosophy the internal order of the shapes of absolute spirit is not motivated in an empirical historical fashion but in terms of a unity of philosophical logic and the spirit of modernity. Here, spiritual reality is conceived of as the actuality of freedom. Of course, empirically there is always the danger of falling behind the requirements of freedom (on this, see for example Vieweg’s contribution in this volume). A fine example of the latter is the political dominance of neoliberalism since the fall of the Berlin wall: an adulteration of freedom in the name of freedom. Freedom as the principle of thought and action is an adventure with a continuous risk of falling. With regard to the methodology of philosophy, Hegel’s philosophy of spirit argues from the concept, not from empirical constellations (not taking this sufficiently into account is a major flaw in Honneth’s interpretation of Hegel’s philosophy of right and its relevance [see Krijnen 2017]). In his philosophy of the history of philosophy, Hegel emphasizes this continuously, and his “attitudes of thought towards objectivity” (E, §§ 26 ff.) do not concern empirical constellations but constellations of principles.

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