

Chapter 1 : Philosophy of history - Wikipedia

Philosophy of history is the philosophical study of history and the past. The term was coined by Voltaire.

One reason for this, which has long been acknowledged, is that the English term "history," like its cognates in many Western languages *histoire*, *Geschichte*, is normally used to refer to two distinct, though related, things. On the one hand it refers to the temporal progression of large-scale human events, primarily but not exclusively in the past; on the other hand, "history" refers to the discipline or inquiry in which knowledge of the human past is acquired or sought. Thus "philosophy of history" can mean philosophical reflection on the historical process itself, or it can mean philosophical reflection on the knowledge we have of the historical process. Philosophers have done both sorts of things, and this has led to a distinction between "substantive" or sometimes "speculative" and "critical" or "analytical" philosophy of history. The first is usually considered part of metaphysics, perhaps analogous to the "philosophy of nature," whereas the second is seen as epistemology, as in the "philosophy of science. This entry begins with the standard distinction, only to see it lose some of its usefulness in the course of the exposition. Philosophical Reflection on the Historical Process The term "philosophy of history" originates with Voltaire in the 18th century, but it is most closely associated with German philosophers of the Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment periods: Kant, Herder, Hegel, and Marx. The lectures represent Hegel at the height of his influence, and their relatively brief less than a hundred pages introduction is as clear and straightforward as it is comprehensive. Soon translated into other languages e. What is more, philosophers who reflected on history before Hegel are often thought to have been engaged in the same kind of inquiry he was. But this is anachronistic, and misleading. The substantive philosophy of history is often described, in keeping with Hegel, as the search for the meaning and purpose of world history, and for the force that drives history toward its goal. While this describes many instances of reflection on the historical process, it is a simplification and is not necessarily an apt description of philosophical thought about history prior to Hegel. The most general description of the substantive philosophy of history is that the philosopher tries to "make sense" of the historical process, usually in the face of evidence to the contrary. But the "sense" that the philosopher seeks varies considerably: Philosophical reflection on the historical process seems to originate in early Christian philosophy, which is in turn indebted to the Jewish conception of time. The Hebrew scriptures introduce historical time into a world dominated by cyclical and ahistorical conceptions of time. Indian, Persian, and Greek thought are based on unchanging patterns and eternal recurrence, in which individual events, both natural and human, get whatever significance they have from reflecting, imitating, or instantiating these timeless forms. The sequence of individual events is not "going anywhere. In spite of the compelling historical accounts left by Herodotus and Thucydides, for Greek philosophers even political arrangements—constitutions such as aristocracy, monarchy, democracy—are portrayed, in the classical texts of Plato and Aristotle, for example, as following cyclical patterns of rise, fall and repetition. By contrast, for the ancient Jews, human events—both political and religious—get their significance not from a "vertical" and imitative relation to eternal patterns, but from a "horizontal" relation backward and forward to other events in real time: Christianity takes up this historical conception of time and intensifies it, first by affirming the coming of the Messiah as a central, real historical event, in the middle of history, as it were, pointing ahead to a final salvation in the second coming; and second, by extending the promise of salvation to all mankind through a progressive spread and universal triumph of Christianity. Creation, the fall, incarnation, and last judgment are unique, unrepeatable occurrences, and individual events and deeds, both human and divine, are arrayed along a line of time that extends from beginning to end. Given this conception, events are coming from somewhere and are going somewhere in time. Origin and destiny give meaning to human events and actions. This conception of historical time is not itself a philosophy of history but a cultural and religious worldview. Philosophical reflection begins when this conception generates problems, as it did in the age of Augustine. This philosopher struggled with problems of good and evil, freedom and divine justice, responsibility and punishment. History entered the picture when these concepts were projected onto the stage of the large-scale social events of his own time. The conversion of the Roman

Empire under Constantine CE was seen by early Christian theologians as the vindication of their religion and the harbinger of its eventual triumph throughout the world. Pagans took this as a sign that Christianity was responsible for the demise of the empire, and Christians wondered why God seemed to be punishing Rome rather than rewarding it for its conversion and crowning it with glory. Here it was historical developments, rather than just evil deeds and events, that seemed at odds with religious doctrine, and this constituted the problem Augustine felt the need to solve, addressing both pagan and Christian audiences. In response, Augustine denied that salvation and divine justice were to be sought in human secular history or its political or even religious institutions. Instead, they were to be found in the City of God, whose citizens have their real life outside secular time. As often occurs in the history of Christian thought, Greek philosophy comes to the rescue of the religious worldview. At the same time Augustine inaugurates the tradition of Christian apologetics, later called theodicy: Two things should be noted about history as Augustine conceives it: These two features of history remained more or less constant in the Christian tradition until the time of the enlightenment. He sees the world in apparent moral disorder, with the authority of the church being challenged, but assures his readers of the guidance of divine providence and the ultimate salvation of the faithful. Giambattista Vico, in the *New Science* , also appeals to the idea of providence, but his approach to history is more novel and more modern, because he thinks of providence as embodied in rational, developmental laws rather than acts of divine intervention. Vico is also known for dignifying historical knowledge, in the face of both ancient and modern disdain for it when compared to our knowledge of nature. Because human beings make history through their own acts, Vico believes, they are capable of knowing it. Because God creates nature, only he can truly know it. In this Vico challenges his contemporaries, the Cartesian defenders of the new mathematical science of nature as the paradigm for all knowledge. In the French Enlightenment, humans take center stage and their reason makes them capable of shaping their own destinies. Human events come under calculation and control. The future is no longer something to be prophesied or predicted, but something to be produced. The legitimacy of rulers can be questioned, and the people can overthrow them. History begins to look like a progress from a past of darkness and superstition into the light of reason and human self-determination. The purpose and goal of history now lies not outside and beyond it, but within it at some attainable point in the future. It is the result of human rather than divine agency, and it is now conceived not as salvation but as emancipation. Even though Voltaire introduces the term "philosophy of history" it is possible to argue that his view of history, shared by the enlightenment philosophes and the revolutionaries of the eighteenth century, was not so much a philosophical reflection on history but again, like the religion of the Jews and early Christians, an emerging political and cultural worldview. The philosophy of history begins, as before, when this worldview generates problems. The late enlightenment period produced a vast new literature of discovery and travel, which led among other things to the beginnings of history as something like an academic discipline with critical methods and justifiable assertions. A late text bears the title "An old question raised again: Kant wants to share the enlightenment point of view, just as he wants to endorse the claims of natural theology, but his critical reason forces him to limit its pretensions. As should be expected when reading Kant, of course, in no way is the idea of divine providence taken for granted. Progress in history, should it be found, would be toward "the achievement of a universal civic society which administers laws among men" p. He discusses at some lengths the difficulties of such an achievement, asserting as he does elsewhere that it would require solving "the problem of a lawful external relation among states" p. This is the greatest difficulty of all, because we can see the same antagonism among states as among individuals, which has led again and again to war. But after "devastations, revolutions, and even complete exhaustion," nature brings states to the realization that they must move "from the lawless condition of savages into a league of nations" p. He is not making claims about the actual course of history; rather, he is outlining the ideal conditions under which alone, he thinks, history could exhibit any progress. Thus he can assure practicing historians that he is making no attempt to displace their work, because he is propounding an Idea of world history based upon an a priori principle p. By using the term "Idea," a terminus technicus from the Critique of Pure Reason, which the translators signal by means of capitalization, Kant indicates a rational concept whose empirical reality not only is not, but, according to the Critique, cannot be exhibited in experience. But, like human freedom itself, neither can its

possibility be empirically denied. Thus the course of history does not provide evidence that the "civic union of the human race" will ever be achieved, but neither does it prove that it never will be. Its realization must at least be regarded as possible, and the Idea that we have of it may help bring it to pass. Kant is telling us not where history is going but where it ought to be going. Only in this minimal sense can philosophy help "make sense" of history, namely by articulating the "cosmopolitan standpoint" from which alone it can be freed from its apparent moral chaos. And by showing that its moral realization is at least possible, it "permits us to hope" for a better future. But here he rationally justifies hope for a better future for mankind on earth. In *Idea for a Universal History*, the concepts of a universal civic society, or league of nations, and of history as progressing toward it, legitimize certain political choices. They are Ideas capable of guiding our action in the social sphere. Kant is anticipating the project of expanding his ethical principles, with such notions as a kingdom of ends, into a political theory. Their central concern is not with what is the case but with what we ought to do. And the same is true of his philosophy of history. In his *Ideen zur Philosophie der Geschichte der Menschheit*, he undertakes a universal history, and for him, as for Voltaire, this means expanding the traditional scope of history to include non-European peoples. But Herder takes this insight in a different direction. While the thinkers of the French Enlightenment sought proof of the universality of human reason, Herder by contrast is struck by the diversity and particularity of human nature, embodied in distinct peoples and cultures. The Enlightenment philosophers saw the growth of scientific rationality expanding to the political realm and imagined a future in which reason triumphed over the dark forces of superstition and emotion. Herder, with his emphasis on diversity and culture, was less convinced that history was moving in any unified direction, much less a progressive one. True, his devout Protestantism kept him from embracing the complete cultural relativism that many would later draw from his work. But in contrast to Kant, whose sympathies still lie with the Enlightenment, Herder becomes one of the first great figures of the Romantic movement that grew up in opposition to it. He begins by distinguishing a "philosophische Weltgeschichte" from history proper; philosophy, he says, has "thoughts of its own," a priori thoughts, to bring to the study of history, p. Reason not only sets the goal for history but also governs the realization of that goal. Hegel did not invent this idea, he reminds us; the idea that reason rules the world is that of Anaxagoras, and it has also been expressed in the idea of divine providence. Unwilling to settle for pious ignorance, Hegel believes that the rationality of providence can be known and explained. If we take seriously the idea of providence, the demonstration of its rationality would amount to a theodicy or "justification of God" p. The embodiment of reason is spirit *Geist*, both in individuals and in peoples, whose nature is to be conscious and self-conscious, and whose actualization is to be autonomous and self-sufficient, that is, to be free. But this actualization is a temporal process, and that process is history. Spirit actualizes itself and achieves freedom through history, drawing its energy from human passions and intentions; but the result of this process is often at odds with the actual intentions of the individuals and peoples involved. In history, it is only when individuals and peoples organize themselves into states that freedom can finally be truly actualized. It is here, in law, the ethical life of the community and political order, not in the mere absence of constraint, that the "positive reality and satisfaction of freedom" are to be found p. The actual course of history can be seen as the display of human perfectibility leading toward the realization of freedom. Individuals and peoples struggle against each other, and many morally good and virtuous people suffer unjustly. But history moves on a different plane, and here the acts of individuals, especially those of the great figures of history, are not to be judged by moral standards. It is the spirit of peoples, not individuals, that are the agents of history, but these, "progressing in a necessary series of stages, are themselves only phases of the one universal Spirit: The self-comprehension of world spirit is philosophy itself.

Chapter 2 : History Of Philosophy

Philosophy of history, the study either of the historical process and its development or of the methods used by historians to understand their material. In more recent times, a comparable attitude was discernible beneath Arnold Toynbee's uncompromising repudiation of the idea that history is "a."

In a sense, this question is best answered on the basis of a careful reading of some good historians. But it will be useful to offer several simple answers to this foundational question as a sort of conceptual map of the nature of historical knowing. First, historians are interested in providing conceptualizations and factual descriptions of events and circumstances in the past. This effort is an answer to questions like these: What was it like? What were some of the circumstances and happenings that took place during this period in the past? How did participants and contemporaries think about it? What were the conditions and forces that brought it about? And providing an explanation requires, most basically, an account of the causal mechanisms, background circumstances, and human choices that brought the outcome about. We explain an historical outcome when we identify the social causes, forces, and actions that brought it about, or made it more likely. What were the processes through which the outcome occurred? How did Truman manage to defeat Dewey in the US election? Fourth, often historians are interested in piecing together the human meanings and intentions that underlie a given complex series of historical actions. They want to help the reader make sense of the historical events and actions, in terms of the thoughts, motives, and states of mind of the participants. Why has the Burmese junta dictatorship been so intransigent in its treatment of democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi? Answers to questions like these require interpretation of actions, meanings, and intentions of individual actors and of cultures that characterize whole populations. And, of course, the historian faces an even more basic intellectual task: Historical data do not speak for themselves; archives are incomplete, ambiguous, contradictory, and confusing. The historian needs to interpret individual pieces of evidence; and he or she needs to be able to somehow fit the mass of evidence into a coherent and truthful story. In short, historians conceptualize, describe, contextualize, explain, and interpret events and circumstances of the past. They sketch out ways of representing the complex activities and events of the past; they explain and interpret significant outcomes; and they base their findings on evidence in the present that bears upon facts about the past. Their accounts need to be grounded on the evidence of the available historical record; and their explanations and interpretations require that the historian arrive at hypotheses about social causes and cultural meanings. Historians can turn to the best available theories in the social and behavioral sciences to arrive at theories about causal mechanisms and human behavior; so historical statements depend ultimately upon factual inquiry and theoretical reasoning. Two preliminary issues are relevant to almost all discussions of history and the philosophy of history. These are issues having to do with the constitution of history and the levels at which we choose to characterize historical events and processes. The first issue concerns the relationship between actors and causes in history: The second issue concerns the question of scale of historical processes in space and time: Both issues can be illustrated in the history of France. Should we imagine that twentieth-century France is the end result of a number of major causes in its past—the collapse of the Roman order in the territory, the military successes of Charlemagne, the occurrence of the French Revolution, and defeat in the Franco-Prussian War? Or should we acknowledge that France at any point in time was the object of action and contest among individuals, groups, and organizations, and that the interplay of strategic actors is a more fertile way of thinking about French history than the idea of a series of causal events? Scale is equally controversial. Should we think of France as a single comprehensive region, or as the agglomeration of separate regions and cultures with their own historical dynamics Alsace, Brittany, Burgundy? Further, is it useful to consider the long expanse of human activity in the territory of what is now France, or are historians better advised to focus their attention on shorter periods of time? The following two sections will briefly consider these issues. Is history largely of interest because of the objective causal relations that exist among historical events and structures like the absolutist state or the Roman Empire? Or is history an agglomeration of the actions and mental frameworks of myriad individuals, high and low? Historians often pose questions like these: But what

if the reality of history is significantly different from what is implied by this approach? What if the causes of some very large and significant historical events are themselves small, granular, gradual, and cumulative? What if there is no satisfyingly simple and high-level answer to the question, why did Rome fall? What if, instead, the best we can do in some of these cases is to identify a swarm of independent, small-scale processes and contingencies that eventually produced the large outcome of interest? More radically, it is worth considering whether this way of thinking about history as a series of causes and effects is even remotely suited to its subject matter. What if we think that the language of static causes does not work particularly well in the context of history? What if we take seriously the idea that history is the result of the actions and thoughts of vast numbers of actors, so history is a flow of action and knowledge rather than a sequence of causes and effects? What if we believe that there is an overwhelming amount of contingency and path dependency in history? Do these alternative conceptions of history suggest that we need to ask different questions about large historical changes? Here is an alternative way of thinking of history: We might couch historical explanations in terms of how individual actors low and high acted in the context of these conditions; and we might interpret the large outcomes as no more than the aggregation of these countless actors and their actions. Such an approach would help to inoculate us against the error of reification of historical structures, periods, or forces, in favor of a more disaggregated conception of multiple actors and shifting conditions of action. This orientation brings along with it the importance of analyzing closely the social and natural environment in which actors frame their choices. Our account of the flow of human action eventuating in historical change unavoidably needs to take into account the institutional and situational environment in which these actions take place. Part of the topography of a period of historical change is the ensemble of institutions that exist more or less stably in the period: So historical explanations need to be sophisticated in their treatment of institutions and practices. Social circumstances can be both inhibiting and enabling; they constitute the environment within which individuals plan and act. It is an important circumstance that a given period in time possesses a fund of scientific and technical knowledge, a set of social relationships of power, and a level of material productivity. It is also an important circumstance that knowledge is limited; that coercion exists; and that resources for action are limited. Within these opportunities and limitations, individuals, from leaders to ordinary people, make out their lives and ambitions through action. What all of this suggests is an alternative way of thinking about history that has a different structure from the idea of history as a stream of causes and effects, structures and events. It is a view of history that gives close attention to states of knowledge, ideology, and agency, as well as institutions, organizations, and structures, and that gives less priority to the framework of cause and effect. Suppose we are interested in Asian history. Are we concerned with Asia as a continent, or China, or Shandong Province? Or in historical terms, are we concerned with the whole of the Chinese Revolution, the base area of Yenan, or the specific experience of a handful of villages in Shandong during the s? And given the fundamental heterogeneity of social life, the choice of scale makes a big difference to the findings. Historians differ fundamentally around the decisions they make about scale. William Hinton provides what is almost a month-to-month description of the Chinese Revolution in Fanshen village—a collection of a few hundred families Hinton, The book covers a few years and the events of a few hundred people. Likewise, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie offers a deep treatment of the villagers of Montaillou; once again, a single village and a limited time Le Roy Ladurie, William Cronon provides a focused and detailed account of the development of Chicago as a metropolis for the middle of the United States Cronon, In each of these cases, the historian has chosen a scale that encompasses virtually the whole of the globe, over millennia of time. The first threatens to be so particular as to lose all interest, whereas the second threatens to be so general as to lose all empirical relevance to real historical processes. There is a third choice available to the historian that addresses both points. This is to choose a scale that encompasses enough time and space to be genuinely interesting and important, but not so much as to defy valid analysis. This level of scale might be regional—for example, G. It might be national—for example, a social and political history of Indonesia. And it might be supra-national—for example, an economic history of Western Europe or comparative treatment of Eurasian history. The key point is that historians in this middle range are free to choose the scale of analysis that seems to permit the best level of conceptualization of history, given the evidence that is available and the

social processes that appear to be at work. Continental philosophy of history The topic of history has been treated frequently in modern European philosophy. A long, largely German, tradition of thought looks at history as a total and comprehensible process of events, structures, and processes, for which the philosophy of history can serve as an interpretive tool. This approach, speculative and meta-historical, aims to discern large, embracing patterns and directions in the unfolding of human history, persistent notwithstanding the erratic back-and-forth of particular historical developments. Modern philosophers raising this set of questions about the large direction and meaning of history include Vico, Herder, and Hegel. A somewhat different line of thought in the continental tradition that has been very relevant to the philosophy of history is the hermeneutic tradition of the human sciences. Human beings make history; but what is the fundamental nature of the human being? Can the study of history shed light on this question? When we study different historical epochs, do we learn something about unchanging human beings—or do we learn about fundamental differences of motivation, reasoning, desire, and collectivity? Is humanity a historical product? The common features of human nature give rise to a fixed series of stages of development of civil society, law, commerce, and government: Two things are worth noting about this perspective on history: Johann Gottfried Herder offers a strikingly different view about human nature and human ideas and motivations. Herder argues for the historical contextuality of human nature in his work, *Ideas for the Philosophy of History of Humanity*. He offers a historicized understanding of human nature, advocating the idea that human nature is itself a historical product and that human beings act differently in different periods of historical development —, Philosophers have raised questions about the meaning and structure of the totality of human history. Some philosophers have sought to discover a large organizing theme, meaning, or direction in human history. The ambition in each case is to demonstrate that the apparent contingency and arbitrariness of historical events can be related to a more fundamental underlying purpose or order. This approach to history may be described as hermeneutic; but it is focused on interpretation of large historical features rather than the interpretation of individual meanings and actions. In effect, it treats the sweep of history as a complicated, tangled text, in which the interpreter assigns meanings to some elements of the story in order to fit these elements into the larger themes and motifs of the story. Ranke makes this point explicitly. A recurring current in this approach to the philosophy of history falls in the area of theodicy or eschatology: Theologians and religious thinkers have attempted to find meaning in historical events as expressions of divine will. In the twentieth century, theologians such as Maritain, Rust, and Dawson offered systematic efforts to provide Christian interpretations of history.

Chapter 3 : Philosophy of History (Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy)

Hegel's philosophy of history is perhaps the most fully developed philosophical theory of history that attempts to discover meaning or direction in history (a, b,). Hegel regards history as an intelligible process moving towards a specific condition—the realization of human freedom.

Indian philosophy Indian philosophy Sanskrit: Some of the earliest surviving philosophical texts are the Upanishads of the later Vedic period — BCE. Important Indian philosophical concepts include dharma , karma , samsara , moksha and ahimsa. Indian philosophers developed a system of epistemological reasoning pramana and logic and investigated topics such as metaphysics, ethics, hermeneutics and soteriology. Indian philosophy also covered topics such as political philosophy as seen in the Arthashastra c. The commonly named six orthodox schools arose sometime between the start of the Common Era and the Gupta Empire. Later developments include the development of Tantra and Iranian-Islamic influences. Buddhism mostly disappeared from India after the Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent , surviving in the Himalayan regions and south India. Due to the influence of British colonialism, much modern Indian philosophical work was in English and includes thinkers such as Radhakrishnan , Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya , Bimal Krishna Matilal and M. Jain philosophy Jain philosophy separates body matter from the soul consciousness completely. Jain philosophy attempts to explain the rationale of being and existence, the nature of the Universe and its constituents, the nature of bondage and the means to achieve liberation. Jain texts expound that in every half-cycle of time, twenty-four tirthankaras grace this part of the Universe to teach the unchanging doctrine of right faith, right knowledge and right conduct. Buddhist philosophy begins with the thought of Gautama Buddha fl. Buddhist thought is trans-regional and trans-cultural. It originated in India and later spread to East Asia , Tibet , Central Asia , and Southeast Asia , developing new and syncretic traditions in these different regions. The various Buddhist schools of thought are the dominant philosophical tradition in Tibet and Southeast Asian countries like Sri Lanka and Burma. Because ignorance to the true nature of things is considered one of the roots of suffering dukkha , Buddhist philosophy is concerned with epistemology, metaphysics, ethics and psychology. The ending of dukkha also encompasses meditative practices. Key innovative concepts include the Four Noble Truths , Anatta not-self a critique of a fixed personal identity , the transience of all things Anicca , and a certain skepticism about metaphysical questions. Mahayana philosophers such as Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu developed the theories of Shunyata emptiness of all phenomena and Vijnapti-matra appearance only , a form of phenomenology or transcendental idealism. After the disappearance of Buddhism from India, these philosophical traditions continued to develop in the Tibetan Buddhist , East Asian Buddhist and Theravada Buddhist traditions. The modern period saw the rise of Buddhist modernism and Humanistic Buddhism under Western influences and the development of a Western Buddhism with influences from modern psychology and Western philosophy. East Asian philosophy The Analects of Confucius fl. East Asian philosophical thought began in Ancient China , and Chinese philosophy begins during the Western Zhou Dynasty and the following periods after its fall when the " Hundred Schools of Thought " flourished 6th century to BCE. These philosophical traditions developed metaphysical, political and ethical theories such Tao , Yin and yang , Ren and Li which, along with Chinese Buddhism , directly influenced Korean philosophy , Vietnamese philosophy and Japanese philosophy which also includes the native Shinto tradition. During later Chinese dynasties like the Ming Dynasty — as well as in the Korean Joseon dynasty — a resurgent Neo-Confucianism led by thinkers such as Wang Yangming — became the dominant school of thought, and was promoted by the imperial state. In the Modern era, Chinese thinkers incorporated ideas from Western philosophy. Modern Japanese thought meanwhile developed under strong Western influences such as the study of Western Sciences Rangaku and the modernist Meirokusha intellectual society which drew from European enlightenment thought. The 20th century saw the rise of State Shinto and also Japanese nationalism. The Kyoto School , an influential and unique Japanese philosophical school developed from Western phenomenology and Medieval Japanese Buddhist philosophy such as that of Dogen.

African philosophy Main article: African philosophy African philosophy is philosophy produced by African

people , philosophy that presents African worldviews, ideas and themes, or philosophy that uses distinct African philosophical methods. Modern African thought has been occupied with Ethnophilosophy , with defining the very meaning of African philosophy and its unique characteristics and what it means to be African. Another early African philosopher was Anton Wilhelm Amo c. Contemporary African thought has also seen the development of Professional philosophy and of Africana philosophy , the philosophical literature of the African diaspora which includes currents such as black existentialism by African-Americans. Modern African thinkers have been influenced by Marxism , African-American literature , Critical theory , Critical race theory , Postcolonialism and Feminism. Indigenous American philosophy is the philosophy of the Indigenous people of the Americas. There is a wide variety of beliefs and traditions among these different American cultures. Among some of the Native Americans in the United States there is a belief in a metaphysical principle called the "Great Mystery" Siouan: Wakan Tanka , Algonquian: Another widely shared concept was that of Orenda or "spiritual power". According to Peter M. Whiteley, for the Native Americans, "Mind is critically informed by transcendental experience dreams, visions and so on as well as by reason. Another feature of the indigenous American worldviews was their extension of ethics to non-human animals and plants. The Aztec worldview posited the concept of an ultimate universal energy or force called Ometeotl which can be translated as "Dual Cosmic Energy" and sought a way to live in balance with a constantly changing, "slippery" world. The theory of Teotl can be seen as a form of Pantheism. Aztec ethics was focused on seeking tlamatiliztli knowledge, wisdom which was based on moderation and balance in all actions as in the Nahua proverb "the middle good is necessary". These groupings allow philosophers to focus on a set of similar topics and interact with other thinkers who are interested in the same questions. The groupings also make philosophy easier for students to approach. Students can learn the basic principles involved in one aspect of the field without being overwhelmed with the entire set of philosophical theories. Various sources present different categorical schemes. The categories adopted in this article aim for breadth and simplicity. These five major branches can be separated into sub-branches and each sub-branch contains many specific fields of study.

Philosophy of History. History is the study of the past in all its forms. Philosophy of history examines the theoretical foundations of the practice, application, and social consequences of history and historiography.

Asked what universe is made of Thales: Each helped to shape the beginning of the scientific method: To Early 5th Century B. These thinkers advanced ideas about the essence of things Empedocles: Each influenced the history of ethics and religion in India, China, and Japan. The Buddha, a title meaning "the enlightened one," said life itself is marked by suffering, and that the path to transcendence nirvana lay in avoiding the extremes of self-indulgence and self-mortification. His ideas are laid out in the Tao Te Ching. Many religious sects and sub-sects were spawned. To Late 4th Century B. Perhaps the three greatest philosophers ever. He believed circumspect use of language and endless self-questioning are crucial in the quest for wisdom. Teacher of Plato, world-sage in outlook, he saw philosophy as a way of life, the highest calling of a select few. For him the highest good is knowledge. He wrote nothing but dramatically influenced the course of intellectual history. Plato, teacher of Aristotle, set forth his philosophy in dialogues, chief protagonist of which was Socrates, his mentor; he founded the Academy c. Most famous for his Theory of Forms phenomenal world of matter just an imperfect reflection of an immutable, transcendental world of ideas. Plato believed that knowledge is a process of remembering; the objects of knowledge are ideal and immutable. Aristotle theorized on a vast range of subjects: He founded the Lyceum and tutored Alexander the Great. His thinking influenced numerous theologians and philosophers, including St. Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. He put forth two general principles of proof: To Early 3rd Century B. Known mostly for hedonistic ethical system in which pleasure is the highest good Epicurus: Epicureans defended an atomistic view of the world i. Epicurus believed there are infinitely many worlds what we call "galaxies" today. To Third Century A. World governed by unshakable laws laid down by God. Everything happens for a reason, so that the goal of life should be acquiescence to divine laws, not resistance. God is immanent in all matter, creates a harmonious order. Later Roman Stoics affirmed same themes: To Second Century A. Avoided doctrines and dogmas and sought to criticize existing ideas. Nothing is truly knowable; doubt is the most tenable disposition of mind Pyrrho. Important harbinger of later empiricism, of the modern scientific method, of religious agnosticism. Profoundly influenced later philosophers Descartes, Hume, Santayana among them. To Sixth Century A. Not a continuous school Name "Cynic" comes from nickname given Diogenes: Cynical philosophy unrelated to modern acceptance of the term view that people act self-centeredly in pursuit of narrow aims. According to the older Greek philosophy, happiness is found in virtuous action; goods in the external world wealth, fame, pleasure, individualistic ambitions are unnatural and harmful. Ascetic self-discipline is the only path to freedom. Cynics are inclined to agree with Skeptics that little, if anything, can be known, and that one should steer clear of dogmas and popular views of things. To Seventeenth Century A. Philosophical speculation spills over into theological speculation. Greatest influence on Christianity was Platonism, with its emphasis on the superiority of the soul spirit against all materialistic and bodily functions, the belief in a higher, transcendent world heaven for religious devotees, belief in Truth and Virtue and acceptance of immutable, perfect Forms Jesus being the Form of ideal humanity. Early post-Hellenistic philosophy reached its summit in the Medieval Period, with the philosophy of Anselm and Aquinas and the poetry of Dante. Ideas prevalent in this era: It was in this period that Dante completed perhaps the most influential poem of all time: Copernicus, a Polish astronomer, challenged the Ptolemaic view; he said the sun was the center of our solar system, and that the earth and other planets revolve around it. Galileo, an Italian physicist, combined math and science to fashion a new scientific worldview. The Church at this time looked upon scientific experimentation with hostility and agitation; Galileo was forced to utter a recantation of his views, which he did half-heartedly. Francis Bacon, considered the father of science in England, made no actual discoveries he was a lawyer, essayist, moral philosopher and man of letters but gave voice to the inductive method of science and, more importantly, to empiricism pursuit of knowledge by observation and experiment, not by use of reason alone. This period marked the end of scholasticism, the growth of intellectual curiosity and freedom, and the belief, however tacit, that knowledge

about the universe can be derived not from revelation, as many of the scholastics thought, but from direct investigation and observation. He set out to construct a "master science" of "nature, man, and society"; if knowledge of nature is obtainable, Hobbes reasoned, knowledge of human nature must also be in reach. He steered away from empiricism, however, and sought to formulate principles of human conduct. The natural state of all bodies, he concluded, is motion; material universe is matter in motion. Life is motion in limbs, nerves, cells, and heart; human feelings, such as desire and aversion, are motions either towards something or away from it. Hobbes is best known for his work *Leviathan*, which was a defense of absolute government. Life, Hobbes said famously, is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. Like Descartes, Spinoza and Leibnitz believed in a rational, benevolent God. Monads, he said, are the elements of all things, mental as well as physical; they are indivisible. No two are alike, and change in the universe occurs because of the workings of each monad. Purpose of philosophy is to formulate and analyze concrete problems, he said, a view which is strikingly popular in universities today. Locke denied that people are born with innate knowledge; human beings are born with a *tabula rasa*, or empty slate, everything subsequently known coming from sensory experience. His acceptance of constitutional government *Two Treatises of Government* influenced leaders of the American Revolution. Matter, Berkeley said, is really only a mental representation in our mind. There is no proof of causality, Hume contended; the sceptical vantage point is the safest to assume in all questions of truth and knowledge. He believed that people are born good but that society wields a corrupting influence on them; like Locke, he expounded upon social contract theory. The driving force behind society is the General Will, and it must be respected. The challenge is to attain freedom amidst corruption and worldliness. According to Kant, the world of things-in-themselves is unknowable; the world of appearance, the phenomenal world governed by laws, is knowable. Transcendental knowledge is impossible. Kant rejected the argument of the empiricists that all knowledge is derived from sensory experience: Moral actions, he thought, can only arise from a sense of duty as opposed to, say, the outcome of actions, which may be pleasurable or beneficial to someone. Schopenhauer thought the driving force of reality is Will. Knowledge depends not on reason but Will; to understand reality, we need to look inward, not outward. Hegel defined the Absolute unity of God and Mind, popularized the dialectical approach to truth in which assertion is followed by negation, which in turn is followed by synthesis. Hegel held that the external world is mind: Hegel developed an influential body of political theory in which the State is the supreme manifestation of rationality and morality; this doctrine has subsequently influenced communist and fascist political orders. Marx excoriated religion, embraced a determinist perspective, and most of all, saw class conflict and capitalist-driven economic disparity as the hallmarks of industrial society. His name is synonymous with the *Communist Manifesto*, but he wrote on a wide range of subjects *Capital* and the *Eighteenth Brumaire* two of his many important works. Mill, Darwin, et al. Darwin, another Englishman, is of course best known for *The Origin of Species*, a work advancing the theory of evolution and the doctrine of natural selection. Those best adapted to their environment, Darwin said, are most successful in reproduction and hence, the propagation of their kind. The species in time will be more advanced, more evolved. Kierkegaard, reputed "founder" of existentialism: Anything we do can be the object of conscious awareness; deep fear that others will relate to us as if we were objects, reduce us to no-thing. There is no meaning to our life a priori, so the deepest striving is to define ourselves in a random and contingent world. This causes anxiety, as does the inevitable fact of death. Existentialist themes brilliantly captured in the following novels: Nietzsche distinguished master morality from slave morality; Christianity, among other religions, falling into the latter category the morality of weakness. Neither truth nor facts exist; everything is interpretation. Only hope for humanity going forward is to transcend influence of religion and bad philosophy and embrace the *Übermensch*, a vaguely defined hero with markedly powerful traits the mix of apollonian and dionysian traits: With its emphasis on the practical, its instrumentalism, pragmatism seems the perfect fit for Industrial America. James makes landmark contributions in psychology *Principles of Psychology*, in epistemology and morals *The Will To Believe*, and in religious studies *Varieties of Religious Experience*. James argues passionately in favor of religious faith. George Santayana the odd philosopher out here: Perhaps the most articulate philosopher of the English language unfortunate that the world only remembers GS by one aphorism: Dewey most famous for his

progressive contributions to education and his outspoken criticism of American culture.

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*Philosophy (from Greek $\varphi\iota\lambda\sigma\phi\iota\alpha$, *philosophia*, literally "love of wisdom") is the study of general and fundamental problems concerning matters such as existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind, and language.*

The History of a Philosophy Published: The History of a Philosophy, Acumen, , pp. Reviewed by Dietmar Heidemann, University of Luxembourg This book provides a comprehensive overview of the history of philosophical idealism from ancient to contemporary philosophy. That is to say, the authors do not claim that the history of philosophy is to be reconstructed in terms of idealism as its leading thread. This would, of course, mean to just ignore concurrent movements, approaches and doctrines throughout the history of philosophy. As Dunham, Grant, and Watson see it, contemporary philosophy shows a growing interest in idealism and its reception in recent philosophy. This is the primary motivation for them to compose a historical survey of idealist theories. They are certainly right in claiming that philosophical research, be it historical or systematic, is in need of such a survey. At the same time, they acknowledge the danger of being selective with respect to the idealist theories they consider since the history of idealism is simply too rich for a normal length book project. On the other hand, they surprisingly ignore medieval philosophy altogether as they obviously think that it is not part of that history, contrary to what recent research has demonstrated. In view of the theoretical context the idea of "idealism" originates in, this decision proves to be well-founded. This is especially so in the chapters on idealism in early modern philosophy and -- disregarded by many scholars for a long time -- British idealism. With respect to the latter, it is particularly illuminating to see how German idealist thought is taken up and further developed by Bradley, McTaggart, Bosanquet, et al. However, one major weakness of the book cannot be overlooked. The authors are aware of the difficulty that there are certain views traditionally associated with idealism such as anti-realism and anti-naturalism pp. But they do not provide any particular definition or explication of the concept "idealism" itself. As this concept emerges in early modern philosophy and since it has had a specific theoretical meaning ever since, it would have been helpful if they had laid out the historical background of the term and profiled the major meanings of the various idealist doctrines on the market. Doing that would have made it less difficult for the reader to know which particular kind of idealism the authors are referring to. Chapter One makes the controversial claim that there is idealism in ancient philosophy and that Parmenides is its origin. Burnyeat is not pointing to the fact that the concept of idealism only appears in modern philosophy, but that ancient philosophy is simply unaware of the very idea of idealism. The various "idealist" interpretations of the Parmenidean poem by, among others, Plato, Plotinus, Bradley, Heidegger and Sprigge the authors mention pp. The same goes for the section on Plato pp. Here again the label "idealism" is simply too unspecific, e. If one acknowledges the modern origin of the concept "idealism", the statement that "Neoplatonism sets out the standard for all subsequent developments in idealist philosophy" p. The concern is not that in principle one cannot find idealist views in ancient philosophy, but what the designation "ancient idealism" could mean given the fact that it was the context of Cartesian subjectivity that gave rise to idealism. To a certain extent Chapter Two is less ambiguous in this respect. Here Dunham, Grant, and Watson discuss in greater detail why and how idealism became the dominating view in early modern philosophy, i. There are two distinguishing features of early modern idealism. By and large this view can be retraced in most early modern kinds of idealism as the authors show with respect to Malebranche, Leibniz and Berkeley. Maybe some of them are anti-realists by implication, but certainly not by intention. The section on Malebranche is particularly instructive since it not only critically discusses his philosophy of ideas p. While Malebranche conceives of the world in terms of occasionalism, Leibniz conceives of it in terms of perfectionism since it is created by God p. Although Dunham, Grant, and Watson do not profile Leibnizean idealism in great detail, they give a fine overview of his theory, arguing that Leibniz is a phenomenalist pp. The way they succeed in assessing the secondary literature on the question of whether Leibniz is an idealist or a realist is exemplary. The common feature that can be established between Malebranche and Leibniz also pertains to Berkeley: God as the source of ideas had by finite rational beings. In the section on Berkeley the authors give a very clear outline of the crucial elements of his empiricism, in

particular of his critique of primary and secondary qualities and the argument for God as the true preserver of reality, from which they conclude that Berkeley is an idealist pp. In the history of idealism Kant is obviously the first philosopher who calls himself an idealist. Given the prevalent condemnation of idealism in eighteenth-century philosophy this is rather surprising. This is certainly not the case. The point of departure for Kantian idealism is the critical theory of space and time as forms of intuition leading to transcendental idealism and empirical realism. The authors maintain that, according to Kant, experiences are "somehow" experiences of the "noumenon" or "transcendental object" p. The discussion of transcendental idealism is not convincing since the authors once again do not characterize the kind of idealism Kant argues for, i. Kant is an idealist. He is not, however, a German idealist. For Kant claims that possible experience defines the critical limits of cognition, a claim to which the German idealists do not subscribe. The problem with German idealism is that it must be conceived of as a highly complex and heterogeneous philosophical movement that does not allow for a homogeneous understanding of its idealist theories. It is therefore a challenge to provide an overview of German idealisms. It is an idealism that insists on the "primacy of practice" p. German idealism culminates in Hegel since Hegel makes the strongest idealist claim: This seems rather questionable since in this work Hegel only gives an abbreviated account of his philosophy, mainly for students. As such, this approach is reasonable as a way to explain what idealism means to Hegel. However, once more they do not really qualify the kind of idealism Hegel advocates, e. At one point only do they give a hint: On the one hand, the British idealists are to be seen in a continuous line with Hegelian idealism; on the other hand, its major representatives -- Green, Bradley, McTaggart and Bosanquet -- champion idealisms of their own. As the authors explain, the two major ideas British idealism centers around are "holism" and "monism", i. This chapter concludes that there is no intrinsic connection between idealism and a subjectivist account of reality p. Dunham, Grant, and Watson do not believe that the history of idealism came to an end by the late nineteenth century. Though one might find similarities, e. However, there is a problem since they do not call themselves idealists. Nevertheless, the authors think these thinkers at least come very close to idealism. McDowell belongs to the idealist thinking though he does not advocate "absolute mind-dependence of the world". For him, "concepts are formed from our experience, and our experience is shaped by the world" p. What makes this idealism is the supposedly Hegelian ingredient that there is a "unity" of "thinking and being, or mind and world" p. The problem with this putative idealism is that McDowell himself comes up with a mixture of Kantian and Hegelian doctrines that make it difficult to identify which kind of idealism he subscribes to, if he does at all, for Kantian and Hegelian idealism look quite different. The same can be said with respect to Brandom, who likewise is supposed to be an idealist since he believes the world to be inseparable from thought, though for different reasons than McDowell p. What makes this idealism is difficult to determine, since once again the authors do not employ any elaborate conception of the specific kind of idealism this is or is not. By contrast to this rather blurry appreciation of idealism, the idealist main feature is much clearer in Sprigge whose "panpsychist" or "absolute idealism" takes physicalism to be only an aspect of reality, reality itself "consisting of innumerable centres of experience" pp. Corresponding to this idealism in analytic philosophy, the authors find idealism also in postmodern philosophy. The thesis that we should conceive of, say, Deleuze as a "philosophical idealist" because he develops "the ontological primacy of the Idea" p. This, however, is what the authors want to prevent us from doing. In sum, Dunham, Grant, and Watson give a very helpful survey of the history of philosophical idealism. Many philosophers like Schopenhauer and Santayana that one would have expected to be considered are left out; however, others that are at times disregarded as idealists have been insightfully included. The final, Hegel-inspired hope the authors express, namely that analytic philosophy might reunify with German idealism p. Skeptische Debatten im Mittelalter. Frankfurt am Main, Accordingly, idealism is not a skeptical but a dogmatic doctrine that claims the existence of only thinking things. This systematic classification had a huge impact on eighteenth-century philosophy until Kant. Kant took it up and gave the contemporary discussion important new impulses by specifying kinds of idealism as well as of realism. One thing is crucial: This is why the use of this term with respect to ancient philosophy seems illegitimate or at least needs further explanation. It was not before the German idealists that philosophers made use of "idealism" in a much broader, e.

The pre-Socratic philosophers (Heraclitus, Empedocles, Parmenides, Zeno) followed with their formulations and speculations, and in the wings were three of history's most prodigious philosophical minds (Socrates, Plato, Aristotle).

Types[edit] In contemporary philosophy a distinction is made between critical philosophy of history also known as analytic and speculative philosophy of history. The names of these types are derived from C. Sometimes critical philosophy of history is included under historiography. Philosophy of history should not be confused with the history of philosophy , which is the study of the development of philosophical ideas in their historical context. Accordingly, classical historians felt a duty to ennoble the world. In keeping with philosophy of history, it is clear that their philosophy of value imposed upon their process of writing historyâ€”philosophy influenced method and hence product. Herodotus, regarded by some[who? History was supposed to teach good examples for one to follow. The assumption that history "should teach good examples" influenced how writers produced history. In the fourteenth century, Ibn Khaldun , who is considered one of the fathers of the philosophy of history, discussed his philosophy of history and society in detail in his Muqaddimah His work represents a culmination of earlier works by medieval Islamic sociologists in the spheres of Islamic ethics , political science , and historiography , such as those of al-Farabi c. He introduced a scientific method to the philosophy of history which Dawood considers something "totally new to his age" and he often referred to it as his "new science", [8] which is now associated with historiography. His historical method also laid the groundwork for the observation of the role of the state , communication , propaganda , and systematic bias in history. Starting with Fustel de Coulanges â€” and Theodor Mommsen â€” , historical studies began to move towards a more modern scientific[citation needed] form. In the Victorian era , historiographers debated less whether history was intended to improve the reader , and more on what causes turned history and how one could understand historical change. Cyclical and linear history[edit] Further information: Social cycle theory Narrative history tends to follow an assumption of linear progression: Many ancient cultures held mythical concepts of history and of time that were not linear. Such societies saw history as cyclical, with alternating Dark and Golden Ages. Plato taught the concept of the Great Year , and other Greeks spoke of aeons eons. According to Jainism , this world has no beginning or end but goes through cycles of upturns utsarpini and downturns avasarpini constantly. Many Greeks believed that just as mankind went through four stages of character during each rise and fall of history so did government. The story of the Fall of Man from the Garden of Eden , as recounted and elaborated in Judaism and Christianity , preserves traces of a moral cycle; this would give the basis for theodicies which attempt to reconcile the existence of evil in the world with the existence of a God, providing a global explanation of history with belief in a coming Messianic Age. Some theodicies claimed that history had a progressive direction leading to an eschatological end, such as the Apocalypse , organized by a superior power. Leibniz based his explanation on the principle of sufficient reason , which states that anything that happens, does happen for a specific reason. In this way theodicies explained the necessity of evil as a relative element that forms part of a larger plan of history. Confronted with the antique problem of future contingents , Leibniz invented the theory of " compossible worlds ", distinguishing two types of necessity, to cope with the problem of determinism. During the Renaissance , cyclical conceptions of history would become common, with proponents illustrating decay and rebirth by pointing to the decline of the Roman Empire. Cyclical conceptions continued in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the works of authors such as Oswald Spengler â€” , Nikolay Danilevsky â€” , and Paul Kennedy â€” , who conceived the human past as a series of repetitive rises and falls. Spengler, like Butterfield , when writing in reaction to the carnage of the First World War of â€” , believed that a civilization enters upon an era of Caesarism [9] after its soul dies. The development of mathematical models of long-term secular sociodemographic cycles revived interest in cyclical theories of history see, for example, Historical Dynamics by Peter Turchin , or Introduction to Social Macrodynamics [10] by Andrey Korotayev et al. Sustainable history[edit] "Sustainable History and the Dignity of Man" is a philosophy of history proposed by Nayef Al-Rodhan , where history is defined as a durable progressive trajectory in which the quality of life on this

planet or all other planets is premised on the guarantee of human dignity for all at all times under all circumstances. Among other things, human dignity means having a positive sense of self and instilling individuals with respect for the communities to which they belong. Basic welfare provision and security are fundamental to ensuring human dignity. Environment and ecological considerations need to be addressed as well. Finally, cultural diversity, inclusiveness and participation at all levels, of all communities are key imperatives of human dignity. Within this civilisation are many geo-cultural domains that comprise sub-cultures. Nayef Al-Rodhan envisions human civilisation as an ocean into which the different geo-cultural domains flow like rivers, "The Ocean Model of one Human Civilization". At points where geo-cultural domains first enter the ocean of human civilisation, there is likely to be a concentration or dominance of that culture. However, over time, all the rivers of geo-cultural domains become one. Nevertheless, there are cases where geographical proximity of various cultures can also lead to friction and conflict. Nayef Al-Rodhan concludes that within an increasingly globalised, interconnected and interdependent world, human dignity cannot be ensured globally and in a sustainable way through sole national means. A genuine global effort is required to meet the minimum criteria of human dignity globally. Areas such as conflict prevention, socio-economic justice, gender equality, protection of human rights, environmental protection require a holistic approach and a common action.

In *What is Enlightenment?* One is responsible for this immaturity and dependence, if its cause is not a lack of intelligence or education, but a lack of determination and courage to think without the direction of another. In a paradoxical way, Kant supported in the same time enlightened despotism as a way of leading humanity towards its autonomy. He had conceived the process of history in his short treaty *Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose*. On one hand, enlightened despotism was to lead nations toward their liberation, and progress was thus inscribed in the scheme of history; on the other hand, liberation could only be acquired by a singular gesture, *Sapere Aude!* Hegel developed a complex theodicy in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which based its conception of history on dialectics: Hegel argued that history is a constant process of dialectic clash, with each thesis encountering an opposing idea or event antithesis. The clash of both was "superated" in the synthesis, a conjunction that conserved the contradiction between thesis and its antithesis while sublating it. Hegel thought that reason accomplished itself, through this dialectical scheme, in History. Through labour, man transformed nature so he could recognize himself in it; he made it his "home. Roads, fields, fences, and all the modern infrastructure in which we live is the result of this spiritualization of nature. Hegel thus explained social progress as the result of the labour of reason in history. However, this dialectical reading of history involved, of course, contradiction, so history was also conceived of as constantly conflicting: Hegel theorized this in his famous dialectic of the lord and the bondsman. According to Hegel, One more word about giving instruction as to what the world ought to be. Philosophy in any case always comes on the scene too late to give it. When philosophy paints its gray in gray, then has a shape of life grown old. The owl of Minerva spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk. Philosophy is always late, it is only an interpretation of what is rational in the real"and, according to Hegel, only what is recognized as rational is real. The Whig interpretation of history, as it was later called, associated with scholars of the Victorian and Edwardian eras in Britain, such as Henry Maine or Thomas Macaulay, gives an example of such influence, by looking at human history as progress from savagery and ignorance toward peace, prosperity, and science. However, it was quickly transposed from its original biological field to the social field, in "social Darwinism" theories. These nineteenth-century unilineal evolution theories claimed that societies start out in a primitive state and gradually become more civilised over time, and equated the culture and technology of Western civilisation with progress. Ernst Haeckel formulated his recapitulation theory in, which stated that "ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny": Hence, a child goes through all the steps from primitive society to modern society. This was later discredited. Progress was not necessarily, however, positive. After the first world war, and even before Herbert Butterfield harshly criticized it, the Whig interpretation had gone out of style. The bloodletting of that conflict had indicted the whole notion of linear progress. The *End of History and the Last Man* by Francis Fukuyama proposed a similar notion of progress, positing that the worldwide adoption of liberal democracies as the single accredited political system and even modality of human consciousness would represent the "End of History". Unlike Maurice Godelier who

interprets history as a process of transformation, Tim Ingold suggests that history is a movement of autopoiesis [17] A key component to making sense of all of this is to simply recognize that all these issues in social evolution merely serve to support the suggestion that how one considers the nature of history will impact the interpretation and conclusions drawn about history. The critical under-explored question is less about history as content and more about history as process. In Steven Pinker wrote a history of violence and humanity from an evolutionary perspective in which he shows that violence has declined statistically over time. His history of great men, of geniuses good and evil, sought to organize change in the advent of greatness. Most philosophers of history contend that the motive forces in history can best be described only with a wider lens than the one he used for his portraits. Danto, for example, wrote of the importance of the individual in history, but extended his definition to include social individuals, defined as "individuals we may provisionally characterize as containing individual human beings amongst their parts. Examples of social individuals might be social classes [Dray, Rainbow-Bridge Book Co. For example, to read about what is known today as the " Migrations Period ," consult the biography of Attila the Hun. Before he can remake his society, his society must make him. Some argue that geography see geographic determinism , economic systems see economic determinism , or culture see cultural determinism prescribe "the iron laws of history" that decide what is to happen. Others see history as a long line of acts and accidents, big and small, each playing out its consequences until that process gets interrupted by the next. It should be noted that even determinists do not rule that, from time to time, certain cataclysmic events occur to change course of history. Their main point is, however, that such events are rare and that even apparently large shocks like wars and revolutions often have no more than temporary effects on the evolution of the society. Karl Marx is, perhaps, the most famous of the exponents of economic determinism. For him social institutions like political system, religion and culture were merely by-products of the basic economic system see Base and superstructure. Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under given circumstances directly encountered and inherited from the past. Social progress and Progress history Theodicy claimed that history had a progressive direction leading to an eschatological end, given by a superior power. However, this transcendent teleological sense can be thought as immanent to human history itself. Hegel probably represents the epitome of teleological philosophy of history. Thinkers such as Nietzsche , Michel Foucault , Althusser , or Deleuze deny any teleological sense to history, claiming that it is best characterized by discontinuities, ruptures, and various time-scales, which the Annales School had demonstrated. Schools of thought influenced by Hegel also see history as progressive, but they saw, and see, progress as the outcome of a dialectic in which factors working in opposite directions are over time reconciled see above. History was best seen as directed by a *Zeitgeist* , and traces of the *Zeitgeist* could be seen by looking backward. Hegel believed that history was moving man toward " civilization ", and some also claim he thought that the Prussian state incarnated the " End of History ". In his *Lessons on the History of Philosophy*, he explains that each epochal philosophy is in a way the whole of philosophy; it is not a subdivision of the Whole but this Whole itself apprehended in a specific modality. Historical accounts of writing history[edit] Further information:

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Our topic this week is the philosophy of history. There are different ways the word 'history' might be defined, so we had better start out by defining our terms. For example, you could define history as the sum total of past events.

It should be noted, first and foremost, that philosophy in its traditional sense was science – philosophers like Aristotle used rationality to come to scientific knowledge of the world around us. It was not until relatively modern times that philosophy was considered to be separate from the physical sciences. It is said that liberalism proper, the belief in equal rights under the law, begins with Locke. Locke is the man responsible, through Jefferson primarily, for the absence of nobility in America. Although nobility and birthrights still exist in Europe, especially among the few kings and queens left, the practice has all but vanished. He was soundly criticized by a lot of Christian polemicists those who make war against all thought but Christian thought, especially during the Middle Ages, because he was thought to be an atheist, whose principles for a happy life were passed down to this famous set of statements: Such intangible things he considered preconceived notions, which can be manipulated. Stoicism is based on the idea that anything which causes us to suffer in life is actually an error in our judgment, and that we should always have absolute control over our emotions. Put another way, the world is what we make of it. Epicureanism is the usual school of thought considered the opposite of Stoicism, but today many people mistake one for the other or combine them. Epicureanism argues that displeasures do exist in life and must be avoided, in order to enter a state of perfect mental peace ataraxia, in Greek. Stoicism argues that mental peace must be acquired out of your own will not to let anything upset you. Death is a necessity, so why feel depressed when someone dies? Why get enraged over something? The rage will not result in anything good. Of importance is to shun desire: He lived in the Persian Empire from c. The Dark Ages were not so dark. His two most well known works today are The Book of Healing which has nothing to do with physical medicine and The Canon of Medicine, which was his compilation of all known medical knowledge at that time. Influenced primarily by 1, his Book of Healing deals with everything from logic, to math, to music, to science. He proposed in it that Venus is closer than the Sun to Earth. Imagine not knowing that for a fact. The Sun looks a lot closer than Venus, but he got it right. He rejected astrology as a true science, since everything in it is based on conjecture, not evidence. As a matter of fact, the petrification of the bodies of plants and animals is not more extraordinary than the transformation of waters. Petrification can occur in any organic material, and involves the material, most notably wood, being impregnated by silica deposits, gradually changing from its original materials into stone. Avicenna is the first to describe the five classical senses: It would take too long to explain them in this list, but they are all forms of syllogisms, and every philosopher and student of philosophy is familiar with them from the beginning of education in the subject. Thomas founded everything he postulated firmly in Christianity, and for this reason, he is not universally popular, today. Even Christians consider that, since he derived all his ethical teachings from the Bible, Thomas is not independently authoritative of any of those teachings. But his job, in teaching the common people around him, was to get them to understand ethics without all the abstract philosophy. He was able to reach the masses with this simple, four-part instruction. He made five famous arguments for the existence of God, which are still discussed hotly on both sides: He has essence and existence, and these two qualities cannot be separated. He espoused significant principles of ethics and politics, in a time when the Greeks were espousing the same things. This may sound obvious to us today, but he wrote it in the early s to late s BC. It is the same principle of democracy that the Greeks argued for and developed: The emperor must be honest and his subjects must respect him, but he must also deserve that respect. If he makes a mistake, his subjects must offer suggestions to correct him, and he must consider them. Any ruler who acted contrary to these principles was a tyrant, and thus a thief more than a ruler. Confucius also devised his own, independent version of the Golden Rule, which had existed for at least a century in Greece before him. His phrasing was almost identical, but then furthered the idea: The second statement is much more important, constituting an active desire to help others. The only other philosopher of antiquity to advocate the Golden Rule in the positive form is Jesus of Nazareth. Smart is the new sexy! Analytical geometry is the study of geometry using

algebra and the Cartesian coordinate system. He discovered the laws of refraction and reflection. He also invented the superscript notation still used today to indicate the powers of exponents. He advocated dualism, which is very basically defined as the power of the mind over the body: He rejected perception as unreliable, and considered deduction the only reliable method for examining, proving and disproving anything. He also adhered to the Ontological Argument for the Existence of a Christian God, stating that, because God is benevolent, Descartes can have some faith in the account of reality his senses provide him, for God has provided him with a working mind and sensory system and does not desire to deceive him. From this supposition, however, Descartes finally establishes the possibility of acquiring knowledge about the world based on deduction and perception. In terms of the study of knowledge therefore, he can be said to have contributed such ideas as a rigorous conception of foundationalism basic beliefs and the possibility that reason is the only reliable method of attaining knowledge. Paul accomplished more with the few letters we have of his, to various churches in Asia Minor, Israel and Rome, than any other mortal person in the Bible, except Jesus himself. But without Paul, the religion would have died in a few hundred years at best, or remained too insular to invite the entire world into its faith, as Jesus wanted. Paul had more than one falling out with Peter, primarily among the other Disciples. Peter insisted that at least one or two of the Jewish traditions remain as requirements, along with faith in Jesus, for one to be counted as Christian. Paul insisted that faith in Jesus is all that is required, and neither circumcision, refusal of certain foods or any other Jewish custom was necessary, because the world was now, and forevermore, under a state of Grace in Jesus, not a state of Law according to Moses. He is especially impressive to have systematized these principles flawlessly, having never met Jesus in person, and in direct opposition to Peter and several other Disciples. Many theologians and experts on Christianity and its history even call Paul, and not Jesus, the founder of Christianity. That may be going a bit too far, but keep in mind that the Disciples intended to keep Christianity for themselves, as the proper form of Judaism, to which only Jews could convert. Anyone could symbolically become a Jew by circumcision and obedience of the Mosaic Laws every one of them, not just the Big Ten. Paul argued against this, stating that as Christ was the absolute greatest good that the world would ever see, and Almighty because he and the Father are one, then the grace of Christ is sufficiently powerful to save anyone from his or her sin, whether Jewish, Gentile or anything else. If Socrates wrote anything down, it has not survived directly. Plato and Xenophon, another of his students, recounted a lot of his teachings, as did the playwright Aristophanes. It is only through philosophy that the world can be free of evils. He argued against democracy proper, rule by the people themselves, since in his view, a democracy had murdered his teacher, Socrates. All things of the material world can change, and our perception of them also, which means that the reality of the material world is weaker, less defined than that of the immaterial abstractions. Plato argued that something must have created the Universe. Whatever it is, the Universe is its offspring, and we, living on Earth, our bodies and everything that we see and hear and touch around us, are less real than the creator of the Universe, and the Universe itself. This is a foundation on which 4 based his understanding of existentialism. But consider that Aristotle is the first to have written systems by which to understand and criticize everything from pure logic to ethics, politics, literature, even science. Aristotle is also the first person in Western history to argue that there is a hierarchy to all life in the Universe; that because Nature never did anything unnecessary as he observed, then in the same way, this animal is in charge of that animal, and likewise with plants and animals together. The Medieval Christian theorists ran with this idea, extrapolating it to the hierarchy of God with Man, including angels. Thus, the angelic hierarchy of Catholicism, usually thought as a purely Catholic notion, stems from Aristotle, who lived and died before Jesus was born. Aristotle was, in fact, at the very heart of the classical education system used through the Medieval western world. His principles of ethics were founded on the concept of doing good, rather than merely being good. A person may be kind, merciful, charitable, etc. We could go on about Aristotle, of course, but this list has gone on long enough. Honorable mentions are very many, so list them as you like.

Chapter 8 : Top 10 Greatest Philosophers in History - Listverse

3 ideas, and philosophical history, reject the first two, and argue for the legitimacy of the fourth as an intellectual enterprise distinct from the third.

Rachel Zuckert and James Kreines eds. *Hegel on Philosophy in History* Published: January 23, Rachel Zuckert and James Kreines eds. Reviewed by Kristin Gjesdal, Temple University This volume, published to honor the work of Robert Pippin, includes contributions by an impressive range of German and Anglophone scholars: Attention is paid both to the limits and nature of subjectivity autonomy, self-consciousness, self-legislation, recognition, spontaneity and to the nature of the modern project -- i. In the following, I will provide a brief overview of the contributions to this volume and then offer some reflections on what questions remain in its wake. The friendly disagreement between Pippin and McDowell goes back a good decade or more. Sedgwick is, strangely, the only woman contributing to the volume the bibliography only strengthens the sense that the discipline needs to change in this respect. In her contribution, Sedgwick plays out a different kind of interanimation with the work of Pippin. According to Siep, one of the things contemporary philosophers can learn from Hegel is that to give up "the pretense to an external standpoint overseeing the general direction of cultural history" need not amount to an abandonment of the project of modernity itself p. For Siep, the project of modernity, and of critical reasoning, can also be pursued from within cultural life. Paul Redding offers a provocative reading of the master and slave dialectic, emphasizing its roots in Greek Stoicism and its relationship to Aristotelian philosophy. Indicating a possible mediation between the positions defended by McDowell and Pippin, Stern argues that Hegel has a perfectionist philosophy, but that this is indeed of a distinctively post-Kantian kind see pp. This, it seems, is but another way of addressing the question as to where the commitments to Kantian transcendentalism end and the historical-dynamical commitments to post-Kantian idealism take over. As the irrationalities of a failing way of life make themselves felt, agents move beyond merely conceiving of themselves as responding to reasons and develop conceptions of what reasons they are authorized to take up in action p. Rolf-Peter Horstmann defends an interpretation of Hegel that, at least to this reader, appears incompatible with that of Pippin. In his intertwinement of metaphysic and logic, Hegel is thought to steer clear of "erroneous beliefs about the nature of concepts and objects and. In a different vein, Karl Ameriks seeks to question a dominant historical narrative, though this time it is a narrative that is, by and large, established by Hegel himself -- namely that of the constitutive shortcomings of philosophical romanticism. In this way, Ameriks airs the legitimate concern that "even non-imperialist readings of Hegel -- whatever their advantages -- may still tend, at times, to obscure the value of non-Hegelian late modern positions and may needlessly encourage the common presumption that these positions are distinguished by a kind of subjectivism, aestheticism, or historicism" p. From his point of view, history emerges not as a progressive path towards freedom and self-determination but as driven by power struggles of the kinds we find more aptly analyzed in the works of Marx and Nietzsche. At stake is an alternative in which "others are not experienced, as in the usual case, as limitations, but rather as conditions of the possibility of forming and realizing our own intentions" p. While the line-up of contributors is impressive and the overall quality of the chapters is high, the topic of the present volume is at one and the same time somewhat narrow and not quite spelled out to its full potential. Consisting of a panel of fairly senior contributors, many of whom have been engaged in past exchanges with Pippin, one cannot help wondering what traces his work has left among a younger generation of philosophers. As I see it, the real legacy of his work will not simply be summed up by those with whom he has spent his career conversing, but also by his paving the way for new generations of Hegel scholars. More significant, though, is perhaps a concern about how the volume sets up the very topic of philosophy in history. It would have made sense to invite a few more critical readers and to have Pippin himself respond to the concerns discussed, be they launched from within a position that is compatible with his own or not. Pippin has definitely been a primus motor behind the recent upsurge both in Hegel scholarship and European philosophy more broadly. The present volume corroborates one strand of this influence, yet leaves the broader scope of his work unaddressed.

Chapter 9 : Philosophy of History

Peter Adamson, Professor of Philosophy at the LMU in Munich and at King's College London, takes listeners through the history of philosophy, "without any gaps." The series looks at the ideas, lives and historical context of the major philosophers as well as the lesser-known figures of the tradition.

Ancient through Medieval The attempt to derive meaning from the past is as old as culture itself. The very notion of a culture depends upon a belief in a common history that members of that culture recognize themselves as meaningfully sharing. Arguably the first scientific philosophy of history—which is characterized by an attempt to be non-biased, testimony-based, comprehensive, and unencumbered by grand predictive structures—was produced by the father of history, Herodotus c. 485–425 BCE. But what he sacrifices in confirmable fact he makes up for in the descriptive vividness of everyday life. All stories, however preposterous, are recorded without moral judgment since they each reflect the beliefs of a time and of a people, all of which are worth knowing. While Greece and Rome produced a number of important historians and chroniclers, none were more comprehensive or more influential than Thucydides c. 460–400 BCE. Like Herodotus, Thucydides viewed history as a source of lessons about how people tended to act. And like him, too, Thucydides was concerned with how methodological considerations shaped our view of the past. However, Thucydides was critical of Herodotus for having failed to carry out a sufficiently objective account. The lesson to be learned was not the sheer diversity of cultural behaviors but the typological character of agents and their actions, which was to serve as a sort of guide to future conduct since they were likely to repeat themselves. Second, Thucydides treated his evidence with overt skepticism. He claims to not accept hearsay or conjecture, and to admit only that which he had personally seen or else had been confirmed by multiple reliable sources. Thucydides was the first to utilize source criticism in documentary evidence. The lengthy and eloquent speeches he ascribes to various parties are preserved only under the promise that they follow as closely as possible the intention of their alleged speaker. With the waning of classical antiquity came the decline of the scientific paradigm of history. The religious practice of sacred-history in the Judeo-Christian and Islamic worlds, though often interpreting the same key events in very different ways, share common meta-historical principles. In that sense, many non-fundamentalist historians of each faith regard their sacred texts as meaningful documents meant for consideration in the light of the present and what its authors believe to be our common future. The most reflective of the early medieval historiographers is doubtless Augustine His *City of God* characterizes lives and nations as a long redemption from original sin that culminates in the appearance of Christ. Since then, history has been a record of the engaged struggle between the chosen elect of the City of God and the rebellious self-lovers who dwell in the City of Men. Because time is linear, its key events are unique and inviolable: Sacred-history thus tends to provide an overarching narrative about the meaning of human existence, either as a tragedy or a statement of hope in a redeemed future. Besides its canonical status throughout much of the Medieval world, its influence manifestly stretches over the hermeneutical tradition as well as the teleological philosophers of history of the Nineteenth Century. His circle of followers recovered and restored a mass of ancient texts the likes of which the previous millennium had not imagined, among them the histories of Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, and Varro. At the beginning of the 15th century, humanist universities expanded from their scholastic core to include rhetoric, poetry, and above all, history. And with their greater concern for the things and people of the natural world came an increasing focus on political history rather than grand religious narratives. Accordingly, the common focal point was not the Resurrection of Christ, but the fall of Rome. And here the lesson of history was not a consistent moral decline, but a hope that understanding Ancient models of social and political life would make room for a sort of secular golden age. With the new focus on human affairs, there came an increased attention to written records and natural evidence. Armed with newly unlocked troves of secular literary artifacts, the works of Leonardo Bruni c. 1404–1444. Though less nationalistic than these, Desiderius Erasmus, too, demanded that historians trace their sources back to the originals, not just in government documents but in cultural artifacts as well. And that meant investigating the religious spirit of sacred history with the tools of Renaissance humanism. His Latin and Greek translations of the New

Testament are monuments of scholarly historiography, and became instrumental for the Reformation. History, for Erasmus, became a tool for critiquing modern misinterpretations and abuses of the once noble past and a means for uncovering the truth about long-misunderstood people, ideas, and events. But although previous writers of history were reflective about their enterprise, the first to merit the name Philosopher of History is Giambattista Vico. He is the first to argue for a common historical process that guides the course of peoples and nations. In the *Scienza Nuova*, he writes: Our Science therefore comes to describe at the same time an ideal eternal history traversed in time by the history of every nation in its rise, progress, maturity, decline, and fall. For the first indubitable principle above posited is that this world of nations has certainly been made by men, and its guise must therefore be found within the modifications of our own human mind. And history cannot be more certain than when he who creates the things also describes them. The true is precisely that which has been made, expressed in his Latin as *Verum esse ipsum factum*. Since natural objects were not made by the scientists who study them, their nature must remain to some degree mysterious. But human history, since its objects and its investigators are one and the same, has in principle a methodological advantage. Vico also suggests that the cultured minds of his day were of a different order than those of their primitive ancestors. Whereas his 18th century thinkers form abstract concepts and universal propositions, to the primitive individual images and sounds directly indicate the real things to which they refer. Because of these epistemological views, Vico is the first to posit distinct epochs of history in which all nations evolve due to an overarching scheme of logic. Ultimately the ideal epoch of reason and civilization is never reached. Here in this barbarism of reflection, aided by civil bureaucracy, deceitful language, and cunning reason, our passions are unrestrained by the manners and customs prominent in the Ages of Gods or Heroes to the point that civil society collapses upon itself before returning to a second cycle of history. Social and cultural history replaced military and political history with a trans-religious and trans-European tenor intended to showcase the spiritual and moral progress of humanity. In keeping with the Enlightenment, he believed that the best remedy for intolerance and prejudice was simply the truth, something which is best discovered by the objective historian working with original documents, never by the ideologue repeating the dicta of authorities. But for his apologies for non-biased historiography, Voltaire betrays rather clearly the ideals of his age. The age of reason is, for Voltaire, the standard by which other eras and peoples are to be judged, though few could be said to have reached. Antoine-Nicolas de Condorcet openly embraced Enlightenment progressivism. Like Voltaire, his *Sketch for a Historical Picture of the Progress of the Human Mind* published posthumously in viewed the past as a progress of reason, but was more optimistic about the inevitable progress of liberal ideals such as free speech, democratic government, and the equity of suffrage, education, and wealth. The point of history was not only a description of this progress. Because the progress is lawful and universal, history is also predictive and, what is more, articulates a duty for political institutions to work toward the sort of equalities that the march of history would bring about anyway. The historian is no mere critic of his time, but also a herald of what is to come. Widely influential on the French Revolution, Condorcet also made a significant impression on the systematizing philosophies of history of Saint-Simon, Hegel, and Marx, as well as laid the first blueprints for systematic study of social history made popular by Comte, Weber, and Durkheim. Kant begins from the Enlightenment view of history as a progressive march of reason and freedom. But given his epistemology he could not presume, as did Voltaire and Condorcet, that the teleological progression of history was empirically discernible within the past. It is not a demonstrable fact, but a necessary condition for the meaningfulness of the past to posit teleological progress as a regulative idea that allows us to justify the many apparent evils that have sprung up within history despite the overall benevolent character of creation. History reveals human culture as the means by which nature accomplishes its state of perpetual peace in all the spiritual pursuits of mankind. Johann Gottfried Herder was key in the general turn from Enlightenment historiography to the romantic. Herder also discards the Enlightenment tendency to judge the past by the light of the present, irrespective of how rational we consider ourselves today. This results from his fundamental conviction that each national culture is of equal historical value. The same inner vitalism of nature guides all living things on the regular path from birth to death. It was clear that there could be no empirical proof or rationalist demonstration of the organic pattern of the development Herder finds. Nor, however, should we

posit teleological progress as a merely regulative principle of reason. The sense for past people and cultures is not itself communicated whole and entire through their documents in such a way that would be open to historical analysis or source criticism. The fairy tales of the Grimm brothers, as much as the nationalistic histories of Macaulay, the Wilhelm Tell saga of Friedrich Schiller, J. The Romantics followed Herder, too, in their belief that this national character was not discernible solely by meticulous analysis of documents and archival records. The historian must have an overarching sense of the course of history of a people, just as the dramaturge reveals the unity of a character through each individual episode. Hardly a bare chronicle of disconnected facts, the narratives historians tell about the past should communicate a sense of spirit rather than objective information. The potential abuses of historiography, to which this nationalistic romanticism lends itself, had a decisive impact on the three main streams of philosophy of history in the 19th century. History unfolds itself according to a rational plan; and we know this precisely because the mind which examines it unfolds itself from the first inklings of sense-certainty to absolute knowing in a regular teleological pattern. The same process that governs the movement of history also governs the character of the philosophical speculation inherent in that moment of history. And at the present epoch of philosophical speculation we are capable of understanding the entire movement of history as a rational process unfolding an ever greater awareness of rational freedom. A true account of the whole of reality, which is itself the sole endeavor of philosophy, must consider everything real as real insofar as it can be comprehended by reason as it unfolds within its necessary historical course. Reason is, for Hegel, the real. Both are understood as historical. This is cognized by an increasingly unfolding awareness according to that same plan. As he demotes religion to a subservient place to absolute knowing in his *Phenomenology of Spirit*, so too does Hegel replace the sacred-history conception of grace with the phenomenological unfolding of reason. Reason consists in both the awareness of contradiction and its sublimation by means of the speculative act of synthesis which results in an increased self-recognition. Analogously, the development of history consists in a progressive structure of oppositions and their necessary synthetic sublimations which leads to an ever increasing self-awareness of freedom. That necessary movement is illustrated in his account of three distinct epochs of world history. In the ancient orient, only the despot is free; his freedom consists only in the arbitrary savagery of his will. The people are held in bondage by the identity of state and religion. The opposition of the despot and his subjects is to some degree overcome by the classical Greek and Roman recognition of citizenship, under which the free individual understands himself to be bound by honor over and above the laws of the state. Still, the great many in the classical world are still un-free. It is only in the intertwining of the Christian recognition of the sanctity of life and the modern liberal definition of morality as inherently intersubjective and rational that guarantees freedom for all. The critics of Hegel have been as passionate as his disciples. Of the former we may count Thomas Carlyle and the historical school at Basel: Bachofen, Jacob Burckhardt, and a younger Friedrich Nietzsche. What unites them is a shared belief that historiography should highlight rather than obscure the achievements of individuals under the banner of necessary rational progress, a general ridicule of any historical process which brings about providential ends in the face of overwhelming global suffering, an anti-statist political stance, and a disavowal of progress as coextensive with the expansion of social welfare, intellectualism, and utility. Past epochs were not merely some preparatory ground on the way to the comfortably modern Hegelian or Marxist state, but stand on their own as inherently superior cultures and healthier models of culture life. This explains to some degree the partition, new to the 19th century, between philosophers of history and practicing historians, who were themselves often quite reflective on the philosophical issues of their discipline. Friedrich August Wolf, the first to enter the ranks of the German academy as a classical philologist, was exemplary in this respect. Though more focused on religious and romantic historians, Wolf rejected teleological systems generally by his demand that interpretation be grounded in the combination of a comprehensive sense for the contextual whole of a particular epoch and rigorous attention to the details of textual evidence. While the Romantic historians tried to coopt the intuitive and holistic aspects of Wolf, the influence of his methodological rigor was shared by two rival schools of thought about the possibility of knowledge in antiquity: