The book reads like a story, one philosophy bleeds into another. Philosophy is often considered to be the ultimate ‘ivory tower’ discipline along with mathematics. Hegel maintains that with philosophical history the historian must bracket his own preconceptions and go and find the overall sense and the driving ideas out of the very matter of the history considered. Hegel explicitly presents his lectures on the philosophy of history as a theodicy, or a reconciliation of divine providence with the evils of history. This leads Hegel to consider the events of history in terms of universal reason: “That world history is governed by an ultimate design, that it is a rational process this is a proposition whose truth we must assume.”

Hegel's lectures on the philosophy of world history were mainly interested in the cognitivist dimension of historical narrative. With Hayden White this interest was exchanged for an exclusive preoccupation with the literary aspects of the historian's narrative representation of the past. However, it may seem that a revival of pre-Whitean narrativist philosophy of history is at hand. Two recent books suggest as much: one by Chiel van den Akker published in 2018 and one more by Paul Roth that came out in 2020. Obviously, a narrativist revival can take two different forms. It may aim at p