# Structural Analysis and Dianomatics. The history (of the history) of philosophy according to Martial Gueroult. Forthcoming in 'Journal of the History of Philosophy'

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# Structural Analysis and Dianoematics
## The History (of the History) of Philosophy According to Martial Gueroult

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Abstract: This article offers an original reconstruction of Martial Gueroult's philosophical conception of the history of philosophy. Gueroult's studies of authors such as Descartes and Spinoza remain among the most widely used today. His monographs on individual philosophers cannot, however, be adequately assessed without awareness of the position he occupied within French philosophy. They were integral parts of a comprehensive project to understand not only past philosophy, but also the philosophical importance of the history of philosophy as a discipline, elaborated in his so-called 'dianoematics.' This article is a reconstruction of that project. First, I discuss how Gueroult was positioned in the intellectual landscape of his time, before turning Gueroult's structural analysis and technology of systems. Next, I discuss Gueroult's Kantian approach to relations between philosophy and the history of the history of philosophy. Finally, in conclusion, I point to the contemporary relevance of his project.

## 1. Introduction

This paper offers a critical discussion of Martial Gueroult's (1891–1976) philosophical conception of the history of philosophy as a discipline. Gueroult was among the most influential French historians of philosophy of the twentieth century, the author of a long list of monographs on a host of modern philosophers. Gueroult's first book, on Maimon, was published in 1929, quickly followed in 1930 by a monograph on Fichte (the latter already undertaken while a prisoner of war in Germany during the First World War and completed as early as 1922). In the English-speaking world, he is probably best known for his two-volume *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons* (1953) and the volumes on part I and II of Spinoza's *Ethics*, published in 1968 and 1974.[1] He also published works on Leibniz's dynamics (1934); on Malebranche, including a short book from 1937 on his psychology and a more comprehensive three-volume study from 1955–59; a specialized study of Descartes's ontological proof (1955); a monograph on Berkeley (1956); and a long list of articles and book chapters, going as far back as 1924. His last major published work was an account of the

[1] A third and final volume on parts III–V was planned, but never completed. For a fragment, see Martial Gueroult, "Le 'Spinoza' de Martial Gueroult." 285–302.

philosophy and history of the history of philosophy, the so-called *Dianoématique* (from the Greek *dianoema* [‘doctrine’]), an *opus magnum* he first drafted in the 1930s, but continued to work on for more than four decades. It was published posthumously in 1979–88 in an edition established by his most dedicated student, Ginette Dreyfus, and completed by Jules Vuillemin after the death of Dreyfus in 1985.[2] It comprises four volumes in two books, the *Histoire de l’histoire de la philosophie* in three volumes, and the *Philosophie de l’histoire de la philosophie*. Gueroult also had a long career of teaching that spanned over the central five decades of the century. After obtaining his teaching qualification—the notorious *agrégation*—in 1920, he held various positions in the French provinces until taking over Léon Brunschvicg’s chair at the Sorbonne in 1945. In 1951, he succeeded the medieval scholar Étienne Gilson at the Collège de France, holding a chair in “The History and Technology of Philosophical Systems” until 1962. In the 60s and early 70s, he also lectured at the École Normale Supérieure de St. Cloud.[3]

A substantial literature exists in French—including introductory prefaces to his works, individual articles, edited volumes, and monographs—dedicated to Gueroult’s historiographical project and to the debates it gave rise to, accumulated over more than half a century of commentary and controversy.[4] Until very recently, however, the English-language bibliography on Gueroult was very short, essentially consisting of Roger Ariew’s brief introduction to his 1984 translation of *Descartes selon l’ordre des raisons*, François Dosse’s attempt to pin down Gueroult’s relationship to structuralism in his *Histoire du structuralisme*, translated into English in 1997, and some instructive pages on Gueroult’s relation to the French historiographical tradition and Alexandre Koyré in Cristina Chimisso’s *Writing the History of the Mind* of 2008.[5] Over the last few years, however, three articles dedicated to Gueroult have appeared in prominent journals. First, in 2011, Knox Peden published an article in *Modern Intellectual History* on the protracted controversy between Gueroult and Ferdinand Alquié, analyzing it as an example of a broader opposition between a modern French rationalism attached to Spinozism as opposed to a more theologically inclined French

[2] Jean Bernhardt, “La philosophie,” 34–35; Sève, “La *Dianoématique*,” 137–38.
[3] Bernhardt, “L’enseignement,” 508–9; Bernhardt, “La philosophie,” 33–34.
[4] For a few highlights, see AA.VV. 1964; Chaim Perelman, “Le réel commun”; Christophe Gioliti, *Histoires*; Jules Vuillemin, *La Philosophie et son histoire*; Jacques Brunschwig, “Goldschmidt and Gueroult”; Jacques Bouveresse, *Qu’est-ce qu’un système philosophique?*; Pierre Macherey, *Querelles cartésiennes*. See also the general bibliography below. For a forthcoming set of articles on Gueroult’s monographs, see Pelletier, *Lectures de Martial Gueroult*.
[5] Roger Ariew, “Introduction,” xiii–xv; François Dosse, *History of Structuralism*, 78–82; Cristina Chimisso, *Writing the History*, 55–57, 132–37, 172.

phenomenology associated with one branch of modern French Descartes scholarship.[6] An expanded version figures as a chapter in his 2014 monograph, *Spinoza contra Phenomenology*.[7] Second, in 2014, Tad Schmaltz dedicated an article in the *Journal of the History of Philosophy* to Gueroult's reading of Descartes and its importance for Anglo-American scholarship, stressing the proximity between Gueroult's structural analysis and standard methods of rational reconstruction among analytically oriented historians of philosophy, such as Alan Nelson's conception of "systematic interpretation."[8] Finally, in 2015, A. D. Smith published a long article in *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, attempting to rehabilitate Gueroult's broadly rejected thesis regarding the first propositions of the *Ethics*, to wit, that Spinoza operates with a provisional conception of substances with only one attribute.[9]

These recent contributions are, as far as I can see, wholly unrelated and take vastly different perspectives on Gueroult. The articles by Schmaltz and Smith testify to the fact that his studies of Descartes and Spinoza have become *passage obligé* even among Anglo-American early modern philosophy students, and Gueroult himself an authority to whom one must, at a minimum, pay lip service in appropriate footnotes. At the same time, Chimisso and Peden's generally excellent books—and despite the fact that Gueroult is neither the sole nor the principal protagonist of their studies which are both set within broader narratives—demonstrate that Gueroult's work has today acquired sufficient distance from the present day to become itself a possible object of study. The same can be said about the monograph dedicated to Gueroult published in French by Christophe Giolito in 1999. Those two approaches to Gueroult's work can, however, not remain unconnected. His monographs cannot be adequately assessed or used without some awareness of the position within twentieth-century French philosophy that he occupied. They were integral parts of a comprehensive project to understand not only past philosophy, but also the philosophical importance of the history of philosophy as a discipline.

This paper attempts an original reconstruction of that general project. The aim is to resituate and anchor Gueroult's work in the methodological tradition that I think he was most deeply attached to, namely, a neo-Kantian one. I thus want to show how his famous systematic readings of various canonical figures in the history of philosophy relate to a

[6] Knox Peden, "Descartes, Spinoza," 361–90.
[7] Peden, *Spinoza contra phenomenology*, 65–94.
[8] Tad Schmaltz, "*Panzercartesianer*," 6–7; cf. Alan Nelson, "Philosophical Systems," 236–57.
[9] A. D. Smith, "Spinoza, Gueroult, and Substance"; cf. Gueroult, *Spinoza I. Dieu*, 107–40.

general project he worked on for the most his career, but which has been entirely ignored by English-language scholars and which today is even rarely discussed among French ones, namely the so-called "dianoematics." In the dianoematics, Gueroult mounted a sophisticated defense of the philosophical value, or "worth," of the history of philosophy, devised on the model of a kind of transcendental deduction, namely, an investigation into the conditions of possibility of the history of philosophy as a discipline. In situating his work within that original neo-Kantian framework, I want to dispel a frequent confusion between the method of "structural analysis" conceived by Gueroult as early as the 1920s as a distinct approach to the history of philosophy and the "structuralism" promoted by authors such as Louis Althusser and Roland Barthes in the 1960s as a general method for the humanities. More importantly, however, I want to offer an approach to Gueroult's work different from the those offered by the most recent commentators—Pierre Macherey and Knox Peden, in particular—who have focused exclusively on Gueroult's combative controversies with a contemporary intellectual adversary, Ferdinand Alquié. As I see it, their approach come at the (too) steep price of ignoring the sole project with which Gueroult was preoccupied throughout his entire career, namely the dianoematics. Contrary to this, I want to show how we gain a clearer image of his intellectual project, including the dianoematics, by retracing his lineage back to an older tradition of French "historian-philosophers" who published their work in the late nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century. I will stress in particular a previously unexplored, but strong connection to the Spinoza and Kant-scholar Victor Delbos. Within his own time, these deeper ties to thinkers of a previous generation gave Gueroult's philosophical concerns a somewhat untimely, even nostalgic, character. Pointing to this nostalgic backdrop of his work does, however, not detract from its contemporary philosophical interest but rather allows us to better discern in what it consists. In conclusion, I will briefly point to some valuable lessons that can be drawn today from Gueroult's neo-Kantian project, regarding the philosophical value of the history of philosophy as a discipline, and the importance of undertaking the writing of a history of the history of philosophy.

The paper is structured as follows. In section 2, I discuss how Gueroult was positioned in the intellectual landscape of his time. In section 3, I turn to Gueroult's structural analysis and technology of systems. In sections 4 to 6, I discuss Gueroult's dianoematics and approach to the philosophy and history of the history of philosophy. Finally, in the conclusion, I offer my remarks about the contemporary relevance of Gueroult's project as I understand it.

## 2. Legacy, Controversies, Heritage

Gueroult did not exactly create a "school" in France.[10] He did, however, exert substantial influence on several generations of scholars and students. An important part of his legacy is associated with the four people who contributed to his lengthy collective 1977 obituary in the *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie*, namely Ginette Dreyfus, Victor Goldschmidt, Louis Guillermit, and Jules Vuillemin.[11] To these four names, one could add Gilles Gaston-Granger, but the roster is somewhat open-ended.[12] Following this line of reception, Gueroult appears first of all as the founding figure in a tradition of systematic philosophy which, today, has given rise to a particular brand of analytic philosophy in France, most prominently represented by Jacques Bouveresse, a former student of Granger and Vuillemin. In 2007–2008, Bouveresse dedicated a lecture series at the Collège de France to the question "What is a Philosophical System?," including a long appended reflection on Gueroult's understanding of philosophical systems.[13]

The frequent assimilation of Gueroult to "structuralism" is not unwarranted but rests on constructed affinities rather than avowed ones. Hence, Dosse stresses the generational and motivational differences between the structuralists and Gueroult, noting how the latter vehemently denied any possible comparison, presenting himself as "a traditional professor, a true historian of philosophy."[14] Gueroult formulated his "structural analysis" long before the heyday of structuralism and, as we shall see below, the Kantian roots of his method were far removed from the linguistic underpinnings of structuralism. Moreover, the political engagement underpinning the structuralist appropriations of the history of philosophy was contrary to his self-understanding as a history of philosophy scholar.[15] Gueroult was the anti-thesis of a *philosophe militant*. He was actively trying to shield the history of philosophy from being re-deployed for present-day political or philosophical purposes foreign to their original intent. And yet, the methodological proximity of Gueroult's structural analysis to

[10] Giolito, *Histoires*, 142–5.
[11] Brunschwig, "Goldschmidt and Gueroult"; Rosset, "De Martial Gueroult à Jules Vuillemin."
[12] For a longer list, see Giolito, *Histoires*, 143n72.
[13] Bouveresse, *Qu'est-ce qu'un système philosophique?* See also AA.VV., *L'Histoire de la philosophie*; Victor Goldschmidt, "Remarques"; Vuillemin, *La Philosophie et son histoire*; Jean Vidal Rosset, "De Martial Gueroult à Jules Vuillemin."
[14] Dosse, *History of Structuralism*, 79–80.
[15] For recent, and excellent, work on the intellectual engagement of French philosophy in the Twentieth Century, see Dosse, *La Saga des intellectuels français*.

structuralism were not lost on students and colleagues, sometimes giving rise to happy alliances between these seemingly incompatible intellectual cultures. Alexandre Matheron, for example, saw himself as such an "intermediary."[16] Gueroult was Matheron's appointed mentor while the latter was a researcher at the CNRS in the 1960s and learned much from his methodology which he considered "a truly ideal model."[17] At the same time, however, Matheron's enormously influential *Individu et communauté chez Spinoza* of 1969 arguably represents the closest one will get to a strict application of a structuralist method to the history of philosophy. As Sylvain Zac put it, Matheron had "done for Spinoza what Lévi-Strauss did for kinship systems."[18]

Gueroult himself, however, preferred framing his own position in relation to older predecessors and peers. In this respect, he belonged to a long line of "historian-philosophers," as Merleau-Ponty called them.[19] He saw himself as working "under the auspices of Renouvier, Boutroux, Delbos, Bergson, Brunschvicg, and Bréhier."[20] Gueroult treats the historiographies of most of the figures on this list extensively in chapter-length commentaries included in HHP III, which is dedicated to modern French historiography. In fact, there is only *one* figure who is conspicuously absent from the portrait gallery of HHP III, namely Victor Delbos (1862–1916). And yet, Delbos commands a pervasive presence in Gueroult, as a master with whom he never explicitly disagrees. Indeed, whenever Gueroult mentions Delbos, it is with evident admiration: "the felicitous formula of Delbos"; "Delbos is not in the habit of making mistakes"; "they are all morons, except Delbos and Lewis Robinson"; "Delbos is never wrong."[21] Moreover, throughout the first chapters of the *Philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie*, Gueroult constantly refers to Delbos, quoting him extensively, sometimes over several pages, weaving Delbos's methodological arguments seamlessly into his own.[22]

Why did Gueroult grant such exceptional status to Delbos? There are several reasons for this, which will be clarified in the following, but the first concerns the status of the history of philosophy as a scientific discipline. In a review of Gueroult's *Spinoza I. Dieu*, Gilles

[16] Alexandre Matheron and Pierre-François Moreau, "Martial Gueroult et Étienne Gilson," 2.
[17] Moreau and Laurent Bove, "A propos de Spinoza," 171.
[18] Personal conversation between Zac and Matheron quoted in Moreau and Bove, "A propos de Spinoza," 180.
[19] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Les philosophies de l'antiquité au XX^e siècle*, 1362–74; Giolito, "L'école française"; Giolito, *Histoires*, 308–12; Chimisso, *Writing the History*, 53–57.
[20] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 582; cf. Giolito, "Pratique et fondement," 155–58.
[21] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 242; oral statements quoted in Moreau and Bove, "A propos de Spinoza," 170, and in Matheron, "Les deux Spinoza de Victor Delbos," 311.
[22] *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 45–48, 52. For details, see note 85 below.

Deleuze concluded by proclaiming that "this book grounds the truly scientific study of Spinoza."[23] The compliment is ambiguous. Deleuze had followed Gueroult's lectures assiduously in the 1950s and had learned from them.[24] Nonetheless, coming from a student of Alquié, the epithet is not necessarily complimentary: Alquié had chastised Gueroult's reading of Descartes for being *merely* "scientific" and therefore "not satisfying"![25] More importantly, however, Gueroult did not see himself as the initiator of scientific study in the history of philosophy. Instead, as Pierre-François Moreau rectifies Deleuze in an interview on French Spinozism, "the true founder of the scientific reading of Spinoza is Delbos, and Gueroult always acknowledged that."[26] The reason is simple. Delbos was a devoted catholic. And yet, as Gilson wrote in *Le Philosophe et la théologie*, "there was nothing in his teaching or in his writings that allowed saying [that he was a catholic]. . . . He wanted his teaching to be 'neutral', so to speak."[27] This self-conscious effort toward moral and religious neutrality is particularly prominent in *Le Problème moral dans la philosophie de Spinoza et dans le spinozisme* (1893), where Delbos strictly separated the question of the historical meaning of Spinoza's philosophy from its moral implications.[28] Gueroult's method was motivated by a similar concern, making a "return to authenticity."[29] In that respect, his book on *Descartes et l'ordre des raison*s does with Descartes's *Meditations* what Delbos's *Le Problème moral* did with Spinoza's *Ethics*, namely placing the study of the systems beyond "a kind of preventive criticism" imposed upon the texts by "current preoccupations"; in order "to set them beyond our prejudices," not "accommodate the ideas to our desires" and "demand from the different doctrines the salutation to problems that they did not pose and that we impose upon them."[30] Gueroult explicitly highlighted this debt to Delbos in his book on Descartes when quoting him in the very first paragraph of the introduction: "'One ought to be wary of those games of reflection which, under the pretext of discovering the deep meaning of a philosophy, begin by disregarding its precise meaning'; this maxim by Victor Delbos was constantly on my mind while writing the present work."[31]

[23] Gilles Deleuze, "Spinoza," 437.
[24] Guiseppe Bianco, *Après Bergson*, 288–89.
[25] Peden, *Spinoza contra phenomenology*, 74.
[26] Lærke and Moreau, "Interview med Pierre-François Moreau," 72.
[27] Étienne Gilson, *Le Philosophe et la théologie*, 42.
[28] Victor Delbos, *Le Problème moral*, i–ii.
[29] Gueroult, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons*, I, 10.
[30] Delbos, *Le Problème moral*, ii.
[31] Gueroult, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons*, I, 9; cf. Delbos, *La Philosophie pratique de Kant*, I; also quoted in *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 242.

At the same time, however, Gueroult had to carve out a methodological space for his own brand of systematic historiography, navigating between several competing contemporary positions. First of all, he had to fight off what he called 'historism,' understood as a method where "psychology and sociology have finally replaced the philosophical in order to constitute the essential of a history of philosophy which will no longer have anything philosophical about it."[32] Historism represented a "method of the most radical philosophical scepticism," because it did away with "this intrinsic value which renders [philosophical monuments] independent of time."[33] In particular, Gueroult had to counter Alexandre Koyré, a historian of science and philosophy working at the cross-section between Bachelard-style French epistemology and the mentality history of the *Annales* school.[34] Koyré was Gueroult's main competition for the chair the latter obtained at the Collège de France in 1951, a selection perceived as a win for the most conservative brand of French history of philosophy.[35]

More importantly, however, there was Ferdinand Alquié, a historian of philosophy close to the surrealist movement with whom Gueroult entered a rather acrid polemics about the reading of Descartes in the wake of Alquié's *La Découverte métaphysique de l'homme chez Descartes* (1950). Alquié defended a genetic reading of Descartes drawing on insights from phenomenology, searching for the fundamental "gesture" of the philosopher, reading the philosophy from the first-person perspective, retracing how the work related the most intimate existential experiences beginning, of course, with the ontological experience of the *cogito*. Gueroult, for his part, perceived Alquié's reading as a "novelistic" re-appropriation of Descartes's philosophy.[36] Similar disagreement was on display again later between Gueroult's *Spinoza I* and *II* (1968, 1974) and Alquié's *Le Rationalisme de Spinoza* (1981).

Most recently, Knox Peden has presented the controversy as one that pits "Descartes against Spinoza."[37] I find that odd. On the face of it, in the first round, the dispute pits one interpretation of Descartes against another; in the second round, it pits one interpretation of Spinoza against another. Peden, of course, acknowledges that, but also claims that Gueroult's

[32] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 16.
[33] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 16 and 18.
[34] Chimisso, *Writing the History*, 123–37.
[35] Chimisso, *Writing the History*, 132–37; Peden, *Spinoza contra phenomenology*, 69.
[36] The accusation of being 'novelistic' appears already in Gueroult's assessment of Alquié's work as a member of the committee at the latter's 1950 thesis defense. See the anonymous summary published in the *Revue de métaphysique et de morale* the same year: "M. Gueroult complains that M. Alquié pretends to present the true Descartes, whereas in fact he only uses him as a pretext for formulating his own thought. His thesis, which 'reads like a novel' is nothing but a 'fantasy about Descartes'" (Anon. [Henri Dussort], "Soutenances de Thèses," 435; on the identity of the author, see Brunschwig, "Goldschmidt and Gueroult," 83–84).
[37] Peden, *Spinoza contra phenomenology*, 2014: 65–94.

reading of Descartes was already "Spinozised" and part of a "broader return to Spinoza."[38] On this point, he appears to take his cue from Pierre Macherey, who also suggests, with respect to a specific objection that Gueroult made to Alquié regarding the status of extension as a substance in Cartesianism, that Gueroult, when criticizing Alquié's reading of Descartes, "consciously or not," was speaking from a from a Spinozist perspective: "It is, in a way, with Spinoza's eyes that Gueroult reads Descartes."[39] Peden's reading is compelling but begs the question. While one can legitimately proclaim Alquié more Cartesian than Spinozist, given the general chronology of things, there is not sufficient reason to declare Gueroult more Spinozist than Cartesian, *except* if his work is perceived from the perspective of the same Spinozist-rationalist tradition the existence of which Peden attempts to demonstrate.

This said, Peden is perfectly right that this drawn-out polemics had underpinnings that concerned not only the principles of the history of philosophy, but also the dominant orientations in French philosophy of the time. Gueroult *was* clearly caught up in the battles between structuralism and phenomenology. It is, however, equally clear that he did not *want* to be. When reading the exchanges with Alquié, like those in 1955 at an infamous ten-day conference at Royaumont, one is left not only with the "discomfit" produced by their constant talk at cross-purposes memorably described by Goldschmidt as "humiliating for the listener who believes in the universality of understanding."[40] On the side of Gueroult, one also senses the irritated distraction of someone who, against his more natural inclination to converse with the philosophers of the past and with the "historian-philosophers" of an earlier generation, was constantly provoked to intervene in contemporary polemics, being drawn into the exact same kind of philosophical battles on the field of the history of philosophy that he wanted to avoid for the sake of "neutrality."

The famous dispute with Alquié is, without comparison, the context of Gueroult's work which has received the most attention in the scholarly literature.[41] Indeed, the dispute with Alquié has become legacy-defining, in the sense that Gueroult's work has been understood as structured and largely motivated by this admittedly entertaining philosophical brawl. Among English-speaking readers, the recent work of Knox Peden has contributed to perpetuate this prevalent image of Gueroult beyond the French borders. That focus does,

[38] Peden, *Spinoza contra phenomenology*, 66, 82.
[39] Macherey, *Querelles cartésiennes*, 24 (text based on a 2002 seminar).
[40] Goldschmidt, "A propos de *Descartes*," 67; cf. Brunschwig, "Goldschmidt and Gueroult," 88–89; Macherey, *Querelles cartésiennes*, 13–32.
[41] See, e.g. Giolito, *Histoires*, 114–26; Brunschwig, "Goldschmidt and Gueroult"; Schmaltz, "Panzercartesianer," 4–6; Macherey, *Querelles cartésiennes*, 13–32; Bianco, *Après Bergson*, 287–88.

however, come at a steep price. As a result of it, the deeper lineages tying his project back to the earlier "historian-philosophers" and figures like Delbos have received considerable less attention. By the same token, commentators have tended to lose sight of the broader neo-Kantian framework within which Gueroult's work on past philosophers was set. In the following sections, I shall attempt to restore Gueroult's monographic work to this original philosophical framework.

## 3. Structural Analysis: Vertical History of Philosophy

We can approach Gueroult's conception of structural analysis somewhat obliquely by briefly returning to Deleuze's 1969 review of *Spinoza I. Dieu*. As already noted, Deleuze was a complicated reader of Gueroult. He was a former student (1944–1948) and research assistant of Alquié 1(957–1960). His own book on a Spinoza, published only months after Gueroult's, was originally a secondary thesis written under the supervision of Alquié. Certainly, their relationship had been declining since the mid-sixties on account of the younger scholar's increasing infatuation with structuralism and with Gueroult's teaching.[42] But Deleuze remained on Alquié's side when it came to the "specificity of philosophy" and did not endorse the historiographical "neutrality" promoted by Gueroult.[43] This may account for the tensions in his review of Gueroult's work on Spinoza which I find less "glowing" and "enthusiastic" than do other commentators,[44] and also very ambiguous in its general characterization of Gueroult's project:

> M. Gueroult has renewed the history of philosophy by means of a structural-genetic method that he elaborated long before structuralism asserted itself in other domains. Within [that method], a structure is defined by an order of reasons, where the reasons are the differential elements that generate a corresponding system, true philosophemes that only exist in the relations they uphold to each other.[45]

[42] Dosse, *Deleuze et Guattari*, 118–19.
[43] Deleuze, "La méthode de la dramatisation"; see Bianco, *Après Bergson*, 289.
[44] Peden, "Descartes, Spinoza," 368; Smith, "Spinoza, Gueroult, and Substance," 656n3.
[45] Deleuze, "Spinoza," 426.

Despite his affirmations to the contrary, Deleuze is here strikingly unwilling to grant Gueroult his own methodological voice. With Émile Bréhier's distinction between "structure" and "genesis" hovering in the immediate background and the dispute with Alquié squarely in the foreground,[46] the characterization of Gueroult's method as 'structural-genetic' comes through as almost oxymoronic.[47] It partly reflects how Deleuze assimilated Gueroult's method to structuralism. Indeed, the expression 'structural-genetic' mirrors a claim that Deleuze also made—incidentally, while referencing a follower of Gueroult, namely Vuillemin—in his contribution on structuralism to François Chatêlet's history of philosophy, namely that "one cannot oppose the genetic to the structural any more than one can oppose time to structure."[48] At the same time, however, Deleuze's characterization reflects the fact that 'genetic' was the term that Gueroult himself employed to describe *Spinoza's* conception of adequate knowledge and of the method to obtain it.[49] Deleuze implicitly conflates Gueroult's method with that of the philosopher he studied. Similar concerns arise when Deleuze assimilates the 'order of reasons,' which is the notion employed by Gueroult used to describe Descartes's method, and 'structure,' which is the general term he used to describe the systematic unity that each philosophy *qua* philosophy aspires to, present already in the subtitle of his 1930 study of Fichte on "the evolution and structure of the doctrine of science." But these different levels should not be conflated. Goldschmidt writes in his 1957 review of *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons*:

> one could think that the order of reasons, 'the order in which M. Gueroult explains Descartes's, was a personal invention of M. Gueroult's and could be confused with the method of structures. It is nothing of the sort. The method of structures, applicable to many other philosophers, serves only to reinstate 'the order of reasons', from which it should be carefully distinguished and which was established by Descartes himself, who signaled it as the unique way of properly understanding the *Méditations*.[50]

[46] See, e.g. the following (somewhat disingenuous) remark by Alquié at a conference in Brussels in 1972: "I am completely of M. Gueroult's opinion. The only difference is that, more than he does, I attach importance to a genetic perspective on the work" (quoted in Giolito, *Histoires*, 126n89).
[47] Émile Bréhier, "Originalité de Lévy-Bruhl"; Bréhier, *Transformation de la philosophie française*, chap. XI.
[48] Deleuze, "À quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme?," 309 (text written in 1967, first published 1973).
[49] See, e.g. Gueroult, *Spinoza I: Dieu*, 13, 27–31.
[50] Goldschmidt, "A propos de *Descartes*," 69.

The implication of the distinction—which is exactly the distinction that Deleuze disregards—is that there are two distinct methodological rules at the base of Gueroult's systematic approach, even when their respective consequences converge.

The first rule is to search for the systematic and unitary structure elaborated within a philosophy, constituting it as a self-sufficient "monument." Chaïm Perelman cites an unpublished text by Gueroult that gives a succinct formulation:

> Every philosophy is a world closed upon itself, a confined universe of thought, in brief, a system. Indeed, each system presents itself as a demonstration of itself, complete in itself within the limits it has outlined for itself *a priori*, that is to say, according to the norm instituted by the original judgment. This self-sufficiency is the mark of absoluteness and entails a claim to complete and exclusive validity.[51]

The idea that any philosophy must be understood as a unified system is forcefully present from Gueroult's earliest publications. Indeed, his very first article, a study of Plato's *Laws* published in the *Revue des études grecques* in 1924, concludes with the wish, formulated by Leibniz in 1715 letter to Nicolas Remond, "that if someone would reduce Plato to a system, they would do humankind a great service."[52] Incidentally, this particular wish of Gueroult was later fulfilled by Goldschmidt in *Les Dialogues de Platon. Structure et méthode dialectique* of 1947.[53]

The approach stands in stark contrast to any kind of deep hermeneutics. Gueroult was decidedly uncomfortable with readings straying too far beneath the surface structure of the texts and adverse to anything that could be perceived as a reduction of the philosophy to any "deeper" level of meaning, be it the psychology of the philosopher or the prevalent mentalities in the historical context. This attachment to the letter of the word is another aspect of Gueroult's historiography which was foreshadowed by Delbos, who also argued that, in order to avoid saddling past thinkers with motifs foreign to their concerns, one should heed "a scrupulous attachment to the systematic form and even to the literal form."[54] Appealing to unifying principles beneath or beyond the systematic elaboration of a doctrine was no less a mystification for Delbos than it was for Gueroult: "I have trouble, understanding . . . those

[51] Gueroult cit. in Perelman, "Le réel commun," 131.
[52] Cit. in Gueroult, "Le X$^{e}$ livre des Lois," 78.
[53] See Goldschmidt, *Les Dialogues*.
[54] Delbos, *Le Problème moral*, iii.

distinctions . . . between the spirit and the letter, the ideas and the system. . . . The necessity of signs . . . prevents the philosopher . . . from complacency in confused intuitions, or from letting his mind float about in a vague sense of infinity."[55] It is not difficult to hear how Delbos's denunciation of "complacency in confused intuitions" resonates with Gueroult's later rejection of Alquié's reading of the Cartesian "gesture."

The second rule is the obligation to "obey a given author's own instructions" about how to read his or her philosophy when engaging with it. Hence, the meaning of a philosophy is referred back upon the author as the guarantor of unity, presiding over the interpretation of his own work.[56] The rule is most clearly formulated in the 1962 article entitled "De la méthode préscrite par Descartes pour comprendre sa philosophie," but already governed the analyses in the 1953 *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons*. As Jacques Brunschwig summarizes it, Gueroult's two-volume monograph is "built entirely, at least on the level of its principles, taking methodological declarations by Descartes as the rule for interpreting his doctrine."[57] It is, incidentally, yet another methodological rule of thumb already formulated by Delbos, according to whom "what we search for, to the extent that this is possible, is the doctrine of the philosopher as he conceived of it himself."[58]

There is some lack of clarity about how, exactly, we should grasp the appeal to the name of the author. Later, in a lecture given in 1970 in Ottawa, Gueroult insisted that "the method of structures consists less in the exploration of the supposed *interiority of the author*, than in *the interiority of his work*. For if the author is no longer, the work remains in front of us, in books, like a monument."[59] The remark regarding the "author" who "is no longer," refers, of course, partly to the simple fact that the discipline is mostly concerned with dead philosophers. In 1970, however, Gueroult could hardly ignore the additional resonances of such a statement to Roland Barthes's structuralist principle of autonomous text interpretation elaborated in his famous 1968 article "La mort de l'auteur."[60] In any case, it is clear that Gueroult did not want his rule to be associated with any phenomenological talk of

[55] Delbos, *Le Problème moral*, v.
[56] And, said *en passant*, it *is* always a 'his': to my knowledge, and apart from the occasional mention of Elizabeth and the Queen Cristina in the work on Descartes, Gueroult did not write about—or even recognize the existence of—any women philosophers, let alone women historians of philosophy.
[57] Brunschwig, "Goldschmidt and Gueroult," 100.
[58] Delbos, "De la méthode," 373.
[59] Gueroult, "La méthode," 12.
[60] Barthes, "La mort de l'auteur."

intentionality: the author in question is not *beyond* or *below* the work, but *in* the work.[61] Fully in line with his Delbosian heritage, the principle should be applied entirely on the surface level of the text and understood as the obligation to honor, when reading a work, whatever principles of philosophical text interpretation are explicitly stated within the work itself. Gueroult even affirmed that "every philosophy carries with it, explicitly or implicitly, its own discourse of the method, a method which is meticulously adjusted to its specific meaning."[62]

The two rules should not be conflated. In the case of Descartes, however, their interpretive consequences tend to converge because—at least on Gueroult's reading—Descartes's systematic understanding of philosophy converges with Gueroult's own. The same can be said about Gueroult's analysis of Spinoza, whom he proclaims an "absolute rationalist."[63] This explains in some measure why Gueroult applied his method most successfully to those two authors. All philosophies are however not equally amenable to the approach. Hence, in 1958, while reviewing three-volume study of Malebranche, Jean-Louis Bruch thus asked whether Gueroult's method of structural analysis was "sufficiently flexible to be adapted as felicitously and judiciously to the different great philosophies" as it had been to Descartes, stressing how "the study of Malebranche exactly puts M. Gueroult's analytical technique to the test."[64] Malebranche certainly represented more of a challenge. He only managed to hold together the system by acknowledging, as Dreyfus puts it, that "it incorporates equivocal concepts and furtive displacements" even though the "concordance and harmonies prevail over the discordance and the aporias."[65]

And yet, in a sense, it is a mute question whether Gueroult's method is appropriate for all philosophies. For, if the two methodological rules should not be conflated, an indirect relation still exists between them. For they are both inseparable from a specific notion of what will count as a philosophical text, or what in a text will count as being philosophical, and which will exclude a wide range of possible intentions from the legitimate range of *philosophical* intentions. Hence, for Gueroult, philosophy is a conceptual structure, and "the discovery of such structures is of paramount importance for the study of any philosophy, for it is through these structures that its monument is constituted as a *philosophy*, in contrast to a fable, a poem, spiritual or mystical elevation, a general scientific theory, or metaphysical

[61] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 174–78; see also Brunschwig, "Goldschmidt and Gueroult," 98, declaring "the notion of the intention of the author" outright "un-Gueroultian."
[62] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 33.
[63] Gueroult, *Spinoza I: Dieu*, 9.
[64] Jean-Louis Bruch, "La méthode," 358.
[65] Ginette Dreyfus, "Martial Gueroult," 298.

opinions."[66] Consequently, whatever some philosopher writes that is demonstrably unsystematic will eventually be seen as motivated by intentions falling outside the scope of a philosophical reconstruction, and considered irrelevant to it. From this, a defining, circular relation between structure and intention eventually emerges which serves the purpose of excluding *a priori* any possible notion of non-systematic philosophy.

When considered from the viewpoint of this "technology of systems," i.e. from the perspective of the structural analysis of doctrines or works, the historiography of philosophy "primarily assumes a monographic character, putting the analysis of the constitutive techniques at the forefront."[67] It corresponds to an ahistorical or "vertical" reconstruction of past philosophies:

> The doctrines are considered in themselves and for themselves. . . . The historian closes himself up in monographs. It is the place of what I would call the *vertical history* of philosophy, a history which is less properly historical . . . , less preoccupied with the collective movement of ideas, but philosophical in the sense that it follows the deep philosophical signification of the different works taken one by one.[68]

Such vertical reconstruction can, however, only be accomplished by "submitting oneself to the immanent laws inherent in the forms within which philosophizing thought encloses itself while instituting them."[69] Immanence, inherence, enclosure: if the formulation comes through as somewhat claustrophobic, it is entirely deliberate. For Gueroult, the autonomy of philosophical systems hinges upon the interiority of the conditions of their constitution: "[Philosophy] deems itself to be generated by internal reason which justify if as truth, escaping the framework of exterior causes"; it "closes up on itself in its autonomy as a world that has evaded necessity."[70] Or as he puts in *Philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie*, "*Nothing is left on the outside*. . . . Every philosophy is an enclosed world, a universe of thoughts closed upon itself, in short: a *system*."[71]

The self-sufficiency that Gueroult attributes to philosophical systems has crucial consequences for his understanding of philosophical truth, which he sees as something a-

[66] Gueroult, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons*, I, 10–11.
[67] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 30.
[68] Gueroult, "La méthode," 10.
[69] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 23.
[70] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 9.
[71] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 234.

temporal. According to Chimisso, "Gueroult was the inheritor of Gilson's idea of *philosophia perennis*."[72] This is indeed the one respect in which Gueroult did *not* follow Delbos. For Delbos, the force of philosophical systems was predicated on their flexibility in structure, assuring continued relevance throughout shifting contexts: "if the internal force of a doctrine is measured by the degree of organization it implies, one could also say, conversely, that its historical influence is measured by the degree of disorganization it can sustain without becoming fundamentally denaturalized."[73] Consequently, "what we must aim a rediscovering and unearthing is the strong and flexible unity of a philosophy which, without modifying itself essentially, has managed to adapt to the most different conditions of existence."[74] Contrary to this, Gueroult agreed with Gilson that "philosophy appears to itself as eternally valid in itself, a-temporally"[75] and that, consequently, the value of philosophy was predicated upon the perennity of its claims. By definition, philosophical truth "is a conception claiming extra-temporal validity."[76] Gueroult did, however, not agree with Gilson about how, exactly, to understand this perennial nature of philosophical claims. Gilson, according to Gueroult, understood the *philosophia perennis* in terms of a general structure, as "a logic of abstract concepts wherein the individualized structures constituting the systems fade away."[77] Gueroult, for his part, denied that any such general structure could be determined: "There are no general structures, but only individualized structures, inseparable from the contents attached to them."[78] For him, there was not *one* perennial philosophy of which each past philosophy elucidated a *part*, but only a *multitude* of philosophies each staking their distinct claims to the perennial truth of the *whole*. For this reason, Knox Peden has depicted Gueroult's project for the history of philosophy as an essentially *ahistorical* and *pluralistic* one, aiming only at the reconstruction of series of radically distinct systems.[79] Mitigating this pluralism so as to allow for a genuine *history* of philosophy was, however, exactly the aim of the transcendental deduction underlying the "dianoematics," to which I will now turn.

[72] Chimisso, *Writing the History*, 136.
[73] Delbos, *Le Problème moral*, vi.
[74] Delbos, *Le Problème moral*, ix.
[75] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 9.
[76] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 566; cf. *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 205.
[77] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 29.
[78] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 33.
[79] Peden, *Spinoza contra phenomenology*, 72.

## 4. Dianoematics

According to Goldschmidt, the "dianoematics represents—ideally—half of M. Gueroult's work, since it constitutes the philosophical theory which underlies and legitimizes the historical interpretations."[80] The term refers to both a specific work and a life-long project. The three volumes of the HHP, published in 1984–1988, comprise a reconstruction of the entire history of the history of philosophy in the Western world "from the origins*"* (in Antiquity) to "our days" (which, in the published volumes, meant up to Jaspers in Germany; and Gouhier in France.) Gueroult achieved a first primitive version of the HHP in the late 1930s, but continued to expand and amend the text throughout his entire life.[81] The second book, the *Philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie*, was both completed and published before the HHP. The manuscript was practically left unaltered after it was written in the 1930s. For practical editorial reasons, it was also the first volume that was published by Dreyfus, in 1979. Nonetheless, and contrary to fact, Gueroult conceived *Philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie* as methodologically posterior to the HHP, as the (alleged) result of "a long investigation regarding the real essence of philosophy the solution of which . . . can only be attained at the end and not at the beginning of the research."[82] This conceived order of the two parts was meant as a direct rebuttal of Hegel, as an attempt "not to postulate in advance the prevalence of a philosophical system imposing its formula upon the solution searched for."[83] I shall return to this point later.

A simple comparison of the titles of the two parts reveals the basic aim: Gueroult wrote a *history of the history* of philosophy in order to grasp what is *philosophical* about the history of philosophy. Delbos, yet again, hovers in the background of the enterprise. In 1917, Delbos published two articles dedicated, respectively, to the "conceptions" and the "methods" of the history of philosophy.[84] Gueroult quotes them extensively in *Philosophie de l'histoire de la philosophie*.[85] In those articles, Delbos not only defended an idea of systematic interpretation akin to Gueroult's. He also gave a broad vista of how the historiography of

[80] Goldschmidt 1976: 305.
[81] Bernhardt, "La philosophie"; Giolito, *Histoires*, 218–21.
[82] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 26; cf. Gueroult, "Le problème de la légitimité," 52; Bernhardt, "La philosophie," 36–37.
[83] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 14; cf. *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 26–28.
[84] Delbos, "Les conceptions" (English translation in Delbos, "The Conceptions," 1918) and Delbos, "De la méthode."
[85] Delbos, "Les conceptions," is cited in *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 31–32n, 40n; Delbos, "De la méthode," is cited in *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 45–48, 57n, 62n.

philosophy had itself been philosophically informed in the past, arguing, for example, that Brucker was guided by his protestant orthodoxy; that Tiedemann was marked by his admiration for Leibniz, Wolff, and Locke; that Buhle and Tenneman, in different ways, took their cue from Kant etc.[86] There is no need to linger on the inadequacies of Delbos's summary overview of the history of the history of philosophy. What matters is the striking resemblance it has to the basic outline of Gueroult's dianoematics. Both are motivated by the conviction that one cannot separate the history of philosophy from a philosophical investigation into the history of itself as a discipline. Just like Delbos's article, Gueroult's dianoematics includes "not only a history of the history of philosophy, but a history of the philosophical conceptions of this history."[87] They share the idea that the history of the history of philosophy is eminently philosophical or, as Gueroult puts it, that "the critical history of the history of philosophy constitutes an indispensable introduction to the transcendental philosophy of the history of philosophy."[88] The question is then *how*, exactly, Gueroult establishes this transcendental loop between philosophy and the history of its history. Indeed, in a technical sense, this is the exact "problem" that the entire dianoematics is concerned with.

For Gueroult, "there is no philosophy without resolution of problems"; "all the great doctrines can be characterized by problems."[89] And, according to an unpublished draft quoted by Goldschmidt, he considered the *Philosophie de l'histoire* to be, exactly, a "philosophy of the problem."[90] Hence, the dianoematics is an avatar of what Leo Catana, in recent work, has characterized as "problem history of philosophy," a tradition that can be traced as far back as to Georg Gustav Fülleborn and was prominent in neo-Kantian historiography.[91] One could also point to a source closer to home, namely Émile Bréhier who, following Bergson, similarly placed the category of the "problem" centrally in his historiography.[92] Be that as it may, common to most problem histories is the idea that the history of philosophy proper plays out as different solutions to certain perennial philosophical "problems." This, however, is not how Gueroult goes about it. He gives a reflexive, transcendental turn to the notion. The problem of the history of philosophy cannot be summarized by a list of concerns about God, man, and the cosmos but is rather related to "The history of philosophy *as* a philosophical

[86] Delbos, "Les conceptions," 137–43, translated in Delbos, "The Conceptions," 397–404.
[87] HHP I.19.
[88] HHP I.15.
[89] Gueroult, "La méthode," 11 and 16.
[90] Goldschmidt, "Martial Gueroult," 305.
[91] Leo Catana, "Philosophical Problems," 120–21.
[92] Bréhier, "La notion de problem en philosophie."

problem," as Gueroult entitled a contribution to *The Monist* in 1969. In short, the "problem" concerns the discipline's own truth conditions and legitimacy as a discipline.[93]

Now, as we have already seen, each philosophy claims philosophical worth for itself only by affirming some determinate truth which, as philosophy, transcends history. No philosophy *qua* philosophy claims only *historical* validity. This places the historian of philosophy in a paradoxical situation very different from that of a regular historian: the historian of philosophy is supposed to write the history of something which, by its own nature, resists its own historicity, or which does not *want* to have a history: "Philosophy repels history."[94] And yet, despite this resistance, philosophy cannot "excommunicate" history, since "doubtless, every philosophy affirms itself by revolting against tradition; it abolishes it in order to install itself."[95] In fact, each time, by the very act of positing itself in exclusion of other, competing systems, philosophies cannot help recognizing not only the factual existence of the latter but also their own historical situation in relation to them. Hence, "philosophy's past presents itself as a succession of doctrines excommunicating each other mutually but without being able to triumph in their pretenses to a truth that is a-temporal, universally valid and definitively acquired."[96] And this, exactly, is the problem that every historian of philosophy must face, i.e. "how to reconcile the historicity of philosophy with the philosophical truth of all philosophy."[97]

## 5. Reality, Philosophical and Common

The way Gueroult goes about solving the problem reveals his deep debt to Kant, a philosopher about whom he never published a monograph but whose presence is only the more pervasive by being diffuse and often implicit.[98] As Louis Guillermit writes:

> If we stick to the appearances of the published texts, it is at first striking to see how, in the immense work of M. Gueroult, Kant's philosophy is, at the same time,

[93] Gueroult, "Le problème de la légitimité."
[94] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 9; cf. Sève, "La *Dianoématique*," 154.
[95] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 12.
[96] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 14–15.
[97] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 564.
[98] This said, at the time of his death, Gueroult was, among other projects, working on a two-volume work on Kant (Brunner and Muller, "Hommage à Martial Gueroult," 180).

> *omnipresent* and approached in an *indirect* way. . . . The presence and force of the Kantian inspiration can be seen at the heart of the philosophical conception which, under the name of dianoematics, governs the conception that M. Gueroult proposes of the history of philosophy. As soon as one recognizes that all the originality and depth of his work essentially resides in a complete submission of the historian's task to the requirements proper to the philosophy it takes for its object, the idea imposes itself that the critical essence of the Kantian philosophy assumes the function of a veritable paradigm within it.[99]

The Kantian "paradigm" that Guillermit has in mind relates to Gueroult's understanding of the dianoematics as a "critique of historical reason" and as a "transcendental deduction" of the conditions under which the history of philosophy is possible as a discipline. Hence, the "dianoematics" is the idea of a discipline which is, at the same time, positive and transcendental. It is positive, because "it is first of all about trying to account for the given facts"; transcendental since it poses the problem of "how the 'philosophical experience' is possible in history."[100] The truth and value of the history of philosophy can only be determined relative to such a transcendental deduction of its own conditions of possibility. This deduction rests on two basic presuppositions about the *worth or value of philosophy* and about the *nature of truth*.

First, the history of philosophy is inseparable from a *philosophical* interest, which alone justifies the effort we put into studying it: "No philosopher would undertake a history of philosophy if the philosophical interest which conditions the undertaking of this history is absent."[101] That is why "the historian of philosophy cannot legitimately be indifferent to philosophies or neglect the philosophical significance of their substance, that is, of their possible connection to philosophical truth, since it is that interest which establishes these philosophies as objects worthy of a history."[102] Gueroult is not arguing that the history of philosophy as a discipline has value only to the extent that it actually *attains* such philosophical truth.[103] He simply claims that no one would engage in the writing a history of philosophy unless they assume that such philosophical truth is present within it. And the kind

[99] Louis Guillermit, "Martial Gueroult," 301–2; cf. Bernard Sève, "La *Dianoématique*," 139.
[100] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 65–66.
[101] HHP I.14.
[102] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 569; cf. Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 11.
[103] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 569.

of truth claims that philosophy qua philosophy makes, as opposed to psychological or merely historical truths, must transcend particular time and place: "The philosophical truth always presents itself as enveloping a doctrinal object of a universal and a-temporal character, beyond every past and every history."[104] It is always a "conception claiming extra-temporal validity," as opposed to history which is "exact, authentic reconstruction of a fact or a series of facts in the past."[105] Therefore, the philosopher must be "dogmatic" about his own discipline: "He must believe in the presence of a certain real substance is each philosophy. It is this very substance that grounds is for him as the possible object of a history," for "it is this 'essential' [thing] which, making the systems objects worthy of a history, sets them outside historical time."[106]

Second, the historian of philosophy must accept the traditional definition of truth as *adaequatio rei et intellectus* as valid for *all* philosophical systems, as "the truth that every doctrine aspires to at heart."[107] Coherentist and pragmatist conceptions of truth are not genuine competitors to correspondence theory but reducible to particular conceptions of correspondence theory.[108] Consequently, the truth claims of philosophy are always claims to representing something *real* or *essential* about the world. In this sense, a philosophy is an *imago mundi*:

> Every philosophy is, and must be, an image of an original and derives its truth, that is to say, its reality as philosophy, from the authenticity of this image in relation to the original. . . . That means that it has no other aim than to reveal, as much as possible, the essence of a reality which is offered to it from the outside.[109]

As images of the world, philosophies posit themselves as *re*-constructions rather than just constructions: "Philosophizing thought . . . does not aspire to construct an imaginary world, but a real one: that is why it affirms that it reconstructs."[110] And yet, each philosophy posits within itself only the determined reality which corresponds to it. This projected reality which each philosophy gives itself constitutes what Gueroult describes as its "philosophical

[104] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 10.
[105] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 566.
[106] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 17.
[107] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 60.
[108] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 80–85.
[109] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 90.
[110] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 97.

reality." It is distinct and separate for each philosophy and determined from within the structures that make up the philosophy in question: it is the reality of which it claims to be the true image. The philosophical reality is ascertained by a philosophy's "certain positing of itself as the maximal synthesis of all possible determinations," giving it "self-sufficiency."[111] This projected reality is the object that a system is the image of, or that it reconstructs.

Now, from the view point of their respective philosophical reality, it makes no sense to enquire about the relative truth-value of one doctrine in relation to another, because they do not refer to the same reality, or do not have the same objective truth conditions. As already noted above, despite adhering to some notion of *philosophia perennis*, Gueroult is also a pluralist about the truth of philosophical systems. Each of them make separate, incommensurable, and equally legitimate truth claims about the nature of a reality they posit for themselves, and which does not exist prior to them: "The fact that philosophizing thought projects out of itself an objective 'double' of the world that it constructs, and conceives of itself as reproducing that world, does in no way imply that this world exists prior to its construction as the model exists prior to its image."[112]

And yet, as we have already seen above, the systems are necessarily related. This is because, within its own sphere, each philosophy, posits itself as an image of the *whole* truth: "Each philosophy recognizes its own validity in the fact that it brings about an understanding of reality, an explanation which is either total or maximal."[113] Systems are like monads: they each comprise a *whole* world.[114] Consequently, two systems, with distinct principles of construction, cannot co-exist without their respective aspirations to capturing the whole truth entering into conflict and competition with each other: "In order to live, all [doctrines] lay claim to [*se disputent*] the same reality in order to make of it their own [reality], instead of each of them confining itself to its own reality."[115] Consequently, each philosophy necessarily posits itself *historically* in opposition to other philosophies: "Each philosophy . . . posits itself in exclusion of any other."[116] This is why every philosophy not only posits, internally, a determined philosophical reality for itself. It also, in and by the very *act of excluding* every other philosophy from its horizon, and thus acknowledging a mutual claim to a shared object, necessarily also posits a relation to an indeterminate reality external to its own philosophical

[111] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 136, 139; cf. 234.
[112] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 97.
[113] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 77.
[114] Sève, "La *Dianoématique*," 141.
[115] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 106.
[116] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 74.

reality. This exterior "common reality" of philosophy is the common element of truth in which all philosophy *qua* historical is submerged.

The common reality remains perfectly indeterminate: "The relation to the real is the condition of possibility of all philosophy. By this, however, it is by no means determined *what reality it is about, nor the nature of that reality.*"[117] But it is completely open to any systematic determination: "The common reality has been posited as indeterminate and open to all the determinations that the different systems manage to attribute to it, each within its sphere."[118] Hence, even though claims to the whole truth of philosophical systems are posited externally in antagonistic terms, and that the philosophical realities they each posit internally are incommensurable, this very antagonism and incommensurability also points to a "common part by which they are conciliated."[119] For if all self-sufficient philosophical systems entirely disagree about *what* is the common reality they all vie for, they also all agree *that* it is, or that it *exists*:

> [All the philosophies] agree to remove all of its determinations and to leave of it only a completely undetermined residue = x, similar to that 'transcendental object' which, as the object in general and conceived while abstracting from every intuition, is interchangeable with 'nothing.'[120]

The common reality is, in short, what each and every philosophy claims to be the truth *of*, it is "the thing to understand."[121] It is the "true reality," "absolute reality," even the "really real reality,"[122] which, nonetheless, proves decidedly elusive within Gueroult's scheme, a transcendental residue which amounts to "nothing" because, in itself, it is deprived all determinations.[123] And yet all philosophies affirm its existence, and this transcendental "residue" or "common part" forms the objective truth condition of the history of philosophy as such. For the common reality is the philosophical condition under which the history of philosophy can be construed as a whole, as driven historically by a common concern for

[117] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 91.
[118] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 219.
[119] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 105.
[120] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 104.
[121] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 105.
[122] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 95, 213; cf. Giolito, *Histoires*, 178.
[123] Sève, "La *Dianoématique*," 158–59.

knowledge of the world, despite the fact that each philosophy posits itself as a self-sufficient *imago mundi*:

> The common reality appears as an internal law, purely formal, of philosophizing thought; a law that is indeterminate with regard to content; a law that grounds the necessity through which the different real syntheses of the interior and the exterior are possible for the philosophizing thought, syntheses each of which constitute a system or philosophical reality.[124]

The relation between philosophical and common reality is the centerpiece of a "radical idealism" the aim of which is to establish "that all the systems have a specific reality and that the affirmation of each of them is necessarily enclosed within this reality."[125] Radical idealism refers to the incommensurability of the philosophical, determinate realities projected by each system, as monuments perceiving themselves as a-temporally true images of the whole of their determined reality. And yet, at the same time, those systems factually emerge in *history* as competing doctrines, each staking their claim to a wholly indeterminate common reality. It is in this sense that "the concept of a completely undetermined common reality remains as the condition of possibility of the living philosophical experience in history," with emphasis on *history*.[126]

## 6. The Fact of Philosophy

It remains now to account for only one last aspect of Gueroult's treatment of the history of philosophy as a "problem." It relates to the exact role played by the "living philosophical experience in history" figuring in the quote with which I finished the previous section. I have described Gueroult's dianoematics in terms of a "transcendental loop" connecting the history of philosophy to philosophy itself via the history of the history of philosophy. Now, for Gueroult, this loop must eventually be accounted for, not *a priori* but *a posteriori*, from the experience of past philosophy; it must spring "from the spontaneous reflection on the object naturally offered here to the historian, in this case the philosophies, eternal monuments of

[124] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 235.
[125] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 221; cf. 231–32.
[126] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 105.

human thought."[127] In short, when reconstructing which relations, exactly, the history of philosophy as a discipline has historically entertained with philosophy itself, one must take one's point of departure in the "experience of the fact" of past philosophy.[128] It is the aspect of his method we have already encountered under the label "positivism" above.

The stress Gueroult puts on the factuality of philosophy's past betrays a certain allegiance to the Rankian notion of history as being concerned with "how things actually were." Gueroult derides Ranke's formula, "disarming in its useless simplicity" and yet his own conception of the history of philosophy is not far removed from "a definition corresponding to the one formulated by Ranke," as "the exposition of doctrines such as their authors actually thought them."[129] The form under which philosophical doctrines are made available to us in such a factual, transparent way is as *texts*. This is also why Gueroult characterizes his method as a "return to the text."[130] More concretely, for him, it is a call to a *work*, i.e. a *set of texts* associated with a *name*: "The work, for its part, is there in front of us, in books, like a monument, an object."[131] Hence, as Victor Goldsmith points out, "the empirical point of departure, if not of the enquiry then at least for the problem, could even justify a reduction of 'philosophies' to 'works.'"[132]

Now, by reason of this a posteriori starting point in the factual existence of past philosophical works, the dianoematics represents an "overturning of Hegelianism," to the extent that it amounts to denying that any a priori philosophy of history governs the relation between philosophy and its history.[133] It is, however, not only Hegelian a priori principles of the history of philosophy that Gueroult rejects, but *any* such principles, be they dialectical, logical, phenomenological, or other. In many ways, the three volumes of HHP are just is one long effort to hunt down and exterminate a priori principles in previous historiographies, as part of a general "critique of historical reason."[134] For example, he objects to Gilson's logical conception of *philosophia perennis* because it reduces the history of philosophy to "an abstract history that dissociates the correct from the incorrect a priori."[135] Or again, he congratulates Renouvier for not "deducing a *system* of history from an a priori philosophy a

[127] Gueroult, "La méthode," 7.
[128] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 25.
[129] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 7–8.
[130] Gueroult, *Descartes selon l'ordre des raisons*, I, 10
[131] Gueroult, "La méthode," 12.
[132] Goldschmidt, "Martial Gueroult," 311; cf. Sève, "La *Dianoématique*," 141.
[133] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 224.
[134] Gueroult, "Les postulats," 444; cf. Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 7–8.
[135] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 27; cf. HHP III.1031–70.

system of history, but only fashioning a classification of system," taking his point of departure in the "naked experience" of past philosophy.[136] At the same time, however, he complains about the *execution* of this project, because Renouvier had finally, and contrary to his own initial ambition, given in to the temptation of elaborating a classification based on "a priori normative" criteria that only his own system of consciousness could honor."[137]

Those are just two examples among many of the way in which Gueroult proceeds in HHP. His constant rejection of any a priori principles for the discipline first of all reflects a deep sense of responsibility toward past philosophy as a fact not to be tampered with. Hence, he writes, "the history of philosophy can be envisaged in two ways: philosophically, as a problem; historically, as a fact." Considered as a problem, as we have seen, "one asks how philosophy can be, at the same time, a truth, which is a-temporal by definition, and a succession of doctrines following each other in time, being consumed into a fleeting past." However, "next to the history of philosophy as a problem for philosophy, we have the history of philosophy as an incontestable fact."[138] According to Goldschmidt, "this empirical point of departure is of paramount importance: M. Gueroult has frequently insisted upon this point, and it is this point of departure which bestows upon the project of dianoematics its true originality."[139]

Gueroult's basic claim regarding this "living experience" of philosophy is double. It posits, first, as a fact, *that* philosophy has been as the empirical condition for the history of philosophy as a discipline. At the same time, however, as the condition under which the relevant facts can be recognized *as philosophical*, it posits a minimal definition of *what* philosophy has (always) been: it comprises, as we already know, *any* systematic concern for a-temporal truth, or any "philosophizing thought."[140] This minimal determination is, however, itself drawn from the experience of philosophy's past existence as "a determination founded not on a priori concepts, but on our living experience of it in history."[141] The argument is transparently circular but not necessarily viciously so: It points to the irreducibility of philosophizing thought. Beyond that minimal definition, however, "philosophy itself keeps changing its conception of its own essence,"[142] which is why "the determination of what is

[136] Gueroult, "Renouvier," 370.
[137] Gueroult, "Renouvier," 378–79; cf. HHP III.777–838.
[138] HHP I.13.
[139] Goldschmidt, "Martial Gueroult," 311.
[140] Gueroult, *Philosophie de l'histoire*, 232.
[141] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 566.
[142] Gueroult, "The History of Philosophy," 564.

philosophy, of its essence, of the kind of truth which is proper to it, is what must conclude the investigation, not what must introduce it."[143] Certainly, philosophizing thought as such is as elusive as the common reality it aims at capturing: We only perceive it in its manifestations, namely philosophical systems. Those systems are, however, given as facts, or, as Bernard Sève puts it, Gueroult's "only postulate is to admit the reality of the philosophical monuments of tradition."[144]

## 7. Conclusion

Gueroult's 1951 inaugural lecture at the Collège de France begins with a "Platonist dream" about "almost forgetting the world, and locking oneself up in the divine city of ideas" and a description of philosophies as "impalpable et invisible monuments."[145] Those words reflect the sentiment of a philosopher who did not feel quite at home. Gueroult did engage vigorously in contemporary polemics; he was "combative" and "capable of condemning without appeal," as Fernand Brunner puts it.[146] But he also literally dreamt of escaping from it, taking refuge not only in the a-temporality of philosophical systems and in the past experience of their history, but also in methodological discussions with respected predecessors like Delbos and Gilson. The dianoematics, a project that encompassed Gueroult's entire career, stands out as a monument to this nostalgic dream. In this light, the protracted dispute with Alquié comes through as a frustrating distraction more than an intellectually defining controversy, and the alleged proximity to structuralism as a *faux ami* tending to obfuscate his allegiance to "neutrality" and resistance to morally, religiously or politically informed appropriations of past philosophy. Indeed, one gains a clearer understanding of Gueroult's general project by seeing him as an heir of Delbos than as an adversary of Alquié. And one acquires a more focused image of Gueroult's methodology by situating his historiographical practice as a particular form of neo-Kantianism originating in the historiographical discussions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries than by comparing it to the phenomenological or structuralist schools contemporary with his tenure at the Collège de France.

[143] Gueroult, "Le problème de la légitimité," 52.
[144] Sève, "La *Dianoématique*," 153.
[145] Gueroult, *Leçon inaugurale*, 5.
[146] Ferdinand Brunner and Philippe Muller, "Hommage à Martial Gueroult," 178.

Over and above these gains in the *historical* understanding of Gueroult's particular place in twentieth-century French philosophy, I believe that there are also *philosophical* benefits to envisaging Gueroult's project within the broader neo-Kantian framework wherein it was originally conceived. It brings out a contemporary relevance to his work which otherwise risks getting overlooked. Certainly, Gueroult's well-known philosophical monographs are, and will remain, very useful tools for historians of philosophy working on Descartes, Spinoza, Malebranche, etc., as extremely detailed and systematic interpretations with which to compare and confront their own. Moreover, his perennialist outlook on the value or "worth" of philosophy should maintain a clear appeal for many analytically minded readers of past philosophy. However, when considered within the framework of the "transcendental deduction" governing the dianoematics, his general project also offers a sophisticated lesson about the epistemological and justificatory underpinnings of current methodological discussions among historians of philosophy—a lesson which applies well beyond the French context. In the Anglo-American context, over the last decades, methodological discussions about the history of philosophy as a discipline have most frequently turned on the question of what use the history of philosophy is to philosophy, if any.[147] Within these discussions, focused on what is *philosophical* about the history of philosophy as a discipline, the *historical* nature of that discipline has been largely overlooked, with a few notable exceptions.[148] The dianoematics is a detailed exploration of that disciplinary history. Gueroult, of course, is not the only scholar to have written a comprehensive history of the history of philosophy. Comes to mind here in particular Giovanni Santinello's collective work *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia* published in five volumes between 1979 and 2004,[149] the first three of which have appeared in English translation over the last twenty years under the title *Models of the History of Philosophy*.[150] Impressive as they are in both depth and breadth, Santinello's volumes do, however, not provide much in terms of a *philosophical* framework for the enquiry into the history of the

[147] See e.g. Jonathan Rée, Michael Ayers, and Adam Westoby, *Philosophy and Its Past*; Alan Holland, *Philosophy, Its History and Historiography*; Peter Hare, *Doing Philosophy Historically*; Richard Rorty, Quentin Skinner, and Jerome Schneewind, *Philosophy in History*; Tom Sorell and G.A.J. Rogers, *Analytic Philosophy and History of Philosophy*; Mogens Lærke, Eric Schliesser, and Justin E. H. Smith, *Philosophy and Its History*; Robert C. Scharff, *How History Matters*.

[148] See e.g. Michael Beaney, "The Historiography of Analytic Philosophy"; Dmitri Levitin, *Ancient Wisdom*. For work in English written by non-Anglo-American scholars, see Catana, *The Historiographical Concept*; Delphine Kolesnik-Antoine, "Is the History of Philosophy a Family Affair?"

[149] See Giovanni Santinello, *Storia delle storie generali della filosofia*.

[150] See Santinello, *Models of the History of Philosophy* I, published in 1993; Santinello and Gregorio Piaia, *Models of the History of Philosophy* II and III, published in 2011 and 2015. The remaining two volumes are still in preparation.

discipline they offer. Gueroult is (putting to one side Delbos's article from 1917 from which I think Gueroult originally took his cue) the one who has most systematically explored the philosophical underpinnings of the discipline in both historical and philosophical perspective.[151] By doing this, he has pointed to an important strategy of argumentation which, until now, has been left largely unexplored by historians of philosophy attempting to establish the philosophical credentials of their work. It is the idea that a genuine understanding of the philosophical value of the history of philosophy requires that we gain better knowledge of how the discipline itself has been used in the past for philosophical purposes, that is to say, that we engage in the writing of a philosophical history of the history of philosophy as a discipline. As I see it, this particular challenge forms one of the most important contemporary legacies of Gueroult's neo-Kantian project.[152]

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[151] To this, one might add Lucien Braun, *Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie*, a largely ignored and badly distributed work from 1985 intended to accompany the excellent work by Braun from 1973, *Histoire de l'histoire de la philosophie*.

[152] This article benefited from the advice and comments of the anonymous reviewers for the *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Roger Ariew, Tad Schmaltz, Pierre-François Moreau, Martine Pécharman, and the audience at the conference *Historiography of Philosophy, 1800-1950*, held at the University of Copenhagen, September 2018.

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