Taking a Look at History

Vasso Kindi
Department of Philosophy and History of Science, University of Athens, Greece
vkindi@phs.uoa.gr

Abstract

Ian Hacking urged that philosophers take a look at history. He called his recommendation the "Lockean imperative". In the present paper I examine how Hacking understands the relation between philosophy and history by concentrating on his 1990 essay "Two kinds of 'New Historicism' for philosophers". In this particular paper Hacking uses the visual metaphor of 'taking a look' which can also be found in the work of two other philosophers, Kuhn and Foucault, who are called by Hacking his mentors. I argue that in the work of these three philosophers, as well as in the work of Wittgenstein who has influenced both Hacking and Kuhn, one can find interest and attention to particulars which can be furnished by history, an approach which cultivates a sensibility for difference. I begin by presenting Hacking's understanding of the relation of history to philosophy and then discuss what the Lockean imperative is. I concentrate on Locke's understanding of history which differs considerably from the contemporary and end by focusing on the similarities in the work of the aforementioned thinkers.

Keywords

Ian Hacking and History

Ian Hacking has repeatedly called for the collaboration of the history and the philosophy of the sciences (Hacking 2002c, p. 178; cf. Hacking 2002a, p. 7). His work exemplifies this injunction which he expressed by the motto "to take a

look". This particular issue is extensively discussed in Hacking's 1990 paper "Two kinds of 'New Historicism' for philosophers", which is based on a talk he gave at a conference in 1988 at Scripps College in southern California. The conference, whose topic was "History and . . .", took place in the wake of Stephen Greenblatt's "New Historicism" in literary studies emanating from Berkeley at the time.[1] There were panels on *History and Literature, History and Music, History and Anthropology*, *History and Philosophy* which aimed to address the status of historical knowing in the humanities during that period (Roth 1990). The Princeton historian Carl Schorske, who also participated in this conference, said in a later version of his talk, that the symposium dramatized the degree to which Clio's life has been dependent. Participants wanted to know and explore Clio's value as a partner: "Is she a satisfactory helpmeet? Can she, does she, could she, enrich the performance of her partners from other disciplines in the academic quadrille?" (Schorske 1998, p. 219) Interest in history, Schorske thought, was emerging in the postmodern academic culture of the period after the rise and fall of history as the queen of the sciences. History's 19th century reign was succeeded by the dehistoricization and decontextualization of modernism which liberated a wide array of disciplines from what Schorske called "the bondage to the flattening effect of historicization" (ibid., p. 220). The result of this dehistoricization was that "Clio, overthrown as queen, was not only no longer courted, but found herself in a bed of Procrustes in her own house, pulled apart between historians who looked for inspiration to the dehistoricized social sciences and historians who looked to dehistoricized humanities" (ibid., pp. 228–229). Schorske dates the break with history, which he says "acquired the force of a generalized paradigm shift in academic culture" (ibid., p. 228), somewhere in the 1950s. It is interesting to note that the same period, that is, the late 50s and early 60s, witnessed the exact opposite trend in philosophy of science. Instead of having the peak of dehistoricization, history was forcefully brought to the fore in the works of T. S. Kuhn, Stephen Toulmin, N. R. Hanson and Paul Feyerabend. Philosophy of science as shaped by the logical positivist agenda, was completely dehistoricized and essentially

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1   In the words of Stephen Greenblatt and Catherine Gallagher who were the protagonists of 'new historicism' and edited the volume *Practicing New Historicism* (2000), "new historicism is not a coherent close knit school . . . at first signified an impatience with American New Criticism, an unsettling of established norms and procedures, a mingling of dissent and restless curiosity" (ibid., p. 2). New historicists embed artistic creation in culture, read culture as text and are interested in vast details of histories and counterhistories, developing thereof sceptical and even adversarial interpretations (ibid., pp. 9, 16).

concerned with the logic of science.[2] With the historicist turn of the late 50s and early 60s, history was dug out from the buried repositories of the context of discovery and took central stage in the philosophy of science proper.

In his talk at the conference of 1988, Hacking was asked to discuss the relation between *History* and *Philosophy*. It is not very clear whether the organizers wanted him to comment on the relation between philosophy and its past, that is history as *res gestae* or philosophy and history as historiography. In the invitation sent to him we read that he was asked to comment on how "the new historicism or philosophy as conversation was connected with philosophy as problem solving" (Hacking 1990, p. 344). 'Philosophy as conversation' alludes to Richard Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979)[3] while 'philosophy as problem solving' refers to analytic philosophy. Hacking steers clear of the oppositions stated in the invitation[4] and distinguishes between Rorty's historicism and his own as the two kinds of 'new historicism' (which appear in the title of his talk) in anglophone philosophy at the time. Rorty, Hacking says, "appl[ies] history to the whole sweep of philosophy" (Hacking 1990, p. 354), drawing global conclusions about its development, while he is more interested in the concrete formation and use of concepts. His own historicist recommendation is to take a look as a philosopher at what happened in history.

Hacking has repeatedly stated that analytic philosophy is ahistorical or antihistorical. His *Representing and Intervening* (1983) begins with a quotation from Nietzsche (2005, pp. 166–167) which says that the lack of historical sense is the most idiosyncratic trait of the philosophers. "They think that they show their respect for a subject when they dehistoricize it – when they turn it into a mummy". Hacking (1983, p. 1), following in Nietzsche's steps says that

> [p]hilosophers long made a mummy of science. When they finally unwrapped the cadaver and saw the remnants of an historical process of

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2   In "The scientific conception of the world", the manifesto of the Vienna Circle, it is stated that "[the representatives of the scientific world-conception] confidently approach the task of *removing* the metaphysical and theological debris of millennia" (Hahn et al. 1996, p. 339). They were interested in the logical analysis and logical clarification of scientific concepts.

3   In this book Rorty advances the view that "the point of edifying philosophy is to keep the conversation going rather than to find objective truth" (Rorty 1979, p. 377). According to Rorty the conversation began with Plato and has been enlarged by other voices (ibid., p. 391). Edifying philosophy is contrasted by him to systematic philosophy which centers in epistemology (ibid., p. 366).

4   For instance, Hacking argues that despite his historicism, Rorty is not uninterested in certain "problems of philosophy" (Hacking 1990, pp. 353–354).

becoming and discovering, they created for themselves a crisis of rationality. That happened around 1960.

Hacking is referring to Kuhn's work and that of others who managed to combine history and philosophy in their accounts of science. What kind of combination that was, is still debated and yet to be settled,[5] but it served, nonetheless, as a paradigm of substantive and not formal or mummified philosophy of science. Hacking says that Kuhn followed the empiricist adage and proposed to "take a look". Kuhn's taking a look, according to Hacking, changed our conception of science and motivated a wealth of empirical research on science, historical, anthropological, sociological, which reached in some cases striking constructivist conclusions.

The Lockean Imperative

Hacking calls the empiricist adage of 'taking a look' the Lockean imperative. Why is that? According to Hacking, Locke's *Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1959), the "perfect example" of the core project of modern philosophy, is "as nonhistorical as we could imagine" and yet it is amenable to historicization (Hacking, 1990, p. 354). By that he means that Locke's book can be understood as looking for the origins of ideas and the origins of knowledge. It is a genetic account of our concepts. Here is how Hacking defines what he calls the Lockean imperative: "to understand our thoughts and our beliefs through an account of origins" (ibid., p. 355). Hacking also says that although Locke is our model empiricist, his method is rationalistic. His whole book is "one great thought experiment" and Locke "almost never takes a look" (ibid., p. 355). That is why Hacking describes the project which he favours, and which combines philosophy and history, as "Locke plus history" (ibid., p. 354).

One can already spot certain tensions in this account. If Locke's account is genetic, then it can be said that history is already incorporated and we do not need to add it as an extra. We do not need to aim at 'Locke plus history'. Second, how can Locke be an empiricist if his account is completely a priori? And, lastly, in what sense is the imperative to 'take a look' Lockean if Locke himself almost never takes a look? I will come back to these questions but, first, let me add a further complication to the picture.

The *Essay*, the book which Hacking finds "as nonhistorical as we could imagine" was written, Locke says in its Introduction (*Essay*, I. I. 2.), following

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5   For Kuhn see Kindi 2005; **Mladenović** 2007.

"the Historical, plain Method". He also says that he has given in this book "a true *history of the first beginnings of human knowledge* (II. XI. 15)" (emphasis in the original). Lawrence Sterne, in *The Life and Opinions of Tristam Shandy Gentleman*, says: "I will tell you in three words what the book [the *Essay*] is. – It is a history. – A history! [. . .] – It is a history-book, Sir" (cited in Anstey 2009a, p. 143). Voltaire, who calls Locke the most acute Logician, finds that Locke gave "with an Air of the greatest Modesty, the History of [the soul]" while Locke's predecessors, in Voltaire's view, offered just the "Romance of it" (cited in Buickerood 1985, p. 157).[6] Reference to the history of the soul is reminiscent of Aristotle's *De Anima* which begins by saying that it concerns "τὴν τῆς ψυχῆς ἱστορίαν" (402a4), that is, the history of the soul. Indeed, Locke's *Essay* has often been placed in the legacy of this work (cf. Serjeantson 2008).

There is certainly a genetic element in the method Locke calls historical since, as Locke explains, he is concerned with "whence the mind has its first objects; and by what steps it makes its progress to the laying in and storing up those ideas, out of which is to be framed all the knowledge it is capable of" (*Essay*, II. XI. 15).[7] But the important thing, I think, is that Locke (and Voltaire) use the term "history" in a sense which is not the one familiar today, that is, the sense of development and succession in time or the account of such a development. It might be said that they use it in the much broader sense of 'inquiry' or 'research' which is the sense of the ancient Greek term 'ἱστορία'.[8]

More particularly, however, it may be said that the use of 'history' that Locke makes is related to that of natural history which we find in Bacon, the Royal Society, and, in general, in the early modern period, and which owes much to the use of the term in the practice of medicine in Hellenistic times and after. This kind of history lays emphasis on direct observation of particular objects or qualities, without the interference of speculation or hypotheses, and the compilation thereof of vast collections of facts. It is supposed to give us knowledge of real individuals and serve as foundation for natural philosophy. Bacon says that "the materials on which the intellect has to work [for these investigations] are so widely spread that one must employ factors and merchants to go everywhere in search of them and take them in". (cited in Anstey, 2002 p. 71).

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6   Voltaire (2008, p. 59) says "Mr Locke has displayed the human soul in the same manner as an excellent anatomist explains the springs of the human body".

7   Cf.: "The 'Historical, Plain Method' is apparently to give a genetic account of how we come by our ideas" (Uzgalis, 2010).

8   This is the reason in *De Anima* the term 'ἱστορία' is translated as 'inquiry' and Herodotus's *Historiae* contains not just typically historiographical material but also ethnographical and geographical, as well as myths (Geuss, 2005, p. 156 n.12).

This is the reason, I suppose, that we find geography books together with books on the laws of nature under the heading "philosophical" in a pamphlet published in 1730, which was supposed to give advice to university students for their studies.[9] It may also explain why 195 items of travel literature and 80 titles of geography are included in Locke's library (Anstey, 2011a, pp. 59–61; cf. Carey 2005, p. 25)). Quotations from these books have found their way in Locke's *Essay* and the philosopher Peter Anstey, who has documented how central the Baconian legacy is in Locke, has said that "[i]f we take Locke at his word, that the *Essay* is a history of the faculty of the understanding, then travel writers are exactly the sorts of sources we would expect to find in the *Essay*" (Anstey 2011a, p. 59).

Locke was intimately involved in Robert Boyle's researches on the air and on the human blood (Dewhurst 1962; Knight 2007).[10] Locke collaborated very closely on *Observationes Medicae* with the medical doctor Thomas Sydenham (Meynell 2006), who promoted the writing of histories of disease.[11] Locke himself who, as is well known, was not only a logician and philosopher but also a physician, authored medical essays, for instance, 'Anatomia' (1668) and 'Ars Medica' or 'De Arte Medica' (1669) which predate the *Essay* (1671) by only a few years (Anstey 2009b). Locke did definitely take a look at empirical matters.

In the *Essay*, Locke says that because we cannot discover the real essence of bodies "we must be content to glean what we can from particular experiments; (...) experience, observation and natural history must give us, by our senses and by retail, an insight into corporeal substance" (Esaay IV, xii, 12), while in a letter in which Locke explains what his approach was to human understanding he states:

> For being resolved to examine Humane Understanding, and the ways of our knowledge, not by others' opinions, but by what I could from my own observations collect myself, I have purposely avoided the reading of all books that treated anyway of the subject, that so I have nothing to bias

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9   Yolton (1986, p. 4) says that in Daniel Waterland's *Advice to a Young Student with a Method of Study for the Four First Years* "several books of what we would view as geography" were listed under the heading 'philosophical' for the third year.

10   Boyle's *Memoirs for the Natural History of Humane Blood* was dedicated to Locke (Dewhurst 1962, p. 202).

11   Locke, in a letter to Thomas Molyneux, expresses the hope that many will follow Sydenham's example and "by the way of accurate practical observation, as he has so happily begun, enlarge the histories of diseases" (cited in Anstey, 2005, p. 229, n. 54). For more on Sydenham see Anstey, 2011b.

anyway, but might leave my thoughts free to entertain only what the mat-
ter itself suggested to my meditations (cited in Sanchez-Gonzalez, 1990,
p. 678).

Given all this, it has been maintained, that Locke's *Essay*, "can indeed justly be
regarded as a kind of natural history of the understanding" (Serjeantson, 2008,
p. 165).[12] As for his 'historical method', Miguel Sanchez-Gonzalez (1990, p. 677)
has said that by this Locke means "a form of recording facts which is merely
observational, descriptive, intersubjective and not interpretive".[13] Peter Anstey
(2009a, p. 150) puts it succinctly as follows:

> This then, is the sense in which the *Essay* follows the historical, plain
> method. It is *historical* insofar as it is an experimental history and it is
> *plain*, insofar as it is, unlike the natural histories of old, unadorned by
> literary device and speculation. Locke, therefore, both endorsed the lea-
> ding natural philosophical methodology of his day, but he also applied it
> to a new domain, the domain of moral philosophy, and in particular, the
> study of the human understanding. (emphasis in the original)

Patrick Romanell states that Locke's own "historical, plain method", which
Locke never defines, "proves to be in fact a method of philosophy derived
mainly from the empirical medicine of his day and ultimately from the origins
of that medicine" (Romanell, 1984, p. 9).[14] The historian of medicine Gianna

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12 Cf. Anstey (2011a, p. 224): "the *Essay* is a genuine attempt at a natural history of the
     understanding." Walmsley (2010, p. 24): "With its "Historical Plain Method" (1.1.2) the
     Essay is nothing so much as natural history of the human mind". Also Carey (2005, p. 23):
     "Locke can be seen as the principal exponent of the project to compile a natural history
     of man in the seventeenth century".

13 The qualification 'plain', Sanchez says, is used to allude to the method's antispeculative
     character" (ibid.). The rejection of speculative hypotheses, physical or metaphysical, of
     occult qualities and principles was an attitude shared at the time by Newton, Sydenham,
     Bacon and Locke.

14 Peter Anstey (2011a, p. 221) says that Romanell was wrong to claim that "Locke's historical
     plain method was derived from the empirical medicine of his day, and ultimately from
     ancient medicine". According to Anstey, "[i]t is more accurate to treat the medicine of
     that period as continuous with natural philosophy [. . .] In the case of Locke, then, to
     privilege one of these disciplines, say, medicine, over the other is to misunderstand the
     milieu in which his intellectual formation took place and to ignore the major influence on
     Locke in these years, Robert Boyle" (ibid.).

Pomata, in her history of the word 'historia', lists four basic notions of *historia* in the sixteenth century (2005, pp. 107–112).[15]

- as knowledge that offered a description of something without explaining it
- as knowledge in general, that is, as anything that is expounded in a true and serious way; as a description of anything; usually a compilation from learned sources or from direct observation; an orderly collection of examples.[16]
- knowledge based on sense perception or observation. This sense is derived from Galen's discussion of the ancient medical sect of the Empiricists.
- Case history- the description of a single medical case over time.

If what is said above is taken into account, then, it can be maintained that Locke's *Essay* is indeed historical in a rather antiquarian sense of the term. His history is akin to natural history which involves the collection of direct observations or the collection of facts in the hope, however, of eventually having hypotheses and theories emerge from them (cf. Carey 2005, pp. 25–26).

If we now go back to the tensions mentioned above, we see in what sense Locke's *Essay* is empirical and at the same time a priori. It is empirical because in it Locke attempts a natural history of the understanding and it is a priori only from a perspective, developed obviously later than Locke, which excludes thought from the domain of the empirical.[17] The injunction to take a look can justly be called Lockean since, as we have seen, Locke does take more than an interest in empirical matters even though he does not take a look at history in the contemporary sense of the term. He does take a look at how the mind gets its objects and, in that sense, his account is genetic integrating history and philosophy and not just putting them side by side. Peter Anstey (2011a) concludes his book *Locke and Natural Philosophy* by addressing Hacking's account of Locke. Anstey thinks that Hacking is "simply wrong to charge him [Locke] with not having 'taken a look'" (p. 224) and he claims that "[t]he *Essay* is not just the work of an under-labourer for the experimental philosophy; it is a work of experimental philosophy in its own right." (ibid., p. 225)

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15   The subtitle she uses is "Historia's 'Infinite Ways of Being'" (Pommata, 2005, p. 106).

16   Cf. Aristotle's *Historia animalium*, Theophrastus's *Historia Plantarum* and Pliny's *Naturalis historia*.

17   Emphasis on the empirical dimension of Locke's *Essay* should not be taken to imply that Locke shied away from abstract philosophizing.

The Relation of History to Philosophy: Take a Look

Hacking wants to combine history and philosophy and recommends, as we saw, the Lockean imperative, namely, to "take a look". In that connection he mentions Bruno Latour, Andy Pickering, Simon Schaffer and Steven Shapin as scholars who have taken a look. He says that "perhaps it is precisely because they know something (for instance, physics or high energy physics), that they are so given to what I [Hacking] nonchalantly call 'taking a look'" (Hacking 1990, p. 356).

What does this tell us? Is this kind of work, Latour's, Pickering's, Schaffer's, Shapin's, or Locke's, the combination of history and philosophy that Hacking wants? Hacking says that the work of the constructivists is difficult to characterize: is it history, anthropology, microsociology (ibid.)? Locke's work, on the other hand, may be amenable to historization as Hacking says, may even be an example of history (in the early modern sense of the term) as I have argued, but it is at the same time a paradigm of pure philosophy. Locke is one of the heroes of philosophy.

One moral to draw is that it is not clear what we are looking for when we ask for the combination of history and philosophy. What do we mean by history and what do we mean by philosophy? We often take it that the two disciplines are like natural kinds surviving intact through the course of time. But we have briefly gone over some of the history of history and one feels, as Pomata put it, "the dizziness at the protean semantic multiplicity of the term"(Pomata 2005, p. 107). One would have a similar feeling if one were to examine philosophy. Going back in history (temporally speaking), one finds that the disciplinary boundaries are permeable or non existent. Philosophy has survived under different guises and names in different kinds of works which we may now categorize as literature, theology, or rhetoric, and it has merged, intersected, and interbred with adjacent disciplines. For instance, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we find the term "natural philosophy" which we understand today as referring to science. But the people who practiced natural philosophy were not only what we now take to be scientists, such as Galileo or Newton, but also celebrated philosophers such as Bacon and Locke. The books of these latter thinkers became classics of philosophy and yet, as we saw, they contain 'natural histories' which are hardly distinguishable from science. In a letter, Locke ranks himself with "Galileo, my lord Bacon, Mr. Boyle, and Mr. Newton, [. . .] with the great discoverers of truth and advancers of knowledge" (Anstey 2002, p. 69). Also, in the same 18th century pamphlet mentioned above, we find the term 'philosophical' applied to books of arithmetic, of trigonometry, books of astronomy, of advanced mathematics and physics, books on metaphysics

and Aristotle's logic, to Euclid's geometry, Locke's *Essay* and Newton's *Optics* (Yolton 1986, p. 4).

So we need to be clear what exactly we want to combine and how. Hacking wisely talks of "how *some* kinds of history matter to *some* kinds of doing philosophy" (Hacking 1990, p. 346, emphasis added). He says philosophy is "a gigantic shunting yard of motley of activities" (Hacking 1990a, p. 373), which means that he does not take history and philosophy as two monolithic blocks pitted against each other, arching *per impossibile* to connect.[18]

One area where history and philosophy were indeed pitted against each other is history and philosophy of science. Ever since the historicist turn in the late 50s and early 60s, the relation of the two disciplines was most often discussed within the confines of what Jutta Schickore has recently called "the confrontation model" (Schickore 2011). The two separate academic fields, one descriptive and empirical, the other normative, were placed against each other with no possibility of bridging the gap between them except by a "logical *Anschluss*".[19] The *is/ought* divide which the two disciplines fall on either side of, gave rise to concerns about possible naturalistic or genetic fallacies if the two areas were to merge or just connect.[20]

The confrontation model encouraged the use of the metaphor of marriage between the two domains. It was introduced by T. S. Kuhn (1977, p. 20)[21] but

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18   David Hollinger (1990), in his reply to Hacking, uses the metaphor of an arch to talk about the relation of history and philosophy. He takes his cue from Hacking himself who referred to William James's arch of pragmatism and problems of philosophy (Hacking 1990. p. 353). Hollinger says that he is "attracted to Hacking's vision of history and philosophy joining to create such an arch, its two parts joined by a sturdy conjunction, or simply two separate slabs leaning precariously against one another at the top, ready to be hauled off to separate locations should a construction gang of conventional philosophers or conventional historians decide to appropriate one or the other for their own use." Hacking (1990a, p. 373), however, declines that he used James's metaphor to suggest that we build an arch joining philosophy and history as two separate slabs.

19   The phrase is Arhur Danto's who claimed that after Kuhn "[i]nstead of history being connected to the wider body of science by a logical *Anschluss*, the natural sciences themselves became matters for the kinds of interpretation the earlier theorists had identified as the methodological prerogative of the human sciences: ways of reading the world. To be sure, there now really was a unity of science, in the sense that all of science was brought under history rather than, as before, history having been brought under science construed on the model of physics." (cited in Novick 1988, p. 526)

20   Hacking (1990, p. 355) has called the warnings about the danger of genetic fallacy if we try to understand our thoughts through an account of origins "insubstantial name-calling".

21   Kuhn's essay on the relations between the history and the philosophy of science was based on a lecture he gave in 1968 at Michigan State University. He ends the paper by

it was, subsequently, overly exploited. The questions raised asked whether the two disciplines were necessary partners or merely roommates (Kegley 1989), whether their relation was intimate or a marriage of convenience (Giere 1973; cf. McMullin 1976, Burian 1977), whether there was any hope beyond peaceful coexistence (Feigl 1989), whether we could observe passionate commitment or a lowered level of mutual tolerance (Caws 1989, p. vi), whether their relation was precarious (Burian 2002), had a future (Nickles 1995, p. 159) or was withering (Fuller 1991). John Zammito (2004) spoke of estrangement and the failed marriage of the two fields while Michael Kelly (2006, p. 197) recommended looking for divorce lawyers.[22] There have been attempts recently to resuscitate the collaboration of history and philosophy of science in projects such as the *Integrated History and Philosophy of Science* (&HPS) without lifting, however, the mutual suspicion and reservation.

Hacking's suggestion to take a look from philosophy to history is exemplified, according to him,[23] in his essay "Was there ever a radical mistranslation?" (2002b) in which he considers certain anecdotes that were used by Quine in advancing his doctrines of the indeterminacy of translation and the inscrutability of reference. Hacking, by considering dictionaries, histories, travelers' letters and missionaries' reports, shows in this short essay that the stories about the reference of 'kangaroo', 'indri', 'vasistas' are false. He readily admits that his observations, being empirical, cannot refute Quine's a priori theses. But he insists that the factual mistakes that he uncovered corrode the plausibility of the assumptions on which Quine's doctrines rest and through which they gain credence. "If something is claimed as a logical possibility about translation, which is never known to be approximated for more than a few moments in real life, may we not begin to suspect that the conception of translation that is being taken for granted may be erroneous?" (ibid., p. 152). In this example of collaboration, recourse to history is incidental and does not involve a sustained rapprochement and integration of the two disciplines.

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saying: "I urge that history and philosophy of science continue as separate disciplines. What is needed is less likely to be produced by marriage than by active discourse" (Kuhn 1977, p. 20). Given that the essay was revised in 1976, it is not clear whether the metaphor of marriage was in the original lecture or was added in 1976 after the publication of Giere's essay in 1973.

22   More on the relevance or the irrelevance of history to philosophy of science can be found in McMullin (1970), Hanson (1971), Smart (1972), Cohen (1977), Wartofsly (1979), Passmore (1983), Vicedo (1993), Pinnick & Gale (2000).

23   Hacking's statement in the Cape Town workshop (March 2011) devoted to his work.

As we saw above, Hacking is interested in "how *some* kinds of history matter to *some* kinds of doing philosophy". In his essay "Two kinds of 'New Historicism' for philosophers" Hacking is interested in how history matters to philosophy as problem solving, as philosophical analysis. Philosophical analysis involves work on concepts and his suggestion is to study words in their sites since he believes that concepts are molded by history (Hacking 1990, p. 358). In other words, that they are not reified, timeless entities but rather words used in particular circumstances (Hacking 1990, p. 359).[24] The use of history that he advocates is again, as in the case of rebutting the tales of translation, localized and concrete. "This is a local historicism, attending to particular and disparate fields of reflection and action. It discourages grand unified accounts, but it does demand taking a look at lots of little facts" (ibid., p. 345).

Considering how words have been used in the course of time does not make Hacking a historian or a philologist. "[T]o use history for the understanding of philosophical problems is not to resign one's birthright to be a philosopher in the Present-Timeless mode" (ibid., p. 362).[25] He continues to be concerned with philosophical problem-solving. Hacking compares his going back to history to Foucault's genealogy which he finds similar, to a certain extent, to Locke's taking a look into the origins of our ideas. This kind of work he calls history of the present (ibid., p. 361) in the sense that it tells us how our present conceptions were made. It is an important kind of work, he thinks, not only because it helps us understand our problems, but also because it helps us understand why they are indeed *problems*.

Hacking, Kuhn, Foucault, Wittgenstein (and Locke)

Hacking's visual metaphor of "taking a look" at history can be compared to Kuhn's "glancing at history" and Foucault's "acuity of a glance". Kuhn, in his paper "The trouble with the historical philosophy of science" (2000b) says that recourse to history requires "no more than a glance" (ibid., p. 116) while

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24   This is a Wittgensteinian idea: "A concept is the technique of using a word" (Wittgenstein 1988, p. 50). Also in PI 383: "We do not analyse a phenomenon (for example thinking) but a concept (for example, that of thinking), and hence the application of a word." For more on this understanding of concepts see Kindi (2012a). The same approach is followed by the intellectual historian Quentin Skinner.

25   Hacking (1990, pp. 346–348) distinguished four attitudes towards the history of philosophy: the *Present-Timeless*, Pen-*Pals*, *Doing-and-Sharing* and *Getting Inside*. The Present-Timeless mode of doing philosophy has no historical sensibilities.

Foucault, in his essay "Nietzsche, genealogy, history" (1984), says that the historical sense "corresponds to the acuity of a glance" (ibid., p. 87). I will argue that the three glances or looks do certainly have differences but raise similar issues which I will try to bring forward in this last section of the paper.

Kuhn restricts recourse to history to merely a glance because he wants to ward off the criticism that was levelled against his model of science which critics thought rested on historical evidence. It had been argued, for instance, that if his model is based on historical evidence, then it is self-refuting since, if what he says about paradigms is correct, the same evidence can be interpreted differently from a different historical paradigm. It was also pointed out that hypotheses about historical facts, as about all empirical facts, are underdetermined by evidence, so Kuhn cannot simply claim that only his view finds empirical support. A third problem concerned the apparently slim evidential base, on which Kuhn purportedly based his model. A few case studies do not yield strong inductive arguments and they are not usually representative. Fourthly, it was feared that the connection with history may lead to relativism and, finally, attention was focused on the gap between the *is* of history and the *ought* of philosophy, which, it is claimed, cannot possibly be bridged.[26]

Given all this criticism, Kuhn was led to maintain that he could derive his model from first principles with history entering only by a glance. He expected that the move to a priori territory would reduce the contingency of his conclusions, making them harder to dismiss, and would block the way to relativism. Kuhn thought that a glance at history will give him all he needs: i.e., the historical perspective which would allow him to view science as a dynamic process. Once he had this perspective, he would then be able to engage in a historically situated comparative evaluation of *change of belief* rather than belief *tout court* (Kuhn 2000b, pp. 112–119). But the historical perspective by itself cannot distinguish, as Kuhn himself admitted, between science and any other developmental process. It seems that, despite the oxymoron, the glance at history needs to be prolonged if it is to contribute to the philosophical study of science. If the glance only helps to suggest a dynamic perspective, then history is not really taken into account in philosophical theorizing. One can get the historical perspective by just considering, completely a priori, that science is an activity that develops over time irrespective of its specific character. One would not even need to conduct historical research to get such an idea. Once science is perceived as undergoing change in time, the dynamic conception will immediately become available (Kindi 2005, pp. 508–510).

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26   More extensive discussion of the criticism that was levelled against Kuhn's use of history can be found in Kindi (2005, pp. 500–504).

So, Kuhn, the person who highlighted the significance of the history of science for philosophy of science came, under the pressure of criticism, to nearly give up on history completely. His glance at history was a move of retreat and capitulation. He never gave up, however, on the significance of developing a historical sensitivity which is gained by doing historical work.[27] His book, *The structure of scientific revolutions* (1970) begins with this famous sentence: "History, if viewed as a repository for more than anecdote or chronology, could produce a decisive transformation in the image of science by which we are now possessed" (ibid., p. 1). His aim, Kuhn says, is to sketch "a quite different concept of science that can emerge from the historical record of the research activity itself" (ibid.) Historical material is not for him evidence for philosophical theses, but rather resource for highlighting discontinuity and difference in the history of science (cf. Kindi 2012b). He combats and undermines the idealized or idealistic conceptions of science found in scientific textbooks.

Foucault speaks of the historical sense which evades metaphysics, i.e., evades the totalizing, suprahistorical perspective which erases change and diversity. This historical sense, Foucault says, corresponds "to the acuity of a glance that distinguishes, separates, and disperses" (1984, p. 87). Foucault's glance is like a scalpel which cuts the seamless continuity, differentiates, splits the unity, disassociates and decomposes. It is the historical sense which is appropriate for genealogy as Nietzsche and Foucault understood it, that is, as a perspective that highlights discontinuity, ruptures and differences. Unlike Kuhn's, Foucault's glance is the historical sense itself and not a glance at history. It seems that, in the case of Kuhn, the historical sense, which emerges from delving into historical cases, takes a flight from the historical details in order to offer philosophy a dynamic perspective of phenomena[28] whereas in Foucault, the historical sense is already available and it is used to cut and separate the historical material in order to serve the philosophical purpose of criticism. Despite this difference, both underscore the significance of historical sensitivity which is exactly the sensitivity for details.

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27   He only insisted that the historical work be separate from the philosophical. "I have myself resisted attempts to amalgamate history and philosophy of science though simultaneously urging increased interaction between the two. History done for the sake of philosophy is often scarcely history at all (Kuhn 1980, p. 183). "I have said repeatedly, and I will say again: you cannot do history *trying* to document, or to explore, or to apply a point of view" (Kuhn 2000c, pp. 313–314 emphasis in the original).

28   "What has for me emerged as essential is not so much the details of historical cases as the perspective or the ideology that attention to historical cases brings with it" (Kuhn 2000a, p. 95).

Foucault, in the essay that Hacking refers to (1984), discusses how he understands Nietzsche's and his own genealogy: "It must record the singularity of events outside monotonous finality; . . . it must be sensitive to their recurrence, not in order to trace the gradual curve of their evolution, but to isolate the different scenes where they engage in different roles" (ibid., p. 76). Foucault's genealogy is not after the purity of the original essence[29] but it collects details (ibid., p. 80), minute deviations (ibid., p. 81), faint traces (ibid.); it looks for accidents, errors and reversals (ibid.). "Genealogy does not pretend to go back in time to restore an unbroken continuity" (ibid.). It disintegrates unity. It does not "discover an identity . . . but a complex system of distinct and multiple elements, unable to be mastered by the powers of synthesis" (ibid., p. 94). It is the kind of history, or philosophy, that, according to Foucault, requires patience (ibid., p. 76) or, according to Hacking, hard work (Hacking 1990, p. 362) or, according to Wittgenstein, slow cure.[30]

Wittgenstein is also interested in highlighting differences for philosophical purposes. In conversation with his student M. O'C. Drury, Wittgenstein said: "I don't think I would get on with Hegel. Hegel seems to me to be always wanting to say that things which look different are really the same. Whereas my interest is in showing that things which look the same are really different. I was thinking of using as a motto for my book a quotation from *King Lear*: 'I'll teach you differences'" (Drury 1984, p. 157). Wittgenstein is interested in attacking an essentialist idea of meaning by bringing forward the multiplicity of ways language is and can be used. He cites real and fictitious examples of linguistic usage in order to show that meaning is not an entity attached to words but a matter of practice that may vary widely. He assembles reminders to bring into relief the great diversity that characterizes the employment of language. And he speaks of perspicuity, another visual metaphor.[31] His other student, the American

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29   "[Genealogy] opposes itself to the search for 'origins'" (Foucault 1984, p. 77; cf. ibid., pp. 79–80).

30   "In philosophizing we may not *terminate* a disease of thought. It must run its natural course, and *slow cure* is all important" (Zettel § 383).

31   Cf. PI §122: "A main source of our failure to understand is that we don't have *an overview* of the use of our words. A surveyable representation produces precisely that kind of understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate links*. The concept of a surveyable representation is of fundamental significance for us. It characterizes the way we represent things, how we look at matters. (Is this a 'Weltanschauung'?)" The German term *übersichtliche Darstellung* which is here translated as 'surveyable representation' was translated in the previous edition of the *Philosophical Investigations* by G. E. M. Anscombe as 'perspicuous representation'.

philosopher, Norman Malcolm records these remarks that Wittgenstein made in a lecture about his philosophical procedure

> What I give is the morphology of the use of an expression. I show that it has kinds of uses of which you had not dreamed. In philosophy one feels *forced* to look at a concept in a certain way. What I do is to suggest, or even invent, other ways of looking at it. I suggest possibilities of which you had not previously thought. You thought there was one possibility, or only two at most. But I made you think of others. Furthermore, I made you see that it was absurd to expect the concept to conform to those narrow possibilities. Thus, your mental cramp relieved, and you are free to look around the field of use of the expression and to describe the different kinds of uses of it (Malcolm 1984, p. 43).

All three thinkers, Kuhn, Foucault and Wittgenstein, show a sensitivity for detail and difference which helps them undermine essentialist and idealist conceptions. Foucault's genealogy "depends on a vast accumulation of source material" (Foucault 1984, pp. 76–77), in order to disintegrate unity (ibid., p. 87) and reject "the metahistorical deployment of ideal signification" (ibid., p. 77). Kuhn attacks an essentialist idea of science. He does it philosophically, but he also summons concrete examples from the history of science to illustrate the different routes science has taken. His aim is to loosen the grip of the ideal image, which insisted on an assumed uniformity of scientific method. Wittgenstein reminds us of facts of our natural history (PI §415) to illustrate the variegated landscape of language use, and Kuhn reminds us of facts of 'scientific history' to bring to view how different research activity has been in different historical contexts.[32] Hacking demands summoning "lots of little facts" to discourage grand unifying accounts (1990, p. 345) in order to understand the vicissitudes in the course of development of our current ideas and problems. Just as Wittgenstein's language games "are meant to throw light on the facts of our language by way not only of similarities, but also of dissimilarities" (PI §130), Kuhn's historical cases are supposed to show (not in the sense of prove) how varied things have been in the past and can also be in the future.

   Hacking says (1990, p. 360) that in studying words in their sites he tries "to display the network of possibilities and constraints that have been built into our present conceptions of chance, determinism, information and control". Wittgenstein also speaks of possibilities. He says that his investigation "is directed towards the '*possibilities*' of phenomena" (PI §90). This means that he

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32   Cf. Kindi 2005, pp. 519–522.

calls to mind the *kinds of statements* that we make in order to clear misunderstandings concerning the use of words, misunderstandings which are brought about by misleading analogies (ibid.). Foucault is also interested in tracing the histories of concepts in order to shatter their unity (Foucault 1984, pp. 87, 89). Identity, he says, is only a mask which covers plurality, "a complex system of distinct and multiple elements" (ibid., p. 94).

These thinkers are not all doing the same thing. There are certainly important differences between them. But one thing they have in common is interest in the compilation of particulars and sensitivity for the differences these particulars illustrate. Even Locke can be made a member of the club with his detailed natural histories which concentrate on diversity. Locke used observations of differences in manners and customs, in beliefs and capacities, to combat the doctrine of innate ideas which were supposed to be common to all. He was genuinely committed to investigating and recording variation rather than explaining it away as error or aberration (Carey 2005, p. 28). Yet, unlike Kuhn and Foucault, he can be credited with a more constructive role. Locke's historical data were meant to be eventually generalized. He accumulated evidence of cultural diversity in order to inductively infer patterns and theories (ibid., p. 26).

For the purpose of highlighting difference, a purpose that the philosophers we consider share, history is particularly suited because concentrating on particulars is constitutive of the discipline itself. History cannot but highlight complexity and difference resisting quick assimilation and conformity to philosophical expectations. It can thus be used to illustrate diversity, an aim crucially important for philosophy which, more often than not tends to favour assimilation, uniformity, pursuit of an atemporal essence.[33] Familiarity with history, taking a look at it, cultivates and sharpens sensitivity for difference, discontinuity and detail.[34] It gives us a mosaic of possibilities.

From this perspective, Hacking's understanding of the relation between history and philosophy meets the doctrine or the practice of New Historicism, a loosely knit school of literary interpretation, influenced in its inception by the presence of Michel Foucault at Berkeley (Greenblatt 1989, p. 1). It is not so popular today, but was very much in vogue when Hacking gave the paper under

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33 A case in point is Kuhn's familiarity with the history of science which led him, as he acknowledged (Kuhn 2000b, pp. 111–112), to question the standard image of science inspired by philosophy and found in textbooks and to develop a variegated conception of scientific activity.

34 Anthropology can also cultivate sensitivity for particulars. Richard Rorty (1991, p. 206) has called anthropologists like Clifford Geertz "connoisseurs of diversity".

consideration here. New Historicism has embraced Ezra Pound's method of "luminous detail" (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000, p. 15) and has shown, according to its founding practitioners, that its most consistent commitment is its commitment to particularity (ibid., p. 19). By inviting historical considerations into criticism, it has combated empty formalism (Veeser 1989, p. xi) and resisted unitary stories (Gallagher and Greenblatt 2000, p. 5) by focusing on anecdotes, idiosyncrasies and what was left out by a more traditional kind of history. It became itself "a history of possibilities" (ibid., p. 16).

Conclusion

In the paper I consider what Hacking thinks about the relation of history and philosophy of science. His whole oeuvre on *chance, probability, cause, person, abuse*, etc, exemplifies what he takes this relation to be, but I have concentrated on his paper "Two kinds of 'New Historicism' for philosophers" because in it he directly discusses the issue. Following Hacking's injunction to take a look at history and study words in their sites, I look at the history of our present conception of history and more particularly at the use of 'history' in Locke since Hacking invites us to follow the 'Lockean imperative'. In an effort to provide a rudimentary history of the present as Foucault and Hacking recommend, I show that 'history' in the early modern period means any kind of detailed inquiry which may result in forming natural histories. Accordingly, Hacking's 'Lockean imperative' should be understood in this spirit, i.e., in the spirit of attending to particulars. Natural histories are today typically classified as science, which shows how complicated the relations of science, philosophy and history are and have been. So, the relation of history to philosophy should not be seen as the merging of two distinct monolithic blocks which have survived intact through the course of time but as a localized affair where emphasis is given to details and differences. This is the approach advocated by thinkers who have influenced Hacking, namely, Kuhn, Wittgenstein and Foucault.

Acknowledgements

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