THE ECLECTICISM AS PROGRAMME: PHILOSOPHY AND SCIENCE IN EUROPE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

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Abstract: The author suggests that eclecticism is one of the core traits of philosophy in the second half of the 19th century, as a result of the placing of philosophical problems in general – in the first half – in the main doctrines and currents (as is the case of those of Comte and Hegel). He upholds that such eclecticism was fostered by the need to provide a philosophical framework for a whole new, broad and complex scientific problematic, from physics and biology, to psychology and sociology. Furthermore, he suggests that eclecticism, far from being a mere confusing and disorganised blend of ideas from different sources, is somewhat underpinned by a common programme, which is transversal – in time – to the whole of philosophical thought. The author concludes by analysing the implications and impact of this programme on 20th century philosophy.

Keywords: Comte, eclecticism, idealism, Hegel, Hegelianism, historiography, materialism, positivism, spiritualism, theory of science.

Resumo: O autor sugere que o ecletismo é um dos traços essenciais da filosofia na segunda metade do século XIX, em consequência da colocação dos problemas filosóficos de maneira geral, na primeira metade, pelas principais doutrinas e correntes (como é o caso das de Comte e de Hegel). Defende que um tal ecletismo foi desencadeado pela necessidade de fornecer um enquadramento filosófico para uma problemática científica inteiramente nova e complexa, da física e biologia, à psicologia e sociologia. Além disso, sugere que o ecletismo, longe de ser uma simples mistura confusa e desorganizada de ideias provenientes de fontes diferentes, foi de alguma maneira norteado por um programa comum, que, na altura, era transversal ao pensamento filosófico no seu conjunto. O autor conclui analisando as implicações e impacto deste programa na filosofia do século XX.

Palavras-chave: Comte, ecletismo, espiritualismo, Hegel, hegelianismo, historiografia, idealismo, materialismo, positivismo, teoria da ciência.

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Introduction: lending coherence and consistency to eclecticism

Speaking in "Europe" in the title of this article, I mean – in the first place – not only its countries in general, but its philosophical (or transnational) space as a whole, and particularly the reception of the German's authors in (namely) France, United Kingdom or Italy, and vice-versa. This kind of historiography is not always practiced by the monumental History of Philosophy which develops mainly at a national level, but, as we will see, is absolutely essential for understanding the issues of this article. The reception I mentioned (as that of France regarding Germany) involves several factors which are not strictly philosophical and that we must take in account; for example, not all the works of the main German's authors in the first and in the second half of the 19th century have been translated into French or English; and when this happened, in this or that particular cases, the presuppositions of the translators seem to be very disputable. August Vera's translations of Hegel's works, in France, are an example of what I just said (Hegel, *Logique de Hegel*; *Philosophie de la nature de Hegel*; *Philosophie de l'esprit de Hegel*). But – in the second place – by that term, contrary to the monumental historiography, I do not mean simply the authors (more or less relevant) in that period; I have in mind essentially the themes and problems that have crossed philosophical research as a whole. That such themes and problems have in fact existed, and that they have been, in some sense, common to the different currents of thought, can be explained by the existence of a close connection, at that time, between philosophy and science, which is unique in the history of Occidental philosophy since the ancient Greece.

One of the most remarkable features of philosophy in Europe – so considered – in the second half of the 19th century is the proliferation of the so-called "minor philosophers". They were authors who had not produced any – more or less systematic – original thought or doctrine which would determine the course of philosophical ideas and should, therefore, allow them to figure prominently in the history of occidental philosophy. After the decease of Hegel (1831) and Schelling (1854) in Germany, and Comte (1857) in France, the exceptions – like Kierkegaard, Schopenhauer, or Nietzsche – can be counted on the fingers. However, what can be said about E. von Hartmann or W. Wundt in Germany¸ H. Spencer and J. McTaggart in the United Kingdom, or V. Cousin, F. Ravaisson and É. Boutroux in France, to name only a few? It was the time when all what the "minor" philosophers generally supposedly did, for the most part and in the absence of truly original thought, was to transform and reformulate the thought of the "great philosophers". Copleston's concept of "The transformation of Idealism", in his monumental *History of Philosophy*, can be given as

example of that kind of reading (293-304, 304-334). More specifically, it was the time of *eclecticism*, i.e. when the former attempted to conciliate – or otherwise mix confusingly and inappropriately – precisely the original ideas or doctrines of the latter, thus demonstrating somewhat despicable philosophical inadequacy. This was how – starting in the 20th century – we learnt to read these authors. Eduard von Hartmann's philosophy, in German, and Victor Cousin's philosophy, in France, can be given as examples of that kind of reading (about Hartmann, see Copleston 289-292). That eclecticism may enjoy some level of originality and relevance, that eclecticism alone may be a project and, to some extent, a programme for philosophy, as some of these "minor philosophers" vehemently claimed (Cousin, *Histoire* 27-29), is often not given due consideration, neither by the great philosophers themselves, as Schelling in his relation with Cousin seems to attest to (*Système de l'idéalisme transcendental*, 377-385), nor generally by philosophy historians to the present day. But why not? Unlike traditional and widespread theory that likens philosophy history to a parade of illustrious figures from different periods, which this history was limited to, eclecticism—alternatively and from another perspective—was like a large nursery of ideas, a true lab where thought and discourse of "great philosophers" and "minor philosophers", the influence of the ones on the others, are closely and indelibly intertwined, without – generally speaking – being acknowledged and attested by any party, particularly by the former. Consequently, eclecticism is neither a diversion nor a limitation, but is at the heart of actual philosophical work. It can also be an insurmountable and staunch consequence of the development of actual philosophical ideas, i.e. a fully positive *de facto* status of such ideas, particularly when perceived as applicable to the questions raised by science and society at large. What we find precisely in some of the most relevant contexts of philosophy in the second half of the 19th century, as we will see herein, is that – given the development and progress of a broad and complex problematic of scientific and epistemological nature (from physics and biology to human sciences), and given the impossibility to underwrite or accept entirely, within this new framework, the ideas of some of the great philosophers who marked the first half of the century decisively (as is the case of Hegel and Comte) – an overriding and original synthesis of such ideas was sought, and in the light of this synthesis they became really unrecognisable.

The thesis hereby submitted points in that direction: it is possible – if only heuristically speaking, as a mere work hypothesis – to outline and characterise a *meta-theoretical* framework – or a broad context of the kind – underlying the eclectic position of philosophical issues in the second half of the 19th century generally speaking, including in such position

most of the European currents and trends at the time, notwithstanding their diversity; hereby showing how they have a *common programme* of sorts, albeit an essentially eclectic one. In other words, it is possible to lend coherence and consistency to eclecticism during this period. Furthermore and as concluded, it is possible to clarify some of the reasons of the programme's failure and, consequently, of the emergence – not without some continuity from the past – of 20th century philosophies (as it was the case of logicism and hermeneutics). From these two methodological points of view, the aforementioned meta-theoretical framework or context, in spite of all of its limitations from the start, may provide an essential tool for interpreting in a new light the history of philosophy from the 19th century to date.

Hermeneutics: the language of eclecticism

One of the most striking features of philosophical thought in the second half of the 19th century generally speaking, and of eclecticism in particular, is that both arose from – and have as the underlying motive – the need to provide justification for the broad and complex issues of sciences at the time, from maths, physics and biology to psychology, sociology and other human sciences. In particular, as suggested ahead, the purpose is to justify philosophically some epistemological problems regarding not only each of these sciences – as is the case, in particular, of physics – but also, actually, *all of them as a whole*, as an organised body of human knowledge, presenting – if one can say so – a unified idea of them, and hereby providing a true synthesis between science and philosophy. (Further ahead I will call your attention to some interesting parallels and analogies that can be drawn between this idea and the one that is upheld in the first quarter of the 20th century, through R. Carnap, in the Vienna Circle and logical positivism). Most of the issues I have mentioned originated in the past, for example, those related to the Newtonian foundations of mechanics (Hertz; Boltzmann; Mach), although others—perhaps the most relevant and closely connected with the last ones—emerged at the time, were perfectly timely and had to be clarified, which was namely the case in physics of termodynamics (or "energetics", as it was called at the time) (Ostwald; Duhem; Poincaré), or, in biology, of evolution theories, like Darwinism (Haeckel; Hartmann; Spencer). Some historiography, at the time or immediately thereafter, was attentive to the subject (Lange; Classen; Rey). Although they remained pertinent on more than one account, the large philosophical frameworks in the first half of the 20th century – that of Comte and Hegel, in particular – seemed quite

limited and insufficient to clarify and explain this new emerging problematic of science. Apparently, other frameworks were needed for this and what they could be was far from clear. This is the broad *leitmotiv* of eclecticism, more or less widespread in the second half of the 19th century, and of the extraordinary proliferation at the time and in all quarters of the so-called "minor philosophers", i.e. the authors who – for one reason or another – are not part of the pantheon of philosophy. Most of these authors' writings have a merely historical and secondary meaning for us today. Recall that this was the time when philosophy was supposed to provide, like Descartes in *Principles of Philosophy* (186-187), the trunk for sciences, and the necessary foundations for all of them in general and each in particular. Therefore, the philosopher was, by definition, a scientist, who in turn could (or should) be a philosopher.

One of the perverse consequences of this situation, specially as far as the relation between philosophy and the new emerging science is concerned, is that, it not being possible to accept the theories of the great authors of the past (like Leibniz, Espinosa, Kant, Hegel, Comte and Schelling) *without reviewing and to some extent caricaturing them*, while not being able to reject and completely abandon them, the language of eclecticism becomes itself quite confusing and deceiving at several levels. It is necessary to decipher it in order to arrive at the true philosophical text, underlying the readable and apparent one. Lange's (very large) concept of materialism, as D. Nolen observes in his introduction to the French translation of Lange's book on the history of materialism, is an example of that (XXXVI) . The same happened with the use of that concept by F. Ravaisson in his *Rapport sur la philosophie française* (64-70). But, from the point of view of the historical-philosophical connections, another kind of confusion seems to exist. For example, even when Hegel is criticised for reducing philosophy to a "intellectual mechanism", as Ravaisson in France put it in his *Rapport* (140), one can finally, without confessing to it, underwrite some of his fundamental theses, such as the existence of an essential identity between thought and the object thereof (276); and the same applies to both other great philosophers in the first half of the century, e.g. Schelling and Comte, and particularly to modern age philosophers, like Leibniz, Espinosa and Kant (specially Leibniz). As suggested earlier, while it is true that some authors—like Cousin—acknowledged their eclecticism, and turned it into an actual programme, eclecticism has not always been taken on board and accepted by all of them. In effect, sometimes these reference authors in the history of philosophy who are commented and criticised were not even read; yet they were hastily awarded misleading and second hand ideas and conceptions. In most cases, these authors are invoked in relation to epistemological issues in a stage

of science's development that they did not even have the opportunity to know in their time, including the controversy between the mechanistic and energetic interpretations of nature, and the controversies underpinning the new evolution theories. This appeal is, therefore, forgiveable. For the same reason it is concurrently highly questionable. Aware of this state of confusion in the dissemination of Leibniz then, Yvon Belaval, historian of French philosophy, observed quite appropriately:

> C'est dans la confusion qu'un auteur se difuse. On le trouve partout et on ne peut le saisir nulle part. De nombreux textes lui ressemblent, mais sa paternité devient douteuse dès que l'on tente de la prouver …. Confusion, diffusion, mais aussi invention. Les erreurs de lecture, les méconnaissances ou les connaissances de seconde main modèlent peu à peu un nouvel auteur. L'histoire de la philosophie est une création continuée, une invention constante. On invente un leibnizianisme, est c'est ce leibnizianisme qui féconde les esprits. Quand on revient aux textes mêmes, on s'aperçoit du décalage. (221)

On the matrix of philosophy in the second half of the 19th century: the origins of eclecticism

In spite of all that has been said in relation to eclecticism, one can trace a historical-philosophical, meta-theoretical framework underlying it and which also provides the grounds for the development at the time of philosophical thought in general. Possibly, such framework does not apply *exactly and specifically* to each of the authors at the time in particular (as happens with the known monumental historiography), and is therefore disputable; but it may be so pertinent that it provides the backdrop for the topics and issues that guided and shed light on the reflections of most of these authors; it can help us understand them better. From this perspective, as we started off by saying, it can provide – as a reading grid – a useful tool for rethinking the period in question in a new light, taking into account, in particular, some essential characteristics which influenced early 20th century philosophy; it is also from this point of view that we first introduced the issue of eclecticism in that period, i.e. not as a deviation or limitation of philosophy (as it is traditionally seen), but as a true programme of the latter.

Émile Meyerson, in France, following some suggestions of Wilhelm Wundt, in German, has delivered some pointers on rethinking the development of philosophical thought in the second half of the 19th century, as we will be proposing further ahead (Meyerson 123; Wundt, *Einleitung in die Philosophie* 252-270). However, these pointers were first provided

in a constrained and confusing fashion by the "minor" and generally (nowadays) unknown-philosophers of that period. The essential idea is that philosophy was somehow seeking a synthesis of the "programmes" – conflicting in many respects, while converging in other – of Comte and Hegel, of positivism and idealism, as the programme for the philosophy that is to be done and developed. An absolutely essential point in common with these "programmes" is the development of a hierarchy of sciences, or levels of knowledge (an encyclopaedia), ranging from mechanics or the more essential determinations of matter and movement to the human sciences themselves (sociology and political philosophy in Comte). This will provide not only the unifying matrix of human knowledge as a whole, from the bottom to the top of the hierarchy, but also the fundamental framework for reading and interpreting, from the beginning to the end, the history of humanity. That there are significant (or even fundamental) differences between these two philosophers' representations of hierarchy is not surprising. For example, Comte – unlike Hegel – refused to include psychology in the hierarchy (*The Positive Philosophy* 9-10). More significantly, he refused to perceive the hierarchy of sciences as a hierarchy of the levels of being, since – according to him and contrary to the Hegelian thesis of the identity between thought and its object – we never get to know things themselves, but only their relations (2-5). From one perspective, however, these differences are secondary: what is essential – in both ases – is that the hierarchy organises and unifies – step by step – human knowledge as a whole, both from an epistemological stance and historically-philosophically speaking. From this perspective, it establishes relations and links between different – albeit closely connected – levels of knowledge, which may be used to reorganise knowledge in the scope of each individual science in question, that is, to outline the scope and programme the relevant research, as Comte and Hegel – each in their own way – had begun to do. (Reducing phenomena to relations or rejecting the concept of cause, in Comte's philosophy, is an example of that reorganisation.) This was then, i.e. in the second half of the 19th century, extremely interesting for a theory of science – a theory in which the philosopher is a scientist, and vice-versa – faced with the pressing need to explain and fit in all sorts of new phenomena, from physics and biology, to psychology, sociology and human sciences in general. When projected in history this outlook could, however, become a powerful tool for interpreting society, culture and religion politically, actually as Comte and Hegel themselves had done originally and for the first time (Comte, *The Positive Philosophy* 12-14; *System of Positive Polity* 47-100; Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*). (The topic of nationalism and the existence of the nation-state – in the last quarter of the 19th century – pro-

fusely illustrate this connection between philosophy and politics (Ribeiro 2012).) The latter orientation was not less relevant than the former for most philosophers at the time, including the ones who were eminently politically-oriented, as is the case of anarchism in general, and of Proudhon (in the mid 19th century) and Kropotkine (in the late 19th century) in particular (Proudhon 129-288; Kropotkin 25-44).

This holistic vocation of an encyclopedic view of sciences, which would embrace human knowledge as a whole and would put it at the service of political thought, explains from the start – at least at first sight – the real success of both positivism and of Hegelianism from the second half of the 19th century until practically the early 20th century (Simon; Negri; Plé, Stern). It explains in particular why these currents formed actual "schools", as was the case, namely, of Litré's positivism and others, in France, or of Hegelianism in France (Mudimbe; Janikaud; Quillien), Italy (Rossi), United Kingdom (Huang) and the United-States (Easton). Russell's first philosophy (1896-1900) is a late example of Hegelianism, which should be interpreted in the light of what was said and is actually closely connected with 20th century philosophy (*My Philosophical Development* 29-41). In this respect, and as previously suggested, we should not let ourselves be deceived by the ambiguous – eclectic – language of a large number of authors during that period who do not recognise themselves in these schools and hastily reject one of these philosophies in particular – Hegel's, for example – or the both globally. In the end, they embrace some of the fundamental ideas in the context of the one or other version of hierarchy. One must read them again – or reread them – from this perspective. Boutroux's spiritualism – in France – is a good example of this (*De la contingence*). Positivism and Hegelianism – in spite of some fundamental differences which I will mention next – agreed on the essential, which includes precisely the adoption of the idea of a hierarchy as the metaphysical framework of the theory of science and – hereby – of human experience as a whole. This is what explains why – as the Italian Hegelian August Vera claimed in the mid sixties – positivism at the time could be a disguised – confused and inconsequential – form of Hegelianism. According to him, positivist philosophers – particularly as far as the theory of science was concerned – were saying what Hegel and Hegelians had said before, only using a different language and without admitting it (Hegel, *Philosophie de l'esprit* LXXX).

The thesis according to which scientific knowledge as a whole and the status, nature and functions of each science in particular must be analysed in the light of any one hierarchy – not necessarily of Comtean or Hegelian origin or trend – is common in science theory in the second half of the 19th century. It is present in several and different philosophical quadrants

in the relevant period. Strictly speaking, in historical terms, it dates back to the second half of the 18th century and the French encyclopaedists in particular. What happened almost a century later was that, by attempting to justify this thesis, the philosophers were inevitably involved in Comte and Hegel's interpretations thereof. As suggested, it was fostered by the epistemological problematics of some sciences – like physics –, where there was clearly a hierarchy of the phenomena it addressed (namely that of mechanics and energetics), which – in turn – imposed the need to explain the link with that of biology and – particularly – the ones addressed by the theory of evolution. Eduard von Hartmann (as is well know) wrote about this (*Wahrheit und Irrthum im Darwinismus*). In this context – in other words, based on the assumption that there is an organised and unified hierarchy of phenomena in nature, where the ones involving human beings occupied a special place – it is not surprising that such hierarchy can be extended to – more or less recent – sciences which seek anxiously to clarify their status against other sciences, like psychology and sociology. Wilhelm Wundt's work – in Germany – can provide an excellent example for psychology (*System der Philosophy* 368-406). As for sociology, the works of some less well-known philosophers, Eugène de Roberty and Alfred Fouillé, illustrate what we have just said (Roberty; Fouillé, *Le mouvement positiviste*). Anyhow, the hierarchy addressed human knowledge as a whole, and not only specific phenomena or more or less specialised knowledge concerning each science in particular, as today we would be tempted to interpret the subject – under the so-called "philosophy of science". Unlike what happened in the 20th century in other versions of the hierarchy, like that of Carnap and of logical positivism in general, whose proto-history (with the first Russell) lies precisely in this problematics of an encyclopedia of sciences in the second half of the 20th century, the dominant concern was not so much to explain how these phenomena can be reduced to a fairly fundamental base (whatever it may be) in the light of which they would be understood and unified, although this aspiration – curiously enough – was already present in some authors, for example in Wundt's psycology (Wundt, *System der Philosophy* 582-585). The aim was to learn how to explain progress from one level of the hierarchy to the next and, concomitantly, the relevant changes: how matter – addressed by mechanics – becomes energy, then shows up as life, and later as will and awareness, etc. In other words, to discover the underlying principle to that progress or that change, which – given the importance thereof – could be legitimately elected as the fundamental principle of philosophy (Hartmann's Unconscious, Fouillé's *idées-forces*, Boutroux's contingency, etc.). Most philosophical problems and controversies in the second half of the 19th century – like the well-known dispute

between a naturalist and/or materialist conception and a spiritualist and/or idealist one – involved precisely the interpretation of this principle, as illustrated in Friedrich Lange's *History of Materialism*, on the German case, or in Félix Ravaisson's *Rapport sur la philosophie en France au XIXe siècle*, on the French one. Generally speaking, it was against this backdrop that at the time post-Cartesian philosophy was resumed, specially the solutions that the philosophies of Leibniz, Spinoza and Kant had presented for these issues.

Yet, whichever version of the hierarchy had been adopted, the truth is that a large portion of the problems related with the relevant philosophical foundations involved, to some extent, finding a synthesis of Comte and Hegel's conceptions – conflicting in several respects, although complementary in other. An essential point, which has already been mentioned, is that in the first philosopher – unlike the second – the hierarchy does not concern the phenomena per se, but only their relations. Consequently, these phenomena-relations which we finally arrive at when we move from the world (physics) to mankind (sociology) – in the context of what Comte calls "objective synthesis" – do not concern human nature itself. (This was the main reason, as mentioned before, why Comte excluded psychology from the hierarchy.) At that time, such restriction was generally unacceptable, although – as proven a few years later by Proudhon's conception of the hierarchy, which already reflects the influence of Comte and Hegel's philosophies, or Spencer's interpretation of the matter – it was not impossible to reconcile the idea that we only know relations with the idea that, by this means, what we know about the phenomena is what we are given to know (Proudhon 41; Spencer 68-96). The crux of the problem is that – contrary to what appeared to result from the *Encyclopaedia* of the German author, but that Schelling had more acceptably laid down in his *Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature* – the evolution from the World to the Man (in Comte's hierarchy) could not be read as an evolution of the natural world per se, i.e. of a world which – at a point in time – becomes aware of itself through human representation (Schelling, *Ideas* 9-42). This is apparently suggested in Comte's theory, according to which having arrived at Man (sociology) we can take – under a new light – the opposite course, or "subjective synthesis" (*The Positive Philosophy* 25-26). But, as we know, there is no "objective syntesis" in Comte. That limitation was an insurmountable barrier when philosophers attempted to interpret his hierarchy in the light of modern theories of natural evolution, like Darwin's. Which explains Comte criticism (then recurrent), according to which there was a need for "an indivisible objective and subjective synthesis" (Fouillé 336). (One must state that, in the last analysis, there was no real incompatibility – philosophically speaking – between the

conceptions of the hierarchy introduced by Schelling and Hegel and the aforementioned theories (which emerged later), as the explanations on the matter, delivered namely by Eduard von Hartmann, strongly suggest. After reinterpreting metaphysically the hierarchy and projecting it, not only in the history of humanity, but also in the history of the Spirit itself (whichever the name in different approaches), evolution theories could be perfectly accommodated there and find a plausible explanation (Prosch 317-318).

One could reread Comte in the light of Hegel, by interpreting metaphysically Comte's hierarchy and the idea of an indivisible synthesis (as we mentioned before), which August Vera regretted rather disappointedly. However, this was not the only path in general, because Hegel's encyclopedia in the first quarter of the 19 century, when applied to science in the second half of that century, also raised strong reservations and forced compromise, even among neo-Hegelian philosophers (McTaggart 203-232, 252-259). No doubt, it has had faithful followers, as John Stallo (*The Concepts and Theories*; *General Principles*). But, as illustrated by the first Russell and his appeal simultaneously to Kant and Leibniz in *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry*, neo-Hegelianism as far as the theory of science is concerned – namely in geometry and physics – was more of a research project or programme than a doctrinal framework established from the start (Griffin 368-369). One essential point to remember is that, at a time essentially focused on putting philosophy at the service of science and explaining its problems, the status which Hegel had awarded to (the philosophy of) nature, as the Idea out-of-itself, seemed to relegate it to a secondary plane of inferiority and draw an unacceptable line between science and philosophy itself (*Hegel's Philosophy of Nature*, 3-26). Another, equally important, point is that those essentially logic and conceptual means by which Hegel had explained the transition from nature to the Spirit, or the way the Idea becomes for-itself, were apparently not the most appropriate for representing in all of its complexity the physical and anthropological basis which sustains this transition. Most of the problems of the theory of science at the time – for example, those which concerned the concepts of force and/or energy – were precisely linked with this representation and – as with physics and the relations between mechanics and energetics in particular – they suggested an entirely different approach; it is within this framework that a return to Leibniz's theories and to his monadology in particular takes place (Hannequin 323). Criticism of Hegel's conceptualism – of the fact that he apparently reduced the theory of science to logic – was commonplace at the time (Boutroux, *Études d'histoire de philosophie allemande* 95-102). It has indelibly marked the reception of this philosopher's philosophy of nature to this day, which

nonetheless – as some contemporary historiography has proven – was not at all deserved (Renault 285). Anyhow, in both cases (the status of the philosophy of nature, conceptualism), a concept of hierarchy like the one in Schelling's *Ideas* seemed, generally speaking, much more suitable and pertinent than Hegel's. Which did not mean that his thesis of identity was entirely subscribed to. With a few exceptions, as may have been the case of Hartmann's Unconscious and his relation with Schelling's and Schopenhauer's philosophies (*Philosophy of the Unconscious; Schelling's positive Philosophie*), not many supported the idea of transcendental philosophy (a knowledge of knowledge), for the same reasons that Hegel's conceptualism was rejected. They moved from nature to the Spirit, while moving in the opposite sense was refuted. Once more, French spiritualism (the late one) illustrates this clearly. Boutroux, in *La nature et l'esprit*, having in mind the German absolute idealism and searching for a view that would avoid both the "immanence" and the "transcendence" of the Spirit, was finally declaring the impossibility of a transcendental philosophy (31-32). His theory of science was still "philosophy of nature", partly in the sense that German idealism awarded to this concept, but it was deprived of its actual transcendental meaning.

Apparently, according to some readings of the epoch, we can find all of the fundamental theses of Schelling's philosophy of nature – in the *Ideas* in particular – in Hegel's philosophy, with a different language and concepts. And this explains why, among those who began rejecting Hegel's philosophy, Schelling's very own philosophy – in spite of generating greater sympathy – was often confused, in France mainly, with "Hegelianism" by the so-called "minor philosophers" (Ribeiro, "Sur la réception" 309-310). What August Vera had said about the link between Hegelianism and positivism applied now equally to the relation between Hegelianism and Schellinguianism (Hegel, *Philosophie de l'esprit* LXV--LXVII). As previously suggested, Schelling's nature philosophy was essentially attractive due to its focus in each step of the hierarchy on ideas like "force", "development" and other, which – unlike Hegel's "intellectual mechanism" or his conceptualism – not only seemed to agree with human experience at large, but essentially – and more appropriately – with the problematic itself of the theory of sience, namely, the discussion held at the time between mechanism and energetism. And it is in this context that we witness the return to Kant's teleology and, specially, to Leibniz's dynamism (to his reconciliation at an early stage between these two large interpretations of nature) in philosophy of the second half of the 19th century generally speaking (Nolen). Leibniz, and not so much Kant, Comte, Hegel or Schelling, was the leading figure of this time, and, subsequently, the highest expression of eclecticism which it featured then – and of which

Leibniz was actually accused (Vacherot XLIV-XLIV). Wherefore, if such a thing as a synthesis between philosophy and science did existed, it would be a "Leibnizian synthesis". Some Comte's or (more frequently) Hegel's followers (which was the case of the first Russell, among others) claimed openly – although sometimes quite inappropriately outside of context, as mentioned above – that Leibniz's philosophy in general, and his theory of science in particular, was a sort of paradigm for the placing of philosophical problems (Russell, *A Critical Exposition* V-IX). It is, however, appropriate to note that that philosophy does not show any sign of the idea of a hierarchy of sciences, or – otherwise – of a hierarchy of monads linked to that hierarchy. With a few exceptions, like Charles Renouvier in France with his *La nouvelle monadologie*, Leibniz's own monadology (as a system) had no impact on the period under discussion.

Impact on 20th century philosophy: theory of science vs. philosophy of science

The idea of a *theory of science* (Wissenschaftheorie), of a philosophical discourse underlying all sciences, regardless of the science in question (geometry or physics, psychology or sociology), disappeared progressively from the intellectual imagery during the first quarter of the 20th century, mainly as a consequence of the growing theoretical and institutional autonomy of specialised scientific research – particularly physics – in relation to philosophy and the (metaphysical) framework it was supposed to provide (Jungnickel and McCormmach 33-58). The development of non-euclidean geometries and the appearance of the theory of relativity fit in this broad context, competing for the fragmentation and specialisation, in the scope of physics itself, of different specialised research, apparently in the absence of any common or unifying internal programme. Instead of theory of science, "philosophy of science" – i.e. a discourse *about* (and not *of*) sciences regarded as an external (and to some extent foreign) body to philosophy – has been addressed to this day. A "programme" like that of an encyclopaedia of sciences designed to embrace the whole of human knowledge and which – either way – would serve socially, culturaly and political mankind, no longer made sense, both philosophically speaking and in general terms. Sciences themselves (namely physical and natural sciences) began questioning and abandoning it. The discussion about the status of so-called "human sciences" – initiated by Dilthey in the late 19th century and followed, ever since, by contemporary hermeneutics, and which was based, as is known, on the fundamental distinction between "interpreting" (human sciences) and "explaining" (physical-natural

sciences) – already reflected the internal, corrosive disaggregation of this programme, specially – as illustrated in this philosopher's historiography – the Hegelian version thereof (*Introduction to the Human Sciences*; *Die Jugendgeschichte Hegels*). As has been suggested, all of this did not imply necessarily that it was abandoned for good, as otherwise illustrated by the impact of Russell's theories about the hierarchy – through Carnap and his *The Logic Structure of the World* – on logical positivism in general (that of the first stage, Viennese, and of the second stage, North-American) and, in particular, on the idea of a "unified science" in the light of its foundations in physics (physicalism) (Ribeiro, "From Russell's Logical Atomism"; Carnap, *The Unity*). With logical positivism in the 20th century too – as with the positivist and Hegelian versions of the encyclopaedia in the second half of the 19th century – the ideological and political scope of its conception was paramount. The fundamental difference between these versions was not so much the goal to reduce the whole of human knowledge to a specific base and, thereby, verifying it through that basis and eliminating metaphysics (Comte's positivism had already pursued that objective with other means), but particularly the linguistic interpretation of the sciences of the hierarchy and the use, to that effect, of a tool as powerful and refined as was/is contemporary mathematical logic. Now, this is to say that, in the 20th century, meaning (meaning in language in general) was what was addressed. And, while it is true that such an essential book like *The Logic Structure of the World*, mentioned above, seems to suggest that philosophical discourse occurs still in the scope of the old theory of science, the development of the positivist approach to a unified science and its issues (in authors like Ernest Nagel) clearly shows that the scope of the more recent research is already that of inconspicuous "philosophy of science" (Nagel 99-135).

Final remarks: on the past and the future of eclecticism

The development of philosophical thought in the second half of the 19th century, in particular the attempt to combine an eclectic approach to the subject matters of philosophy and science with systematic research, calls for a review not only of the status of eclecticism, but also of philosophical historiography itself in general. Eclecticism, unlike what was traditionally understood (considering, for example, the case of Cousin in France and Hartmann in Germany), is not necessarily a deviation, nor – least of all – a shortcoming of what was supposed to be real philosophical research. If we wish to understand – in all of its true complexity – the period in question in this paper, we must draw away from this re-

presentation. It will not help us understand what happened over more than fifty years of philosophy history; and – probably – we will also not manage to understand our own era and the problems we are faced with today. Eclecticism may, as underscored from the beginning, match the real essence of philosophical work, including that of great and revered authors. Furthermore, (and running the risk of becoming involved in *contradictio in adjectum* of sorts) eclecticism may provide a real programme for philosophy and thus be perfectly original and systematic. It can guide the philosophical work of whole generations, of the so-called "minor philosophers" in particular, drawing them decisively towards a common goal or aspiration, intellectually speaking, which is in some sense much more exciting than what was allegedly done by the "great philosophers". Historiography which focuses only on these philosophers and on the – somewhat disconnected and problematic – relations between the relevant philosophies, seems incapable of explaining the real course of philosophical ideas, starting with their reception. It is precisely here, among the minor philosophers, i.e. on rather shaky and deceiving ground for the historian, that the fate of these ideas is gambled.

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