Philosophy as a Way of Life, the System, and the Advent of the Research University: Contributions Towards an Unwritten Chapter of the History of PWL

1. Interruption: what is university philosophy?

Cornelius Castoriadis once commented suggestively that all great thinkers think beyond their means. Certainly, wherever a thinker works with a very expansive scope, or pursues a wholly new orientation, it is reasonable to expect that some elements of what they present will be less developed than others. The foci of Pierre Hadot's multi-dimensional work, beyond the well-known rubric of philosophy as a way of life, remained ancient philosophy, Neoplatonism and the church fathers, competing forms of mysticism, and the philosophy of nature. Given this extensive purview, we should not be surprised that his comments in *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (2002, 255-261) concerning the fate of philosophy in the later modern period are relatively brief, opening up orientations for further research, rather than pursuing the subject in as great a detail as his works on the ancients. The title of the chapter in *What is Ancient Philosophy?* where these remarks are principally ventured gives these orientations: "Eclipses and Recurrences of the Ancient Conception of Philosophy". Hadot notes that in figures such as Montaigne, Erasmus, and Descartes, on the one hand, and later, the popular philosophers in Germany, the French *philosophes*, Schopenhauer, Thoreau, and Nietzsche, we have modern philosophers, usually working outside of the universities, in whose work the conception of philosophy as a *bios* involving spiritual direction, and the transformation of its votaries, is at least partly recalled and revised. These are the ''recurrences" (Hadot 2002, 270; 2020, 169-170, 310-311). On the other hand, within the universities, Hadot claims, philosophy tends to devolve into the forms of academic scholarship we predominantly experience today, and which he describes in almost point-for-point contrast to the ancient metaphilosophy (Hadot 2002, 259-260; 2020, 168-171). This is the "eclipse" of the ancient metaphilosophy, although what prospects might remain for a resumption of PWL within or outside of the universities, in later modernity Hadot leaves open.

This paper aims to critically develop Pierre Hadot's account of modern university philosophy in *What is Ancient Philosophy?* but also in some lesser-known pieces reproduced in the 2020 *La philosophie comme éducation des adultes* collection. First of all, Hadot's orientation towards modern philosophy reflects the wider methodology for reading ancient texts which led him to the postulation of ancient philosophy as a *bios* (Hadot 1996, 49-70). Hadot

treats the philosophy we do in modern institutions as not the product of pure minds or isolated geniuses, but as shaped by the material and institutional settings in which we are called to philosophise:

> Just as, in antiquity, there was a close interaction between the social structure of philosophical institutions and their conception of philosophy, so, since the Middle Ages, there has been a kind of reciprocal causality between the structure of university institutions and the notions they have entertained about the nature of philosophy. (Hadot 2017, 259-60)

To understand what it is to philosophise as university philosophers, that is to say, we must take into account our situation within universities, as modern institutions which look back to, but also transform, the great medieval universities established between the 11th and 14th centuries CE in Europe (Hadot 2002, 255-261). And this matters, in terms of what counts as philosophy, and why modern academic philosophers have forgotten or discount the older conception of philosophy, as a business of forming students to become wiser, happier human beings. Hadot singles out, a second point, that whilst modern universities have secularised in the context of modern state formation, and typically are no longer directly connected to, and funded by, established Churches, it remains that "universities come about only though the initiative of a higher authority, be it the State or the various religious communities (Catholic, Lutheran, Calvinist, Anglican)" (Hadot 2002, 260).[1] At several points, in both *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (2002, 260) and *La philosophie comme éducation des adultes* (2020. 171-172), Hadot especially closely links modern philosophy to the purposes of the State. His principal, primary prooftext hails the Preface to Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*. Herein, Hegel pushes back against that movement of philosophy in Germany known as "popular philosophy", which Hadot by contrast situates—alongside the work of the French *philosophes*—as a partial reactivation of the ancient idea of philosophy as a way of life. So, Hegel comments:

> Inasmuch as the purest charlatanism has won the name of philosophy, and has succeeded in convincing the public that its practices are philosophy, it has now become almost a disgrace to speak in a philosophic way about the state. Nor can it be taken ill, if honest men become impatient, when the subject is broached. Still less is it a surprise that the government has at last turned its attention to this false philosophising. / With us philosophy is not practised as a private art, as it was by the Greeks, but has a public place, and should therefore be employed only in the service of the state. (Hegel *)

[1] In this context, also ''sometimes to science'', in a way Hadot does not do more than mention at this point. Hadot 2002, 260.

With that much said, Hadot immediately qualifies this by saying that "the Hegelian view of a university in the service of the State cannot be generalized'' (Hadot 2002, 260). In any event, Hadot's third claim targets what we can, following Pierre Bourdieu, call the lived *habitus* of the modern university, wherein philosophers are employed as paid professionals, whether by the state directly, or by their institutions, whose managers respond to the demands of the vocational system (or job market), as well as the state, and other potential sources of financial or reputational capital. As Hadot writes, in a telling passage:

> the university tends to make the philosophy professor a civil servant whose job, to a large extent, consists in training other civil servants. The goal is no longer, as it was in antiquity, to train people for careers as human beings, but to train them for careers as clerks or professors—that is to say, as specialists, theoreticians, and retainers of specific items of more or less esoteric knowledge. Such knowledge, however, no longer involves the whole of life, as ancient philosophy demanded. (Hadot 2002, 260)

And so we arrive, via this route, at the way Hadot proposes that philosophy is mostly understood by later modern university scholars: "at least in the case of the image of it which is presented to students, because of the exigencies of university teaching" (Hadot 2002, 2): namely, as "theoretical discourses and philosophers' systems" known pre-eminently or only to specialists, who are charged with conveying them to students who will be assessed in predominantly written assessment exercises, and discussing and developing them in the forms of research papers and monographs (Hadot 2002, 1). The modern student of philosophy will be given:

> the impression that all the philosophers they study strove in turn to invent, each in an original way, a new construction, systematic and abstract, [that they] intended somehow or other to explain the universe, or at the least, if we are talking about contemporary philosophers, that they tried to elaborate a new discourse about language. (Hadot 2002, 2)

In this connection, albeit only in one tantalising remark in *What is Ancient Philosophy?* which accords with the importance he has assigned to Hegel, Hadot points us in particular to the significance of German idealism—the stream of philosophy almost everywhere recognised as especially associated with the foundation of the modern research university. "The dominance of Idealism over all university philosophy, from Hegel to the rise of existentialism and subsequently the vogue of structuralism," Hadot provocatively claims, "has done much to foster the idea that the only true philosophy must be theoretical and systematic" (Hadot 2002, 261).[2] In the long essay,

[2] In brief, if with Hadot (1) we study philosophy as an embodied, intersubjective, institutional, lived practice, then we are asked to resee ourselves as engaged in a form of philosophising which (2) remains subordinate to extrinsic forms of 'higher' knowledge, whether theology or the sciences; and (3)

"Enseignement antique et moderne de la philosophie", Hadot elaborates a little further on his thinking here, with reference to work by Michel Abensour and Pierre-Jean Labarrière, who note the extraordinary profusion of texts on the organisation of the university which correspond to the ascendancy of German idealism in the decades surrounding the turn of the 19th century, and the German university reforms of that period: texts by Schelling (''Lectures on the Method of University Teaching'', 1803), by Fichte ("A Plan, Deduced from First Principles, for an Institution of Higher Learning to be Established in Berlin, Connected to and Subordinate to an Academy of Sciences", 1807), by Schleiermacher (''Occasional Thoughts on German Universities in the German Sense" (1808)) and Wilhelm von Humboldt (1809-10). These texts amount to what Abensour and Labarrière call "a veritable corpus of philosophies of the university, that is to say, of philosophies which make of the University the place for the realisation of philosophy as such" (at Hadot 2020, 171). Furthermore, as Hadot continues:

> This defence of university philosophy is closely tied to the idea according to which philosophy is essentially a construction of system … this idea of systematic, but also state-ised and functionalised university philosophy, that the pamphlet by Schopenhauer [*Against University Philosophy*] of 1851 rebels against … (Hadot 2020, 171-72)

This essay takes it bearings from Hadot's singling out of the moment of German idealism, and the foundation of the modern research university (first of all, that of Berlin in 1809), as especially significant in the history of the eclipses and recurrences of PWL in the West. Proffered as a draft for an as-yet-unwritten, decisive chapter on the history of PWL, it will closely examine the texts by Schleiermacher, Fichte, Humboldt and Schelling that Hadot mentions *en passant* in "Enseignement ancient et moderne de la philosophie" (Hadot 2020, 149-178; cf. 305-322). These texts represent studies of great significance for the history of PWL, the paper suggests, insofar as they are philosophical reflections on the university, its necessity and its purpose, as well as metaphilosophical reflections more specifically on philosophy, its nature and role, within the universities. In part 2, we will show how Hadot's claim that these texts inaugurate a subordination of philosophy to the state, even in its qualified form, needs to be revised. What stands out is rather the attempt, sketched already in Kant (1794), of trying to grant philosophy a new autonomy within the modern university, as the sole faculty ideally governed by reason alone, not by external authorities. In part 3, we will critically pursue Hadot's comments linking the advent of the modern research

to the purposes of the state; wherein (4) we are employed as professionals, if not civil servants, training other professionals; so, as such, (5) philosophy is mostly conceived as "pure theory", embodied in the written theoretical texts, arguments, or systems of philosophers, which we convey to our students as examinable information, with an uncertain or no clear relationship with their larger formation as human beings; and finally (6) a principal "historical factor" explaining this situation, in terms of the history of ideas, is the importance of German idealism in shaping both the modern research university, and philosophy within it.

university with the construction of philosophy as a system. Our argument contra Hadot is that the classical idealistic texts on the university also each envisage philosophy as implicating a form of pedagogy and *Bildung*. Our argument with Hadot, is that this *Bildung* is nevertheless subordinated to the pursuit of systematic, pure, or absolute knowledge in ways which pave the way to today's *ca va sans dire* expectations around what serious philosophy must always be (that is, theoretical, written, publishable in peer reviewed formats). In conclusion, we proffer several observations raised by our analysis, concerning Hadot's presentation of the idea of university philosophy as a philosophy of civil servants, teaching other civil servants, and how it relates to the longer history of, and continuing contemporary research on, PWL.

2. Kant's conflict of the faculties, the modern university and the state

The great Idealist texts on the university, and the purposes of higher education, that were written by Immanuel Kant, Friedrich Schiller, Friedrich Schleiermacher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Wilhelm von Humboldt predate and inform the foundation of Berlin University in 1809. The texts have both wider and a narrower set of informing contexts. On one hand, they are shaped by 18th century debates surrounding the fate of the university in the age of the developing sciences and scientific academies, as well as the increasing secularisation of modern cultures and emergent national states. The French and wider European enlightenment, and in particular the project of the *Encyclopédie* surrounding Denis Diderot, had proposed a radical challenge to earlier modes of organising knowledge: firstly, by including technical crafts and forms of knowledge on an equal, alphabetised footing with the liberal arts, philosophy or theology in the *Encyclopédie*; and secondly, by setting out the project of enlightening, that is, spreading the new knowledges, to a wider reading public, beyond the clericy and the universities (Munzel 2012, 35-51; Hadot 2002, 268; Hadot 2020, 169-171, 310-311). In Germany, as Hadot repeatedly comments, the advent of popular philosophy associated with figures such as J.G. Sulzer (Hadot 2002, 268), and disseminated through the weeklies of the emergent bourgeois public sphere (Munzel 2012, 24-28) shared Diderot's desire across the Rhine, to "hasten to popularise" philosophical thought (cf. Hadot 2020, 311), rather than leaving established institutional-hierarchical modes of knowledge production and dissemination unchallenged. On the other hand, Napoleon's move within France to close the medieval universities, and to instead promote scientific academies as the places for research in higher education; as well as his success in over-running the German states in the first years of the 19th century, including closing universities such as at Halle, situate these philosophical reflections on the university in a particular, highly charged geopolitical context (Crouter 2005, 143-146; Fallon

1980, 5-9; Ziolkowski 2016, 26, 33-34). When proposals to open the University of Berlin were brought by professors from Halle to the Kaiser, the latter is supposed to have answered that "[t]he state must replace with intellectual strength what it has lost in material resources" (at Fallon 1980, 9; Ziolkowski 2016, 34).

In this context, as we see in Schleiermacher and von Humboldt in particular, the German debates included many voices advocating for the closure of universities, as guild-like relics of a bygone period (Ziolkowski 2016, 26-27; Munzel 2012, 19-20). A particular subject of concern was the relevance of the medieval lecture (literally, "reading") format, originally devised in an age without the printing press, to a period in which *ex cathedra* oral presentations of books which students could independently read seemed redundant—one of many concerns in these debates that seem to recur over time (Fichte 2017, 69-71). Critics could see the universities serving no specific modern function, between proffering the kinds of education in established knowledges privileged boys should receive in secondary schools, and the kinds of new, specialised forms of research which could be produced by the dedicated academies (or *écoles spéciales)* sponsored by Napoleon across the Rhine as the principal locale for tertiary education (Ziolkowski 2016, 26-27).

Then as perhaps ever since, the debates surrounding the ends and nature of the university hence turned in particular around the place of what we call the humanities; and what was at that time, confusingly but revealingly for us, called the Faculty of Philosophy. As we still see in Kant's famous, influential text on the "Conflict of the Philosophy Faculty with the Theology Faculty" (1794), the predominant university model remained one in which there were three "higher faculties" in which students were trained for professional work: in medicine, in law, or in theology. The "lower faculty", that all students would commence with, was the Faculty of Philosophy *né* Arts, centring on the seven *artes liberales* established since antiquity (the four mathematics, and the three *trivia*, grammar, rhetoric, and dialectic), and positioned as propaedeutic, giving students necessary skills to carry into their professions as doctors, lawyers, clergy or theologians.

What Kant sets out in this essay on the conflict of the faculties is a defence of the "lower faculty" as the true heart of the university. His famous piece in this sense sets the template for the later texts by Schleiermacher, Schelling, Fichte and Humboldt surrounding the formation of the "research university", as it has come to be known. For Kant, contra Hadot, it is only the higher university faculties of medicine, law, and theology, which can rightly be spoken of as producing civil servants, charged by the state to carry out specific functions, and bound in their public utterances not to challenge the sanctioned edicts which enable them to practice their professions (Kant 1794, 2, 3-6). In the lower Faculty, that of Philosophy (a "philosophy" which in Kant's text takes in historical knowledge,

the natural sciences, as well as philosophy (rational knowledge) in a narrower sense (Kant 1794, 7)), by contrast, scholars cannot be persuaded by political authority to accept any particular belief to be true or false. Echoing liberal arguments about the inability of the conscience to be compelled, which had played such a powerful role in discourses in favour of religious toleration, Kant argues that inquiry in the historical, empirical or rational sciences must be conducted freely. As Kant writes:

> Now the power to judge autonomously–that is, freely (according to principles of thought in general)–is called reason. So the philosophy faculty, because it must answer for the truth of the teachings it is to adopt or even allow, must be conceived as free and subject only to laws given by reason, not by the government. (Kant 1794, 6)

This Faculty's function is not simply, therefore, to furnish students with preparatory, general skills they can take into their specialised or professional role. "Its function in relation to the three higher faculties is to control them and, in this way, be useful to them, since truth (the essential and first condition of learning in general) is the main thing, whereas the utility the higher faculties promise the government is of secondary importance," Kant proudly writes (Kant 1794, 6-7). He quietly suggests that we should wonder in fact whether philosophy, as "servant of theology", is the mistress's *torchbearer*, rather than its *trainbearer* (Kant 1794, 7). As for anxieties from the State, as to whether this freedom of thought could be dangerous to public order, Kant's rhetoric is more conciliatory:

> the very modesty [of philosophy's claim] – merely to be free, as it leaves others free, to discover the truth for the benefit of all the sciences and to set it before the higher faculties to use as they will – must commend it to the government as above suspicion and, indeed, indispensable. (Kant 1794, 7)

Herewith, we in fact come upon the limitation of Hadot's generalisation, based on Hegel—and the criticisms of a Schopenhauer or a Nietzsche—that sees modern academic philosophy as "state-ised". In fact, in all of the discourses of Fichte, Schelling, Schleiermacher, and von Humboldt on the new university, as in Kant's "Conflict of the Faculties", the state is rarely mentioned except that its potentially deleterious role in corrupting free inquiry is decried and warned against. "The state is never anything but an impediment as soon as it meddles in the production of knowledge", von Humboldt tells us (2017, 109; cf. Schelling 1967, 80). The reason is that, as Kant had identified, a government's direct interest lies only in the work of the higher faculties, producing civil servants capable of running the higher professions and the business of state (Kant 1794, 2, 3-6). In Schleiermacher's terms, the state is self-interested, rather than interested in the life of the mind (Schleiermacher 2017, 50; Crouter 2005,

154). It wants only forms of knowledge that can be "measured", concrete discoveries able to be fed into technical and professional practices; it needs doctors and lawyers, or bureaucrats, but not philosophers (Schleiermacher 2017, 54). Its ideal type of student is of the kind whom Schiller memorably described, in his 1794 "Lecture on Universal History" as "bread (*Brot*) scholars":

> who, for all [their] diligence, [are] interested merely in fulfilling the conditions under which [they] can perform a vocation and enjoy its advantages, who activates the powers of his mind only thereby to improve his material conditions and to satisfy a narrow-minded thirst for fame, such a person has no concern upon entering his academic career more important than distinguishing most carefully those sciences which he calls 'studies for bread,' from all the rest, which delight the mind for their own sake. Such a scholar believes, that all the time he devoted to these latter, he would have to divert from his future vocation, and this thievery he could never forgive himself. He will direct all of his diligence to the demands made upon him by the future master of his fate, and he will believe he has achieved everything once he has made himself capable of not fearing this authority. Once he has run his course and attained the goal of his desires, he dismisses the sciences which guided him, for why should he bother with them any longer? (Schiller 2017, 51-52)

As for other, non-utilitarian, non-measurable forms of knowledge, the state tends to fear them as unproductive, or even for inculcating forms of idleness, deleterious to lives of active, public service (von Humboldt 2017, 112; Schleiermacher 2017, 49). The political difficulty, still known to defenders of the humanities today, is that any university in which a space for teaching and research in non-utilitarian subjects is to be preserved, is going to depend upon external, government financing. At the same time as governmental or economic interference with the inner life of higher education institutions needs to be minimised (Schleiermacher 2017, 54), the state (or, more lately, the "private sector") needs therefore to be convinced of the larger value of promoting such a "university", in which all subjects could be studied. Such an apology for the university then becomes closely, quickly identified with reflections upon the specific ends of philosophy, as the preeminently non-utilitarian, non-technical pursuit, and what higher goods it promotes in its votaries, and thereby, modern society more widely. "It is through philosophy and art that such striving for openness is expressed most often" which the universities should inculcate, for von Humboldt, as more than vocational or technical colleges (von Humboldt 2017, 111). Philosophical instruction, says Schleiermacher, is at the basis of everything that universities should aim to achieve, as teaching and research institutions (Schleiermacher 2017, 61); Fichte suggests that universities should not deign

to professionals' training at all (Crouter 2005, 149). In Schelling, there is the characteristically maximal suggestion that universities should not have particular philosophical faculties, insofar as philosophy is truly to be identified with *the whole* of the institution (Schelling 1966, 79).

3. Philosophical studies in the new university: from Bildung to the system

But how then is philosophy being conceived, at the same time as these Idealist texts would elevate it to the heart, or even the whole, of the modern university? And how does these thinkers' metaphilosophical remarks in these texts on the university relate to older conceptions of philosophy, as a way of life, or set of educational practices aimed at transforming subjects, and inculcating forms of wisdom?

Von Humboldt tells us that university education, pre-eminently including forms of philosophy, has both an objective goal, the advancement of specific kinds of knowledge (see below), and a subjective goal, that of forming subjects as particular kinds of individuals (von Humboldt 2017, 107). Von Humboldt, and before him Schiller and Schleiermacher, is in fact closely associated with what came to be called German neohumanism (Walther 2015; Herdt 2019). The neohumanistic thinkers, following Winckelmann in particular, idealised ancient Greece, in contrast to Christendom, as the height of human culture and achievement in the arts, in politics, as well as in philosophy. Through educating children on Greek models, as they envisaged them, the neohumanists' ambition was to form students to new, more elevated forms of life and achievement: in Schiller's famous letters on aesthetic education, for instance, a form of aestheticized subjectivity, animated by what he termed the play drive, was presented as the corrective to the one-sidedness, over-emphasis on technical knowledges, and forms of vocational specialization increasingly demanded by modernization.

In this light, we are unsurprised to read in von Humboldt's texts on the German university, of a contrast between forms of learning which would allegedly aim at "collecting facts"—perhaps the French encyclopedists are intended—with forms of knowledge which would be drawn forth from the mind (von Humboldt 2017, 110). What matters, not simply to the state but to "humanity" more widely, he claims, is "not merely knowing and talking about things, but the formation of character and action". This would involve forms of knowledge which "can be cultivated within" and which, as such—but no further explanation of how this would occur is given—are able to "transform character" (von Humboldt 2017, 110).

Given these comments on von Humboldt's subjective aim of university pedagogy, and the neohumanistic language of *Bildung* in which they are partly couched, someone might be tempted to suppose that Hadot was fundamentally mistaken about this moment in the history of Western philosophy. In the great Idealist texts on philosophy and the university, we would have one last recurrence of the Greco-Roman understanding of PWL in Western higher education, with its emphasis on philosophical pedagogy or practice as formation, not the conveyance of information. Any fuller inspection of the texts cannot bear out this interpretation. As Humboldt straight away stresses, if the purpose of the university involves both the pursuit of knowledge and the work of forming the subject, "the primary standpoint must be that of knowledge alone" (von Humboldt 2017, 108). The calling of higher educational institutions, von Humboldt specifies, is:

> to pursue knowledge in the highest and broadest sense of the term and devote themselves to the use of knowledge not as material arranged according to particular external purposes, but rather as the autonomous, self-arranging material of intellectual and ethical formation. (von Humboldt 2017, 107)

"[I]nsofar as knowledge is allowed to exist as pure knowledge," von Humboldt explains, "people … will be able to see what it is in itself and as a whole" (von Humboldt 2017, 107). As such, universities can only realise their purpose "when they operate as much as possible in accordance with the pure idea of knowledge" (von Humboldt 2017, 108).

In Schleiermacher, comparably, the goal of higher education is the pursuit of what he terms "systematic knowledge". In contrast once more to the encyclopaedic, empiricist "piling up of isolated facts" (Schleiermacher 2017, 54; von Humboldt 2017, 112), those coming together in universities, "in service of scholarship and science", ought to seek out:

> the awareness of the necessary unity of all knowledge, the laws and conditions of its genesis, and the forms and structures by which every perception, every thought, actually becomes a real part of our systematic knowledge … (Schleiermacher 2017, 54)

Scholars should aim to draw all particular knowledges into "the realm of systematic knowledge" (Schleiermacher 2017, 52, 54; cf. Schelling 2017, 90), reducing the "multifariousness" of different knowledge claims across the diverse disciplines, and straining at all times to see the whole within each part, and each part within the whole (Schleiermacher 2017, 54).

It is with Schelling however that we find the most elevated statements concerning the desired form of "knowledge of the organic whole of all sciences" as the *telos* of the university, or philosophy within it (Schelling 2017, 87; cf. 80, 81, 88, 90, 97, 99). For Schelling, what is at issue in higher education is ultimately "the idea of a knowledge which is itself absolute—a knowledge that is simply one, in which all knowledge is unified" (Schelling 2017, 88). This "knowledge of all knowledge" is what "perfectly fulfils the requirements and contains the premises that every form of science and scholarship requires and assumes in its own way" (Schelling 2017, 88). Indeed, in a passage with deep Neoplatonist resonances, we are told that such knowledge represents at its highest, "participation in the originary knowledge" of which the sensible universe is the "visible image", and as such, "communion with the divine being, towards participation in the originary knowledge whose image is the visible universe" (Schelling 2017, 90). Without such knowledge, Schelling claims, all higher education "is necessarily dead, mindless, one-sided, and intrinsically limited" (Schelling 2017, 87). Every thought or inquiry which is not pursued "in this spirit of unity and universality", according to the philosopher, "is intrinsically empty and worthless" (Schelling 2017, 90).

Putting aside an assessment of the epistemic merits and demerits of these Idealist representations of systematic, absolute, or pure knowledge, our stress here is primarily on what happens to the conception of philosophy, if its goal is identified with the discovery or production of such an objectifiable, trans- or impersonal form of knowledge? What in particular must become of the language of *Bildung* or "ethical formation" (von Humboldt 2017, 108) which we've seen that these philosophers inherit, and which seems to point towards philosophical and higher education as not simply a process of what von Humboldt calls, in a Baconian turn of phrase, the "advancement" of "knowledge" (von Humboldt 2017, 103, 113), but rather a work in the formation of philosophers' souls?

The answer seems to us to be that, in these Idealist texts, this neohumanistic language—and alongside it, the celebrated motifs of the freedom of teaching and learning—is subordinated to the optative pursuit of systematic knowledge. Contra what some of Hadot's remarks might lead us to suggest, whether it is in Fichte, Schleiermacher, or von Humboldt, there is the attempt to single out university teaching. This is distinguished, as a formative process, at once from the forms of pedagogy appropriate for secondary schools, from the more or less mindless accumulation of facts these German thinkers associate with the encyclopaedists, as well as from the forms of "lecture" (that is, professorial reading to students of texts) of the medieval universities (Fichte 2017, 69-70). For von Humboldt, there is a stress on the need for university teachers to actively engage with their students in a

seminar format. However, if they should present work relating to their research (the freedom to teach (*lehrfreiheit*)), it is with the end to develop their new ideas in the lively "back and forth [of] a large group of strong, vigorous young minds" (on Humboldt 2017, 113). The teacher is not teaching only for the sake of the student, Humboldt famously intones (von Humboldt 2017, 109). Both are present for the sake of scholarship and knowledge. In terms of combatting the tendency of knowledge to harden into a senseless stockpile of more or less unconnected data, everything hence depends, for von Humboldt, on the conception of the collective work of seeking knowledge as being open-ended, to be "endlessly pursued" (von Humboldt 2017, 110).

In Fichte, comparably, the art of teaching at university level would consist not in teaching established bodies of information, as at secondary institutions—or in the lecture format of medieval universities (Fichte 2017, 69-70). It would involve teaching students the principles which could explain how the knowledge was generated, prompting them to reflect upon the operative principles in their own learning. "What we come to grasp while we are learning it, and conscious *of the rules* by which we are learning it," Fichte tells us, "will become a signature part of our personality and our life, something we are able to develop freely" (Fichte 2017, 72). But the point remains that what the students are being formed for in these texts—becoming "artists of scholarship", in Fichte's term (Fichte 2017, 80)—is not an ethos for practical or wider life: the management of their desires for instance, or the work of managing their inner discourse according to the principles of a rigorous philosophical logic, or the work of becoming more virtuous, serene, or *eudaemon* through addressing sources of emotional distress or empty opinions (*kenodoxia*) (cf. Hadot 1996).

The closest description of such a program that we find in these texts, actually, comes in von Humboldt's description of the ideal secondary school or gymnasium (von Humboldt 2017, 112), remembering importantly that his educational reforms expanded beyond the founding of Berlin University. University students would be being trained by scholars, animated by the pursuit of systematic knowledge, to become the next generations of scholars, likewise animated by the same spirit of the system (Schleiermacher 2017, 57). The task of university teachers, Schleiermacher tells us, is to lead students towards "this main point of unity and form in systematic knowledge; they train him to see systematically; and only after he has found his footing do they let him go deeper into the particulars" (Schleiermacher 2017, 64). In language reflecting his work translating Plato, we are told that the task of the university teacher is to "excite" a love of such systematic learning (Schleiermacher 2017, 64). The work of philosophy as formation is to produce a student in whom it is "second nature":

> … to view everything from the perspective of systematic inquiry, to see individual things not in isolation but rather in the intellectual interconnection and place them in a large context, at the same time with reference to the unity of knowledge; to ensure that he learns to remember the laws of systematic knowledge in all his thinking and thereby develops his capacity to do independent research, make discoveries, and present his findings systematically—this is the task of the university. (Schleiermacher 2017, 60)

Indeed, Schleiermacher's proposed solution as to why universities should survive, given the proliferation in Berlin and elsewhere of dedicated research academies, is because true scientists would ideally need, to practice their craft, a grasp of "the philosophical principles of his field" (Schleiermacher 2017, 59). Each needs to be taught to approach his field in a "philosophical spirit" (Schleiermacher 2017, 56, 49). The question of what a university could specifically be for in the age of modern research is hence answered, Schleiermacher tells us, as soon as we pose the question of where this "philosophical spirit" is supposed to come from. For no one could suppose that "this form of life alone, even in its first tender shoots, requires no care or cultivation …" (Schleiermacher 2017, 59) "Here then lies the essence of the university", Schleiermacher declares: "It is charged precisely with this begetting, this cultivation":

> It marks the transition between the time when a young man is first prepared for systematic knowledge, by his own studying and by acquiring a knowledge base and the time when, in the prime of his intellectual life, he expands the field or adds on a beautiful new wing to the edifice of knowledge though his research. (Schleiermacher 2017, 60)

It is not therefore that the neohumanistic stress on *Bildung*, the work of forming students which is also at the heart of Hadot's notion of the ancient schools of PWL, disappears from the horizon of the Idealist discourses on the modern research university, and the calling of philosophy within it. This work is nevertheless subordinated to the pursuit of systematic, pure or absolute knowledge, in von Humboldt or Schelling, and even further, to the *Bildung* of specialised, but philosophically oriented scientific researchers in the academies, in Schleiermacher. What is primarily to be worked upon, within philosophical pedagogy, is the mind of the "noble youths" who show the potential to become philosophers, artists of scholarship, or scientists, capable of contributing their cumulative additions to the ever-growing edifice of systematic knowledge. Not simply their specific individualities, as human beings as well as scholars, but because of this, their individual predilections, strengths and weaknesses, beliefs and desires, are not present within the horizon of such a *Bildung* for the sake of knowledge. The famous Humboldtian stress on academic freedom, and the freedom of scholarly inter-communication (von Humboldt 2017, 99-100;

Schleiermacher 2017, 49), is precisely a reflection of the fact, already glimpsed in Bacon and the experimental philosophers, that the edifice of knowledge in an age of scientific diversification, has become so "multifarious" that no individual could ever grasp it in all of its particulars—let alone bring it to heel to form their ethical, as against their intellectual, life. In Schelling, a kind of complete relativisation of the individual takes place, before the transpersonal dimension of the absolute knowledge the pupil is called to pursue in his university career: "just as true action is that which could be performed in the name of the whole human race, so too is true knowledge that in which it is not the individual who knows, but Reason itself" (Schelling 2017, 94).

We must therefore actively import into these famous texts—for it is not directly found there—any conception of philosophy or pedagogy as a work of ethical as well as intellectual formation, which would bring about not only knowledge of things in the heavens and on earth, but virtues apposite for intra-mundane, extra-mural flourishing. Nevertheless, one can see how, logically, the emphasis on all knowledge which would be philosophical being its own end, for the sake of which cultivation must be undertaken in the higher educational institutions, places anything like the ancient metaphilosophy (of philosophy as a *bios*) under suspicion of treating philosophy merely instrumentally. The true Schellingerian philosopher is hence contrasted exactly with all "those who regard knowledge as the means and action as the end [and] derive their idea of knowledge from everyday activities, in which knowledge indeed serves as a means to action" (Schelling 2017, 92). Such people would have us believe, in a clear echo of some ironies in Plato's *Republic*, that:

> theory is supposed to tell them how to raise crops, how to develop the arts and crafts, and how to rebuild their dissipated powers. They think that geometry is fine, not because it is the most self-evident science, the most objective expression of reason itself, but because it teaches how to measure fields and build houses or is useful in plotting the courses of merchant ships ... (Schelling 2017, 92)

From such an absolute Idealist height, PWL's conception that philosophy should above all shape a person's actions, as well as their words, their affects as well as their learning, would appear far beneath serious philosophy's purview, all celebrations of the noble Greeks notwithstanding. As Schelling tells us:

> To speak of the uses of philosophy I consider beneath its dignity. Anyone who can ask what its usefulness might be is assuredly not capable of any conception of it. By its very nature it is exempt from consideration of utility. It exists for its own sake alone; its very essence would be destroyed if it existed for the sake of anything else. (Schelling 1967, 50)

Although in the Idealist texts, therefore, the stress on philosophy as a pedagogical endeavour survives, it is clear that, once systematic knowledge, tethered from wider *ethismos*, becomes hypostasised in their texts as a self-standing goal (cf. Ferry & Renaut 1979), a decisive step was taken or retaken towards out later modern conceptions of philosophy, in which all traces of the ancient idea of PWL have disappeared, except as an object of historical study.

Conclusion: PWL, the system, and the logics of professionalisation

In this essay we have contended that, if we refer to the famous philosophical texts surrounding the foundation of the modern research university with the university of Berlin, in 1809, Hadot's claim that modern university philosophy is necessarily subordinated to the interests of the state cannot be upheld. Hegel here represents an exception, not the rule (part 2). Following Kant, what we see are attempts to demarcate philosophical inquiry, informing but not reducible to the sciences, from the higher, instrumental faculties within the university (medicine, law, theology), and to safeguard the independence of scientific and philosophical teaching and research from the influence of the state. However, we contended (part 3), that despite the celebrated neohumanism of a Schiller or a von Humboldt, the forms of philosophy that their texts on university-philosophy oppose to forms of specialised, technical-instrumental learning is not anything like PWL, the predominant ancient metaphilosophy. Although every effort is made to differentiate modern philosophical teaching, in a nexus with research, from the forms of book learning and lectures associated with the medieval universities, pedagogy is subordinated to the transpersonal goal of systematic, pure, or absolute knowledge, as an end in itself. How the individual students' training to play their role in the pursuit of this systematic knowledge would relate to their extramural lives is never specified: it is instead at times assumed that contributing to this end will make a person ethically better. It is salutary when Fichte, for instance, tells us in "The Vocation of the Scholar" that "the Scholar ought to be morally the best man of his age; he ought to exhibit in himself the highest grade of moral culture then possible" (Fichte 1794). The relationship between this ought and this "is" of his servitude to Truth, as Fichte styles it, is nevertheless arguably far from direct.

I want to close with comments on two further considerations which are opened up by this inquiry, and its critical confirmation of Pierre Hadot's fundamental orientations surrounding the fate of PWL in the later modern university. Firstly, if as we have seen, these texts "appear … wholly traversed by the spirit of what Schelling names

''the One-totality'' itself, or the spirit of the System'' (Ferry and Renaut 1979, 66), it would be possible to suppose that what Hadot's position commits us to, by defending PWL against this form of philosophising, is a hostility to all forms of systematicity. It is important to oppose this misunderstanding, starting by stressing Hadot's identification of the logic in the Stoic school—aiming at the systematic internal coherence of subjects' inner discourse—as one of the three disciplines (and exercise *topoi*) within the philosophy of the porch. To speak of PWL is not to embrace ludic arbitrariness, or philosophy as the creation of concepts unbound by repressive rationality, etc. More widely, if we examine Hadot's engagement with competing ideas of system in Western philosophy, we see him stressing not simply the famed coherence of the Stoic philosophical discourse, but the place of systematic presentations for instance of Epicurean doctrines. However, in these texts the systematicity, and the literary-rhetorical presentation of ideas in more or less deductive forms, was subordinated to the ethical *paideia* or indeed *bildung* of the students:

> The Stoics required their students to keep the school's essential dogmas present in their minds, by dint of a constant effort of memory. This was not an instance of conceptual construction as an end in itself which just happened to have ethical consequences for the Stoic or Epicurean way of life. On the contrary, the goal of these systems was to gather the fundamental dogmas together in condensed form, and link them together by vigorous argumentation, in order to form a systematic, highly concentrated nucleus, sometimes reduced to one brief saying, which could thus have greater persuasive force and mnemonic efficacy. Above all, such sayings had a psychagogic value: they were intended to produce an effect on the soul of the auditor or reader. This does not mean that such theoretical discourse did not respond to the demands of logical coherence; on the contrary, such coherence was its strong suit. (Hadot 2002, 106-107)

The decisive differentia between the forms of systematicity integrated into ancient philosophical writings, and that of moderns like Schelling or Hegel, is at the level of *telos*. Does the systematic knowledge become reified as self-sufficient, like the statues Francis Bacon analogised Aristotelian texts to be in the context of medieval universities: noble to look at, but without life? Or is the systematisation, with the rhetorical forms of the treatise, the epitome, or the logic-deductive presentation, conceived as a means of forming students? As Hadot writes of Plato's dialogues, as a form of philosophical paideia:

> the dialogues were written not to "inform" people but to "form" them. Such was the deepest intention of Plato's philosophy. He did not aim to construct a theoretical system of reality, and then "inform" his readers of it by writing a series of dialogues which methodically set forth this system [this however became the way the dialogues were taught in later antiquity]. Instead, his work consisted in "forming" people-that is

> to say, in transforming individuals by making them experience, through the example of a dialogue which the reader has the illusion of overhearing, the demands of reason, and eventually the norm of the good. (Hadot 2002, 73)

The second observation touches on the relationship between philosophy being conceived as solely discursive, theoretical, and as aiming at the production of systematic knowledge, and Hadot's identification of university philosophy as a business of civil servants training other civil servants. The discourses of Humboldt and others, as we have seen, conceive of systematising philosophy as that form proper to the modern research university. But one can nevertheless ask (1) what exactly it is about philosophy in this form, characterised by the search for theoretical systematicity, and modes of systematising, written presentations of ideas, that suits it so well to the professionalised environs of modern academic intra-professional training? And (2), *mutatis mutandis*, given Hadot's stress on "a kind of reciprocal causality between the structure of university institutions and the notions they have entertained about the nature of philosophy" (Hadot 2002, 260), how have the dynamics of professionalisation of philosophy set in place by the advent of the 19th century university continued to reshape what kinds of speaking, thinking, writing, and behaviours count as "serious" or "rigorous" today?

I evidently cannot pursue either of these questions in the kinds of detail they each demand. It is nevertheless possible, especially in the context of this event, to proffer some suggestions as to what this pursuit could involve. To address the first question, it would be necessary I believe to consider the institutional needs surrounding assessment of students, capable of being certified and audited for the purposes of conferring professional qualifications. These as it were 'select' for written, examinable forms of philosophical activity: treatises, articles, commentaries and commentaries on commentaries, or the quasi-juridical, argumentative essay. Forms of *viva*, still practiced in some European universities, represent carry-overs from medieval practices, and at most accompany and defend the written thesis.

To address the second question, it seems to me, PWL research would need to take seriously sociological and historical work on professionalisation. To do so, is to push against the remaining sense of academic philosophers that, somehow, even as we are educated into and enact forms of institutional conduct typical of all modern professions—competition for symbolic capital as a basic, unquestionable good, verticalized status hierarchies encoding highly conservative norms of deferentialism, qualification through standardised examinations, and credentialization depending on the mimetic cultivation of established norms of speaking, referencing, writing and argumentation—philosophers really *should* be different. On the other hand, there is what Pierre Bourdieu calls

the ''academic aristocratism'' which is promoted by the institutional *habitus* of ''those who are immersed, in some cases from birth, in scholastic universes'', which is ''one of the least noticed effects of academic procedures of training and selection, functioning as rites of initiation'' (Bourdieu 2000, 25). This aristocratism, Bourdieu proposes, ''is rooted in the sense, specific to academic elites, of natural selection through gift'' and is predicated on a usually unquestioned ''magic boundary between the elect and the excluded'':

> This socially guaranteed difference, ratified and authenticated by the academic qualification which functions as a (bureaucratic) title of nobility is, without any doubt—like the difference between freeman and slave in past times—at the root of the difference of 'nature' or 'essence' … that academic aristocratism draws between the thinker and the 'common man', absorbed by the trivial concerns of everyday existence. "This aristocratism owes its success to the fact that it offers to the inhabitants of scholastic universes a perfect 'theodicy of their privilege', an absolute justification of that form of forgetting of history, … of the social conditions of possibility of scholastic reason which, despite what seems to separate them, the universalistic humanism of the Kantian tradition shares with the disenchanted prophets of 'the forgetting of Being'. (Bourdieu 2000, 25)

However, just as Hadot's work shows ancient philosophy's hosts of genres of writing, and forms of spiritual direction and exercises, shaped by the civic, institutional, and rhetorical realities in which philosophers worked, a PWL approach to contemporary thinking necessarily poses questions about ''the social condition of scholastic reason''. Under the banner of the Socratic ''know thyself'', it allows us to bring into renewed critical visibility the kinds of philosophising which the institutionalised norms and incentive structures of modern universities and *homo academicus*, promote and exclude, and so to consider what alternatives there may be.

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