TIME AND NARRATIVE VOLUME 3
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PART IV: NARRATED TIME

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In the current state of the discussion about a philosophy of history, it is usually taken for granted that the only choice is between speculation regarding universal history, in a Hegelian form, or an epistemology of the writing of history, as in French historiography or English-language analytic philosophy of history. A third option, arising from our rumination on the aporias of the phenomenology of time consists in reflecting upon the place of historical time between phenomenological time and the time phenomenology does not succeed in constituting, which we call the time of the world, objective time, or ordinary time.

History initially reveals its creative capacity as regards the refugation of time through its invention and use of certain reflective instruments such as the calendar; the idea of the succession of generations—and, connected to this, the idea of the threefold realm of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors; finally, and above all, in its recourse to archives, documents, and traces. These reflective instruments are noteworthy in that they play the role of connectors between lived time and universal time. In this respect, they bear witness to the poetic function of history insofar as it contributes to solving the aporias of time.

However, their contribution to the hermeneutics of historical consciousness only appears at the end of a reflective inquiry that no longer stems from the epistemology of historical knowledge. For historians, these connectors are, as I said, just intellectual tools. They make use of them without inquiring into their conditions of possibility—or rather, their conditions of significance. These conditions are revealed only if we relate the functioning of these connectors to the aporias of time, something historians as historians need not consider.

What these practical connectors of lived and universal time have in common is that they refer back to the universe the narrative structure I described in Part II of this work. This is how they contribute to the refugation of historical time.

Calendar Time

The time of the calendar is the first bridge constructed by historical practice between lived time and universal time. It is a creation that does not stem exclusively from either of these perspectives on time. Even though it may participate in one or the other of them, its institution constitutes the invention of a third form of time.

This third form of time, it is true, is in many ways only the shadow cast over historians' practice by a vastly larger entity which can no longer appropriately be designated by the name "institutions," and even less by that of "invention." This entity can only be designated broadly and in an approximate fashion by the title "mythic time." Here we are bordering upon a realm that I said we would not enter when I took as the starting point of our investigation into narrative first epic and then historiography. The split between these two narrative modes has already occurred when our analysis begins. Mythic time takes us back before this split, to a point in the problematic of time where it still embraces the totality of what we designate as, on the one hand, the world and, on the other hand, human existence. This mythic time was already present in outline in Plato's conceptual labors in his Timeaus as well as in Aristotle's Physics. We have also referred to its presence in Anaximander's well-known aphorism.¹ We rediscover this mythic time at the origin of the constraints that preside over the constituting of every calendar. We must move back, therefore, before the fragmentation into mortal time, historical time, and cosmic time, a fragmentation that has already taken place when our meditation begins, in order to recall, as myth does, the idea of a "great time" that envelops, to use the word still preserved by Aristotle in his Physics, all reality.² The primary function of this great time is to order the time of societies and of human beings who live in society in relation to cosmic time. This mythic time, far from plunging thought into a night where all cows are black, initiates a unique, overall scansion of time, by ordering in terms of one another cycles of different duration, the great celestial cycles, biological recurrences, and the rhythms of social life. In this way, mythic representations contributed to the institution of calendar time.³ Still less should we neglect, in speaking of mythic representation, the conjunction between myth and ritual.⁴ Indeed, it is through the mediation of ritual that mythic time is revealed to be the common root of world time and human time. Through its periodicity, a ritual expresses a time whose rhythms are broader than those of ordinary action. By punctuating action in this way, it sets ordinary time and each brief human life within a broader time.⁵

If we must oppose myth and ritual, we may say that myth enlarges ordinary time (and space), whereas ritual brings together mythic time and the profane sphere of life and action.

It is easy to see what reinforcement my analysis of the mediating function
of calendar time receives from the sociology and the history of religions. Yet at the same time, we do not want to confuse these two approaches, taking a genetic explanation as equivalent to understanding a meaning, at the price of doing injustice to both of them. Mythic time concerns us as regards certain expressly limiting conditions. Of all its functions, which are perhaps heterogeneous ones, we shall retain only its speculative function bearing on the order of the world. And from the relay station of rituals and festivals, we shall retain only the correspondence they set up, on the practical level, between the order of the world and that of ordinary action. In short, we shall retain from myth and ritual only their contribution to the integration of ordinary time, centered upon the lived experience of active, suffering individuals, into the time of the world outlined by the visible heavens. It is the discernment of the universal conditions of the institution of the calendar that guides our use of information gathered by the sociology and the comparative history of religions, in exchange for the empirical confirmation that these disciplines bring to the slow discerning of the universal constitution of calendar time.

This universal constitution is what makes calendar time a third form of time between psychic time and cosmic time. To sort out the rules of this constitution I will take as my guideline what Emile Benveniste says in his essay “Le langage et l’expérience humaine.” The invention of calendar time seems so original to Benveniste that he gives it a special name, “chronicle time,” as a way of indicating, through the barely disguised double reference to “time,” that “in our view of the world, as in our personal existence, there is just one time, this one” (p. 70). (Note as well the reference to both the world and personal existence.) What is most important for a reflection that might be called transcendental in order to distinguish it from genetic inquiry is that “in every form of human culture and in every age, we find in one way or another an effort to objectify chronicle time. This is a necessary condition of the life of societies as well as of the life of individuals in a society. This socialized time is that of the calendar” (p. 71).

There are three features common to every calendar. Together they constitute the computation of, or division into, chronicle time.

1. A founding event, which is taken as beginning a new era—the birth of Christ or of the Buddha, the Hegira, the beginning of the reign of a certain monarch—determines the axial moment in reference to which every other event is dated. This axial moment is the zero point for computing chronicle time.

2. By referring to the axis defined by the founding event, it is possible to traverse time in two directions: from the past toward the present and from the present toward the past. Our own life is part of the events our vision passes over in either direction. This is why every event can be dated.

3. Finally, we determine “a set of units of measurement that serve to designate the constant intervals between the recurrence of cosmic phenomena” (ibid.). Astronomy helps us determine, although not to enumerate, these cosmic intervals. For example, the day as based on measuring the interval between the rising and setting of the sun, the year as a function of the interval defined by one complete revolution of the sun and the seasons, the month as the interval between two conjunctions of the moon and the sun.

In these three distinctive features of calendar time, we can recognize both an explicit relationship to physical time, which was recognized in antiquity, and implicit borrowings from lived time, which were not very well thematized before Plotinus and Augustine.

The relationship of calendar time to physical time is not difficult to see. Calendar time borrows from physical time those properties that Kant as well as Aristotle saw in it. It is, as Benveniste puts it, “a uniform, infinite continuum, segmentable at will” (p. 70). Drawing upon Kant’s “Analogies of Experience,” as well as Aristotle’s Physics, I would add that insofar as physical time is segmentable at will, it is the source of the idea of an instant in general, stripped of any meaning as the present moment. And as connected to movement and causality, it includes the idea of a direction in the relations of before and after, but pays no attention to the opposition between past and future. It is this directional aspect that allows an observer to regard time in two directions. In this sense, the two-dimensional aspect of observing time presupposes the single direction of the course of events. Finally, as a linear continuum, physical time allows for measurement, that is, it includes the possibility of establishing a correspondence between numbers and equal intervals of time, which are related to the recurrence of natural phenomena. Astronomy is the science that furnishes the laws for such recurrences, through an increasingly exact observation of the periodicity and regularity of astral movement, in particular of the sun and the moon.

But if the computation of calendar time is based [étayé] upon astronomical phenomena that give meaning to the idea of physical time, the principle governing the division of calendar time is not reducible to either physics or astronomy. As Benveniste rightly says, the features common to every calendar “proceed” from the determination of the zero point of some computation.

The borrowing here is from the phenomenological notion of the present as distinct from the idea of any instant in general, which itself is derived from the segmental character of physical time owing to its status as a uniform, infinite, linear continuum. If we did not have the phenomenological notion of the present, as the “today” in terms of which there is a “tomorrow” and a “yesterday,” we would not be able to make any sense of the idea of a new event that breaks with a previous era, inaugurating a course of events wholly different from what preceded it. The same thing applies as regards the bidirectionality of calendar time. If we did not have an actual experience of retention and protention, we would not have the idea of traversing a series of events that have already occurred. What is more, if we did not have the idea of a quasi-
present—that is, the idea that any remembered instant may be qualified as present, along with its own retentions and protentions, in such a way that recollection which Husserl distinguished from mere retention or the recent past (become a retention of retentions), and if the protentions of this quasi-present did not interweave with the retentions of the actual present—we would not have the notion of a traversal in two directions, which Benveniste very aptly speaks of as “from the past toward the present or from the present toward the past” (p. 70). There is no present, and hence neither past nor future, in physical time as long as some instant is not determined as “now,” “today,” hence as present. As for measurement, it is grafted onto the experience Augustine describes so well as the shortening of expectation and the lengthening of memory, and whose description Husserl takes up again with the help of metaphors such as falling away, flowing, and receding, which convey the qualitative differences between near and far away.

However, physical time and psychological time provide only the dual basis of chronicle time. This form of time is a genuine creation that surpasses the resources of both physical and psychological time. The axial moment—from which the other characteristics of chronicle time are derived—is not just an instant in general, nor is it a present moment, even though it does encompass both these things. It is, as Benveniste says, “such an important event that it is taken as giving rise to a new course of events” (p. 71). The cosmic and psychological aspects of time get a new significance from this axial moment. On the one hand, every event acquires a position in time, defined by its distance from the axial moment—a distance measured in years, months, days—or by its distance from some other moment whose distance from the axial moment is known—for example, thirty years after the storming of the Bastille... On the other hand, the events of our own life receive a situation in relation to these dated events. “They tell us in the proper sense of the term where we are in the vast reaches of history, what our place is in the infinite succession of human beings who have lived and of things that have happened” (p. 72, his emphasis). We can thus situate the events of interpersonal life in relation to one another. In calendar time, physically simultaneous events become contemporaneous with one another, anchor points for all the meetings, the mutual efforts, the conflicts that we can say happen at the same time, that is, on the same date. It is also as a function of such dating that religious or civil gatherings can be called together ahead of time.

The originality that the axial moment confers on calendar time allows us to declare this the form of time “external” to physical time as well as to lived time. On the one hand, every instant is a possible candidate for the role of axial moment. On the other hand, nothing about any particular calendar day, taken by itself, says whether it is past, present, or future. The same date may designate a future event, as in the clauses of a treaty, or a past event, as in a chronicle. To have a present, as we have also learned from Benveniste, some-

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one must speak. The present is then indicated by the coincidence between an event and the discourse that states it. To rejoin lived time starting from chronicle time, therefore, we have to pass through linguistic time, which refers to discourse. This is why any date, however complete or explicit, cannot be said to be future or past if we do not know the date of the utterance that pronounces it.

The externality attributed to the calendar in relation to physical time and lived time expresses the specificity of chronicle time and its mediating role between the other two perspectives on time on the lexical plane. It cosmologizes lived time and humanizes cosmic time. This is how it contributes to reinscribing the time of narrative into the time of the world.

These are the “necessary conditions” that all known calendars satisfy. They are brought to light by a transcendental reflection that does not exclude our taking up a historical or a sociological inquiry into the social functions the calendar exercises. Furthermore, so as not to substitute a kind of transcendental positivism for a genetic empiricism, I have tried to interpret these universal constraints as creations exercising a mediating function between two heterogeneous perspectives on time. Transcendental reflection on calendar time thereby finds itself taken up into our hermeneutic of temporality.

THE SUCCESSION OF GENERATIONS
CONTEMPORARIES, PREDECESSORS, AND SUCCESSORS

The second mediation suggested by historians’ practice is that of the succession of generations. With it, the biological basis of the historical third-time succeeds the astronomical one. In return, the idea of a succession of generations finds its sociological projection in the anonymous relationship between contemporaries, predecessors, and successors, to use Alfred Schutz’s apt formula. If the idea of a succession of generations enters the historical field only when it is put in terms of the network of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors, the same idea, conversely, indicates the basis for this anonymous relationship among individuals considered in terms of its temporal dimension. My goal is to disengage from this complex of ideas the new temporal operator that draws its significance from its relation to the major aporia of temporality, to which it replies on another level than that of the calendar. The Heideggerian analytic of Dasein gave us the opportunity to formulate this aporia in terms of an antinomy between mortal and public time. The notion of a succession of generations provides an answer to this antinomy by designating the chain of historical agents as living people who come to take the place of dead people. It is this replacement of the dead by the living that constitutes the third-time characteristic of the notion of a succession of generations.

Recourse to the idea of a generation in the philosophy of history is not new.
Kant made use of this notion in his “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” (1784). It appears precisely at the turning point from the teleology of nature, which disposes human beings toward sociability, to the ethical task that requires the establishment of a civil society. “What will always seem strange,” Kant says in discussing his third thesis, “is that earlier generations appear to carry out their laborious tasks only for the sake of later ones, to prepare for later generations a step from which they in turn can raise still higher the building that nature had in view—that only the most recent generations should have the good fortune to live in the building on which a long sequence of their forefathers (though certainly without any intention of their own) worked, without being able themselves to partake of the prosperity they prepared the way for” (p. 31). There is nothing surprising about this role played by the idea of a generation. It expresses how the ethico-political task is anchored to nature and it connects the notion of human history to that of the human species, which Kant takes for granted.

The enrichment that the concept of a generation brings to the concept of actual history, therefore, is greater than we might have suspected. Indeed, the replacement of the generations underlies in one way or another historical continuity and the rhythm of tradition and innovation. Hume and Comte enjoyed imagining what a society or a generation would be either as replacing another society or generation all at once, instead of doing so by continually replacing the dead with the living, or as something that would never be replaced because it was eternal. According to Karl Mannheim, these two thought experiments, implicitly or explicitly, have always served as a guide in evaluating the phenomenon of the succession of generations.

How does this phenomenon affect history and historical time? From a positive—if not positivist—point of view, the idea of a generation expresses several brute facts about human biology: birth, aging, death. One result of these is another fact, that of the average age for procreation—let us say thirty years—which, in turn, assures the replacement of the dead by the living. This measurement of the average duration of life is expressed in terms of the units of our regular calendar: days, months, years. But this positive point of view, linked to just the quantitative aspects of the notion of a generation, did not seem sufficient to the interpretative sociologists Dilthey and Mannheim, who were especially attentive to the qualitative aspects of social time. They asked what we have to add to the undeniable facts of human biology in order to incorporate the phenomenon of generations into the human sciences. We cannot derive a general law concerning the rhythms of history directly from a biological fact; for example, that youth are progressive by definition and older people conservative, or that the thirty-year figure for the replacement of generations automatically determines the tempo of progress in linear time. In this sense, the simple replacement of generations, in quantitative terms—whereby we count eighty-four generations between Thales and the time when Dilthey was writing—is not equivalent to what we mean by a succession (Folge) of generations.

Dilthey, who came first, was particularly interested in those characteristics that make the concept of a generation an intermediary phenomenon between the “external” time of the calendar and the “internal” time of our mental lives. He distinguishes two uses of the term. On the one hand, that individuals belong to the “same generation”; on the other, the “succession of generations,” a phenomenon that has to be interpreted in terms of the preceding one if it is not to be reducible to the purely quantitative phenomena derived from the notion of an average life-span.

According to Dilthey, contemporaries who have been exposed to the same influences and marked by the same events and changes belong to the same generation. The circle he outlines is thus wider than that of the we-relation but narrower than that of anonymous contemporaneity. This form of belonging together is a whole that combines something acquired and a common orientation. When set within time, this combination of influences received and influences exercised explains what accounts for the specificity of the concept of a “succession” of generations. This is a “chain” or a series arising out of the interlacing of the transmission of what is acquired and the opening of new possibilities.

Karl Mannheim undertook to refine this notion of belonging to the same generation by adding to its biological criteria a sociological criterion of a dispositional kind, which included dispositions as well as propensities to act, feel, and think in a certain way. All contemporaries, in fact, are not submitted to the same influences nor do they all exercise the same influence. In this sense, the concept of a generation requires us to distinguish the kind of belonging together that comes from the localization of belonging to an age class (verwandte Lagerung) from merely belonging to a concrete social “group,” in order to designate those more subtle affinities that are undergone more than they are intentionally and actively sought. And we must characterize the connection between generations (Generationszusammenhang) by prereflective participation in a common destiny as much as by real participation in its recognized directive intentions and formative tendencies.

The notion of a succession of generations, which is the real object of our interest here, ends up enriched by the precisions applied to the notion of belonging to the same generation. Already for Dilthey, this notion constitutes an intermediary structure between physical externality and the psychic internality of time, and makes history a “whole bound together by continuity” (p. 38). So we rediscover on the intermediary level of the succession of generations the historical equivalent of the interconnectedness (Zusammenhang), taken in the sense of a motivational connection, that is the major concept of Dilthey’s comprehensive psychology.
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Mannheim, in turn, saw how social dynamics depended upon the modes of interconnecting the generations, taken at the level of potential "localizations" in social space. Some fundamental features of this successive interconnection were the focus of his attention. First, the constant arrival of new bearers of culture and the continual departure of others; two features that, taken together, create the conditions for a compensation between rejuvenation and aging. Next, the stratification of age classes at a given moment. The compensation between rejuvenation and aging thus takes place in each temporal division of the period defined arithmetically through the average life-span. A new concept, an "enduring" concept, of a generation follows from this combination of replacement (which is successive) and stratification (which is simultaneous). Whence the character of what Mannheim called the dialectic of the phenomena included in the term "generation"—not just the confrontation between heritage and innovation in the transmitting of the acquired culture but also the impact of the questions of youth on older people's certainties, acquired during their own youths. Upon this retroactive compensation, this remarkable reciprocal action, rest, in the final analysis, the continuity in the change of generations, along with all the degrees of conflict this change gives rise to.

The idea of the "realm of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors," introduced by Alfred Schutz, constitutes, as I have said, the sociological complement to the idea of the succession of generations, which, in return, gives the former term a biological basis. What is important about this is how it allows us to discern the significance of the anonymous time that is constituted at the turning point between phenomenological and cosmic time.

The great merit of Alfred Schutz's work is his having considered simultaneously the work of both Edmund Husserl and Max Weber and to have drawn an original sociology from social existence in its anonymous dimension.

The major interest of a phenomenology of social existence lies in exploring the transitions leading from the direct experience of the "we" to the anonymity characteristic of the everyday social world. In this sense, Schutz interweaves the genetic phenomenology and the phenomenology of intersubjectivity which were poorly tied together in the work of Husserl. Phenomenological sociology, for Schutz, is largely a genetic constitution of anonymity, instituted on the basis of an underlying instituting intersubjectivity—from the "we," as directly experienced, to the anonymous, which mostly escapes our awareness. The progressive enlargement of the sphere of direct interpersonal relationships to include anonymous relationships affects every temporal relation between past, present, and future. In fact, the direct relationship of the I to the Thou and to the We is temporally structured from its very beginning. We are oriented, as agents and sufferers of actions, toward the remembered past, the lived present, and the anticipated future of other people's behavior. Applied to the temporal sphere, the genesis of the meaning of "anonymity" will therefore consist in deriving from the triad of present, past, and future, characteristic of the direct interpersonal relationship, the triad of the realm of contemporaries, the realm of predecessors, and the realm of successors. It is the anonymity of this threefold realm that provides the mediation we are seeking between private and public time.

As regards the first figure of anonymous time, the realm of contemporaries, the originary phenomenon is that of a simultaneous development of several temporal streams. The "simultaneity or quasi-simultaneity of the other self's consciousness with my own" (Schutz, p. 143) is the most basic presupposition of the genesis of meaning of the historical field. Here Schutz proposes a particularly apt expression: we share "a community of time," "we are growing old together" (p. 163). Simultaneity is not something purely instantaneous. It brings into relationship two enduring individuals (if, with Spinoza, we understand duration as "the indefinite continuance of existence"). One temporal stream accompanies another, so long as they endure together. The experience of a shared world thus depends on a community of time as well as of space.

Upon this simultaneity of two distinct streams of consciousness is built up the anonymous contemporaneity characteristic of everyday social existence, a contemporaneity that extends well beyond the field of interpersonal, face-to-face relations. The genius of Schutz's phenomenology is that it traces out the transitions leading from "growing old together" to this anonymous contemporaneity. If, in the direct we-relation, the symbolic mediations are weakly thematized, the passage to anonymous contemporaneity indicates an increase in them in inverse proportion to the decrease in immediacy. Interpretation thus appears as a remedy for the increasing loss of immediacy: "We make the transition from direct to indirect social experience simply by following this spectrum of decreasing vividness" (p. 177). This mediation includes Max Weber's ideal-types: "when I am They-oriented, I have 'types' for partners" (p. 185). In fact, we only reach our contemporaries through the typified roles assigned to them by institutions. The world of mere contemporaries, like that of our predecessors, is made up of a gallery of characters who are not and who never will be individuals. At best, the post-office employee, for example, reduces to a "type," a role which I respond to while expecting her to distribute the mail correctly. Contemporaneity here has lost its aspect of being a shared experience. Imagination entirely replaces the experience of mutual engagement. Inference has replaced immediacy. The contemporary is not given in a pre-predicative mode.

The conclusion as regards our own inquiry is that the very relation of contemporaneity is a mediating structure between the private time of individual fate and the public time of history, thanks to the equations encompassing con-
temporaneity, anonymity, and understanding based on ideal-types. “My mere contemporary ... is one whom I know coexists with me in time but whom I do not experience immediately” (p. 181). 21

It is regrettable that Schutz does not pay as much attention to the world of predecessors as he does to the world of contemporaries. 22 There are a few comments, however, that do allow us to take up again what was said above concerning the succession of generations. In fact, the frontier is not so easy to trace as it might seem between individual memory and that past before any memory which is the historical past. Absolutely speaking, my predecessors are those people none of whose experiences are contemporary with my own. In this sense, the world of predecessors is one that existed before my birth, and I cannot influence it by any form of interaction taking place in a common present. Nevertheless, there does exist a partial overlapping between memory and the historical past that contributes to the constitution of an anonymous time, halfway between private time and public time. The canonical example in this regard is that of a narrative received from the mouth of one of our ancestors. My grandfather might have told me during my youth of events concerning people whom I could never have known. Here the frontier that separates the historical past from individual memory is porous, as can be seen in the history of the recent past—a slippery genre to be sure—which blends together the testimony of surviving witnesses and documentary traces detached from their authors. 23 An ancestor’s memory partly intersects with his descendants’ memories, and this intersection is produced in a common present that itself can present every possible degree, from the intimacy of a we-relationship to the anonymity of a newspaper clipping. In this way, a bridge is constructed between the historical past and memory by the ancestral narrative that serves as a relay station for memory directed to the historical past, conceived of as the time of people now dead and the time before my own birth.

If we proceed along this chain of memories, history tends to become a we-relationship, extending in continuous fashion from the first days of humanity to the present. This chain of memories is, on the scale of the world of predecessors, what the retention of retentions is on the scale of individual memory. But it must also be said that a narrative told by an ancestor already introduces the mediation of signs and thus leans toward the side of the silent mediation of the document and the monument that makes knowledge of the historical past something completely different than a giant-sized memory, just as the world of contemporaries is distinguished from the we-relationship through the anonymity of its mediations. 24 This feature authorizes the conclusion that “the stream of history includes anonymous events” (p. 231).

To conclude, I would like to draw two consequences from the connecting role that the idea of a succession of generations, joined to that of the network of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors, plays between phenomenological time and cosmological time.

The first has to do with the place of death in the writing of history. In history, death bears an eminently ambiguous signification that mixes together the intimacy of each person’s death and a reference to the public character of the replacement of the dead by the living. These two references meet in the idea of anonymous death. Under the saying “they die,” the historian recognizes death obliquely and only to go immediately beyond it.

Death is so intended, for example, in the sense that the replacement of generations is the euphemism by which we signify that the living take the place of the dead. Thanks to this oblique intention, the idea of a generation is the insistent reminder that history is the history of mortals. But death is also thereby superseded. For history, there are only roles always left in escheat and then assigned to new actors. In history, death, as the end of every individual life, is only dealt with by allusion, to the profit of those entities that outlast the cadavers—a people, nation, state, class, civilization. Yet death cannot be eliminated from the historian’s field of attention if history is not to lose its historical quality. 25 Thus we have the mixed, ambiguous notion of anonymous death. Is this not an unbearable concept? Yes, if we deplore the inauthenticity of the “they.” No, if we discern in the anonymity of death the very mark of that anonymity, not just postulated but established by historical time at the sharpest point of the collision between mortal and public time. Anonymous death is, as it were, the central point of the whole conceptual network that includes the notions of contemporaries, predecessors, successors, and, as a background to them, a succession of generations.

The second, even more noteworthy consequence will not take on its full meaning until it is helped along by the following analysis of the trace. It has less to do with the biological side of the idea of the succession of generations than with the symbolic side of the related idea of the realm of contemporaries, predecessors, and successors. Ancestors and successors are others, infused with an opaque symbolism whose figure comes to occupy the place of an Other, wholly Other, than mortals. 26 One thing that bears witness to this is the representation of the dead, not just as absent from history, but as shadows haunting the historical present. Another thing is the representation of future humanity as immortal, as can be seen in numerous Enlightenment thinkers. For example, in Kant’s “Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Intent” (1784), the commentary already partially cited earlier on the third thesis ends with the following affirmation, which we are asked to accept “no matter how puzzling this is.” It is “nonetheless equally as necessary once one assumes that one species of animal should have reason and that as a class of rational beings—each member of which dies, while the species is immortal—it is destined to develop its capacities to perfection.” 27 This representation of
an immortal humanity, which Kant here raises to the rank of a postulate, is the symptom of a deeper symbolic function through which we intend a more human Other, whose lack we fill through the figure of our ancestors, the icon of the immemorial, along with that of our successors, the icon of hope. It is this symbolic functioning that the notion of a trace has to make more clear.

Archives, Documents, Traces

The notion of a trace constitutes a new connector between the temporal perspectives that speculation arising out of phenomenology, especially Heideggerian phenomenology, dissociates. A new connector, perhaps the final one. In fact, the notion of a trace becomes thinkable only if we can succeed in discovering in it what is required by everyone of those productions of the historian's practice that reply to the aporias of time for speculation.

That the trace, for historical practice, is such a requirement can be shown if we examine the thought process that begins with the notion of archives, moves on to that of a document (and, among documents, eyewitness testimony), and then reaches its final epistemological presupposition: the trace. Our reflection on historical consciousness will begin its own second-order investigation from this final requirement.

What do we mean by archives?

If we open the Encyclopaedia Universalis and the Encyclopaedia Britannica to this term “archives,” in the former we read, “archives are constituted by the set of documents that result from the activity of an institution or of a physical or moral person.” 28 The latter says that “the term archives designates the organized body of records produced or received by a public, semipublic, institutional, business or private entity in the transaction of its affairs and preserved by it, its successors or authorized repository through extension of its original meaning as the repository for such materials.” 29

These two definitions and their development in these two encyclopedia articles allow us to isolate three characteristics: first, the reference to the notion of a document (or “record”). Archives are a set, an organized body of documents. Next, comes the relationship to an institution. Archives are said, in the one case, to result from institutional activity; in the other, they are said to be produced by or received by the entity for which the documents in question are the archives. Finally, putting documents produced by an institution (or its juridical equivalent) into archives has the goal of conserving or preserving them. The Encyclopaedia Universalis adds in this regard that, unlike libraries, archives constituted of gathered-together documents, “are only conserved documents,” although it modifies this distinction by adding that some discrimination is unavoidable—what should be conserved, what thrown away?—even if this choice is made only in terms of the presumed usefulness of the documents, and hence of the activity they stem from. The Encyclopaedia Bri-

tannica says, in a similar sense, that conservation makes archives an “authorized deposit” through the stipulations that spell out the definition of the goals of the institution under consideration.

Therefore the institutional character of archives is affirmed three times. Archives constitute the documentary stock of an institution. It is a specific activity of this institution that produces them, gathers them, and conserves them. And the deposit thereby constituted is an authorized deposit through some stipulation added to the one that sets up the entity for which the archives are “archives.”

A sociological interpretation might legitimately be grafted to this institutional character, denouncing, if the need should arise, the ideological character of the choice that presides over the apparently innocent operation of conserving these documents and that betrays the stated goal of this operation.

However, this is not the direction in which our investigation leads us. Instead we must turn toward the notion of a document (or record) contained in the initial definition of archives and to the notion of a trace implicitly contained in the notion of a deposit.

In the notion of a document the accent today is no longer placed on the function of teaching which is conveyed by the etymology of this word—it is derived from the Latin docere, and in French there is an easy transition from enseignement (teaching) to renseignement (information); rather the accent is placed on the support, the warrant a document provides for a history, a narrative, or an argument. This role of being a warrant constitutes material proof, what in English is called “evidence,” for the relationship drawn from a course of events. If history is a true narrative, documents constitute its ultimate means of proof. They nourish its claim to be based on facts. 30

Criticism of this notion of a document may take place on several levels. At an elementary epistemological level, it has become banal to emphasize that any trace left by the past becomes a document for historians as soon as they know how to interrogate its remains, how to question them. In this respect, the most valuable traces are the ones that were not intended from our information. Historians’ interrogations are guided by the theme chosen to guide their inquiries. This first approach to the notion of a document is a familiar one. As I said in Part II, in volume I, the search for documents has continued to annex zones of information more and more distant from the type of documents lying in already constituted archives; that is, documents that were conserved because of their presumed usefulness. Anything that can inform a scholar, whose research is oriented by a reasonable choice of questions, can be a document. Such critical inquiry at this first level leads to the notion of involuntary testimony, Marc Bloch’s “witnesses in spite of themselves.” Rather than calling into question the epistemological status of documents, it enlarges their field. 31

A second level of criticism for the notion of a document is contemporaneous with the quantitative history discussed in volume I. The relationship
between documents and monuments has served as the touchstone of this criticism. As Jacques Le Goff reminds us in an insightful article in the *Encyclopedia Einaudi*, archives were for a long time designated by the term “monument.” For example, the *Monumenta Germaniae Historica*, which date from 1826. The development of positivist history at the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries marked the triumph of the document over the monument. What makes a monument suspect, even though it often is found *in situ*, is its obvious finality, its commemoration of events that its contemporaries—especially the most powerful among them—judged worthy of being integrated into the collective memory. Conversely, the document, even though it is collected and not simply inherited, seems to possess an objectivity opposed to the intention of the monument, which is meant to be edifying. The writings in archives were thus thought to be more like documents that like monuments. For criticism directed against ideology, which prolongs the criticism mentioned above concerning the setting up of archives, documents turn out to be no less instituted than monuments are, and no less edifying as regards power and those in power. A criticism is born that takes as its task to discover the monument hiding behind the document, a more radical form of criticism than the critique of authenticity that assured the victory of the document over the monument. This new form of criticism directs its attack against the conditions of historical production and its concealed or unconscious intentions. In this sense we must say with Le Goff that once its apparent meaning is demystified, “the document is a monument” (p. 46).

Must we, then, give up seeing in contemporary historiography, with its data banks, its use of computers and information theory, its constituting of series (using the model of serial history), an enlargement of our collective memory? This would be to break with the notions of a trace and the testimony of the past. However difficult the notion of a collective memory may be, particularly when it does not openly carry its credentials with it, to reject it would be to announce the suicide of history. In fact, the substitution of a new science of history for our collective memory rests upon an illusion about documents that is not fundamentally different from the positivist illusion it thinks it is combating. The data in a data bank are suddenly crowned with a halo of the same authority as the document cleansed by positivist criticism. The illusion is even more dangerous in this case. As soon as the idea of a debt to the dead, to people of flesh and blood to whom something really happened in the past, stops giving documentary research its highest end, history loses its meaning. In its epistemological naiveté, positivism at least preserved the significance of the document, namely, that it functions as a trace left by the past. Cut off from that significance, the datum becomes truly insignificant. The scientific use of data stored in and manipulated by a computer certainly gives birth to a new kind of scholarly activity. But this activity constitutes only a long methodological detour destined to lead to an enlargement of our collective memory in its encounter with the monopoly exercised over speech by the powerful and the clergy. For history has always been a critique of social narratives and, in this sense, a rectification of our common memory. Every documentary revolution lies along this same trajectory.

If therefore neither the documentary revolution nor the ideological critique of the document/monument reaches the actual basis of the function of the document as informing us about the past and enlarging the scope of our collective memory, the source of the authority of the document, as an instrument of this memory, is the significance attached to the trace. If archives can be said to be instituted, and their documents are collected and conserved, this is so on the basis of the presupposition that the past has left a trace, which has become the monuments and documents that bear witness to the past. But what does it mean “to leave a trace”?

Here historians put their trust in common sense, and, we are about to see, they are not wrong in doing so. Littré gives as the first sense of the word “trace”: “vestige that a human being or an animal has left on the place where it passed.” Then he notes the more general usage: “any mark left by a thing.” Through generalization, the vestige becomes a mark. At the same time, the origin of a trace is extended from a human being or an animal to anything whatever. On the other hand, the idea of being past has disappeared. All that remains is the remark that the trace is “left behind.” Here is the heart of the paradox. On the one hand, the trace is visible here and now, as a vestige, a mark. On the other hand, there is a trace (or track) because “earlier” a human being or an animal passed this way. Something did something. Even in language as we use it, the vestige or mark “indicates” the pastness of the passage, the earlier occurrence of the streak, the groove, without “showing” or bringing to appearance “what” passed this way. Note the apt homonymy between “passed” [être passé] (in the sense of having passed a certain place) and “past” [être passé] (in the sense of having happened). This is not surprising. Augustine’s Confessions have made us familiar with the metaphor of time as a passage: the present as an active transit and a passive transition; once the passage has taken place, the past falls behind. It passed this way. And we say that time itself passes. Where then is the paradox? In the fact that the passage no longer is but the trace remains. Recall Augustine’s perplexity over the idea of the vestigial image as something that remains (manet) in the mind.

Historians confine themselves to this preunderstanding familiar to ordinary language, which J. L. Austin so admired because he saw in it a storehouse for the most appropriate forms of expression. More precisely, historians stand halfway between the initial definition of a trace and its extension to a thing. People from the past left these vestiges. However they are also the products of their activities and their work, hence they are those things Heidegger speaks of as subsisting and at hand (tools, dwellings, temples, tombs, writings) that
have left a mark. In this sense, to have passed this way and to have made a mark are equivalent. "Passage" is a better way of speaking about the dynamics of a trace, while "mark" is a better way of indicating its static aspect.

Let us explore the implications of this first sense as they profit history. Someone passed by here. The trace invites us to pursue it, to follow it back, if possible, to the person or animal who passed this way. We may lose the trail. It may even disappear lead nowhere. The trace can be wiped out, for it is fragile and needs to be preserved intact; otherwise, the passage did occur but did not leave a trace, it simply happened. We may know by other means that people or animals existed somewhere, but they will remain forever unknown if there is not some trace that leads to them. Hence the trace indicates "here" (in space) and "now" (in the present), the past passage of living beings. It orients the hunt, the quest, the search, the inquiry. But this is what history is. To say that it is a knowledge by traces is to appeal, in the final analysis, to the significance of a passed past that nevertheless remains preserved in its vestiges.

The implications of the broader meaning—the sense of a mark—are no less suggestive. It first suggests the idea of a harder, more durable support than the transitory activity of human beings. In particular, it is because humans worked, and committed something to stone, or bone, or baked clay tablets, or papyrus, or paper, or recording tape, or computer's memory, that their works outlive their working. People pass, their works remain. But they remain as things among other things. This "thing-like" character is important for our investigation. It introduces a relationship of cause to effect between the marking thing and the marked thing. So the trace combines a relation of significance, best discerned in the idea of a vestige, and a relation of causality, included in the thing-likeness of the mark. The trace is a sign-effect. These two systems of relations are interwoven. On the one hand, to follow a trace is to reason by means of causality about the chain of operations constitutive of the action of passing by. On the other hand, to return from the mark to the thing that made it is to isolate, among all the possible causal chains, the ones that also carry the significance belonging to the relationship of vestige to passage.

This double allegiance of the trace, far from betraying an ambiguity, constitutes the trace as the connection between two areas of thought and, by implication, between two perspectives on time. To the same extent that the trace marks the passage of an object or a quest in space, it is in calendar time and, beyond it, in astral time that the trace marks a passage. This is the condition for the trace, as conserved and no longer in the process of being laid down, to become a dated document.

This connection between trace and dating allows us to take up again the problem left unresolved by Heidegger of the relationship between the fundamental time of Care, the temporality directed toward the future and toward death, and "ordinary" time, conceived of as a succession of abstract instants.

I would like to show that the trace brings about this relationship, which

phenomenology seeks in vain to understand and to interpret relying only on the temporality of Care.

It was not, as we have seen, that Heidegger was unaware of the problem. His criticism of Dilthey's claim to give the human sciences an autonomous epistemological status not grounded in the ontological structure of historicality begins precisely from the inability of historiography to account for "pastness" as past.37 Furthermore, the phenomenon of the trace is explicitly taken by Heidegger as the touchstone for the enigma of pastness. However, the answer he proposes to this enigma redoubles it rather than resolves it. Heidegger is certainly correct when he states that what no longer is, is the world within which these "remains" once belonged, as equipment. As he says, "That world is no longer. But what was formerly within-the-world with respect to that world, that which is now still present at hand can belong nevertheless to the 'past'..."38 This text defines adequately what we mean by "remains of the past," or, in other words, by a trace. But what do we gain by refusing the predicate "past" (vergangen) to Dasein, limiting it to those beings qualified as subsistent and manipulable, while reserving for the Dasein of earlier times the predicate "having-been-there" (da-gewesen)? Recall Heidegger's unambiguous statement in this regard: "A Dasein which no longer exists, however, is not past [vergangen], in the ontologically strict sense; it is rather 'havingbeen-there' [da-gewesen]" (ibid.). What, we shall ask, are we to understand by a Dasein—a "being-there"—that had been there previously? Is it not precisely on the basis of the "remains" of the past that we assign this qualification to the being we ourselves are? Heidegger glimpses something of this mutual relationship when he adds an important corrective to his clear distinction between da-gewesen and vergangen. Indeed, it is not sufficient just to distinguish these two terms, we have to sketch the genesis of the meaning of the second beginning from the first. We must say that the historical character of Dasein is in a way transferred to some subsisting, manipulable things so that they count as traces. The aspect of being an implement that is still attached to these remains of the past is then said to be historical in a secondary sense.39 We have only to forget this filiation of the secondary sense of "historical" to form the idea of something that would be "past" as such. "Historical" in the primary sense preserves the relation to the future and the present. For "historical" in the secondary sense this fundamental structure of temporality is lost sight of and we begin to pose unsolvable questions concerning the "past as such." Furthermore, the restitution of this filiation of meaning allows us to account for what Heidegger calls the "world-historical" (weltgeschichtlich). The remains of the past, with their equipment-like character, constitute the leading example of what is world-historical. In fact, these remains are themselves what seem to be the carriers of the signification "past."

But can we avoid anticipating the problematic of within-time-ness at the very heart of the problem of historicality if we are to account for this derived
form of historicality? These anticipations would indicate some progress in our interpretation of the phenomenon of the trace only if, as I suggested in my analysis of Being and Time, we can give the idea of the “origin” (Herkunft) of the derived forms of temporality the value not of a decrease but of an increase in meaning. This at least seems to be what is implied by the introduction of the notion of the world-historical at the very heart of the analysis of historicity.

The phenomenon of the trace—along with the phenomena of ruins, remains, and documents—thus finds itself displaced from the historical toward the intratemporal, that which is “within-time.”

Would we then have a better account of the trace if we took account of the surplus of meaning “within-time-ness” brings to historicity? There can be no doubt that the notions of datable, public, and extensive time are essential to deciphering the “traces” of the past. To follow a trace, to retrace it, is to bring into play in one way or another each of the characteristics of within-time-ness. This is surely the stage where Heidegger would have wished to situate this operation. However, I do not think he would have succeeded in doing so without making further loans from “ordinary time,” taken as a simple leveling off of within-time-ness. Indeed, it does not seem to me that he could ever account for the significance of the trace without associating ordinary time and within-time-ness. The time of the trace, it seems to me, is homogeneous with calendar time.

Heidegger comes close to recognizing this when he suggests that “remains, monuments, and records that are still present-at-hand, are possible ‘material’ for the concrete disclosure of the Dasein which has been-there” (p. 446; his emphasis). But nothing more is said about the status of this “material” other than the reiterated affirmation that only its world-historical character allows such material to exercise a historiographical function. We cannot make more progress in our analysis of the trace unless we show how the operations proper to the historian’s practice, relative to monuments and documents, contribute to forming the notion of “the Dasein which has been there.” This brings about the convergence of a purely phenomenological notion with historiographical procedures, all of which can be referred to the act of following or retraceing a trace, can only be carried out within the framework of a historical time that is neither a fragment of stellar time nor a simple aggrandizement of the communal dimensions of the time or personal memory; this is a hybrid time, issuing from the confluence of two perspectives on time—the phenomenological perspective and that of ordinary time, to use the Heideggerian terminology.

If, however, we are to give equal rights to the time of Care and to universal time, we have to renounce seeing in the latter a “leveling off” of the least authentic forms of temporality.

This composite constitution of the significance of a trace finally allows us to give a less negative twist to Heidegger’s estimation of the categories of history. If he gave up completing his thesis about the subordination of historiography to historicity by an inverse analysis of the procedures by which historiography provides the “material” of historicity, it was because, for him, in the last analysis, historiography is situated on the fault line between within-time-ness and ordinary time. He can even concede that “the ordinary representation of time has its natural justification” (p. 478), but the mark of falleness stamped upon it by hermeneutic phenomenology is an indelible one. Historiography, in this sense, must always be poorly grounded.

This would no longer be the case if the operators that historiography brings into play—whether the calendar or the trace—were dealt with as actual creations, stemming from the interweaving of the phenomenological perspective and the cosmic perspective on time, perspectives that cannot be coordinated with each other on the speculative level.

The idea of a connection stemming from historians’ actual practice allows us to go even further than this simple assertion of a mixture of attraction and repulsion between these two perspectives, as I indicated at the end of my inquiry into the Heideggerian conception of time. These connectors add the idea of a mutual overlapping or even of a mutual exchange that makes the fault line upon which history is established a line of sutures. This exchange along the frontiers of our two perspectives on time can take on the extreme forms of either a negotiated collision or a rule-governed mutual contamination. If the calendar illustrates the first form, the trace stems from the second one. Let us begin by considering the calendar again. If we abstract from the immense labor that goes into the constituting of the calendar, we are left with the collision resulting from the heterogeneity of our two perspectives on time. The oldest forms of human wisdom call this to our attention. Elegies about the human condition, modulating between lamentation and resignation, have always sung of the contrast between time which remains and who pass on. Would we so deprecate the brevity of life if it did not appear against the background of the immense scope of time? This contrast is the most moving form that the mutual movement of separation can take, thanks to which, on the one hand, the time of Care tears itself away from the fascination of a time impervious to our mortality, and, on the other hand, the time of the stars turns us toward contemplating the sky rather than thinking about the sting of our immediate preoccupations and even our own death. Yet the construction of the calendar is then completed by the making of clocks. These govern all our meetings, which come about owing to our common concerns, on the basis of measures of time that show no care for us. This does not prevent some of our clocks, however, from having written on their faces a mournful memento mori. With this reminder and this warning, forgetfulness of one figure of time brings to mind the forgetfulness of the other figure.

The trace illustrates the inverted form of the exchange between the two figures of time, that of a mutual contamination. We had a presentiment of this
phenomenon in our discussion of the three major features of within-time-ness: datability, the lapse of time, and its public character. Recall that I already suggested there the idea of an “overlapping” of the existential and the empirical.\textsuperscript{41} The trace consists in this overlapping.

In the first place, to follow a trace is one way of “reckoning with time.” How could the trace left in space refer back to the passage of the sought-for object without our calculations concerning the time that passed between them, that is, between the passage and the trace it left? Immediately then, datability with its “now,” “then,” “earlier,” and so on, is brought into play. However, no hunters or detectives would limit themselves to these vague references. Datability without a specific date is of no interest to them. Rather it is with watch in hand that they follow the trace—or with a calendar in their bag that they retrace it. Next, to follow a trace, to retrace it, is to decipher, in space, the “stretching along” of time. How can we do this, though, unless right away we calculate and measure the lapse of time? The trajectory of the passage, like the tracing of the trace, is relentlessly linear. The significance of the trace has to be reconstituted in terms of successive time, even if it is not contained in some pure succession. Finally, the trace, as visible to everyone, even if it can only be deciphered by a few, projects our preoccupation, as illustrated by our hunt, search, or inquiry, into public time which makes our private durations commensurate with one another. The seriousness of our preoccupation—so well expressed by the term “circumpection”—does not betray any failure here that would further aggravate the dereliction that our blindness has already brought us to. On the contrary, if we are willing to be guided by the trace, we must be capable of that letting-go, that abnegation that makes care about oneself efface itself before the trace of the other. However we must always take the inverse trajectory too. If the significance of the trace depends on the computations inscribed in ordinary time, just as the trace itself is inscribed in geometrical space, this significance is not exhausted by the relations of successive time. As I said above, this significance consists in the reference back from the vestige to the passage, a reference that requires the quasi-instantaneous synthesis of the print left here and now, and the event that occurred.

That this significance, in turn, distances us from Heidegger’s critique of ordinary time, I willingly grant—and all the more so because I have borrowed the very expression “the significance of the trace,” not from Heidegger but from Emmanuel Lévinas, in his noteworthy essay on this topic.\textsuperscript{42} However, my borrowings from Lévinas can be only indirect and must appear biased to him. He speaks of the trace in the context of the epiphany of the face. His interrogation, therefore, is not directed at the historian’s past but at, if I may put it this way, the past of the moralist. What, he asks, is the past before history, the past of the Other, for which there is no unveiling, no manifestation, not even an icon? Is the trace, the significance of the trace, what assures Entry and Visitation without revelation? This significance escapes the alternation of unveiling and concealment, the dialectic of revealing and hiding, because the trace for Lévinas signifies something without making it appear. It is compelling but not revealing. Lévinas’s perspective, therefore, is very different from my own as regards the trace. And yet . . .

Yet I cannot overestimate how much my investigation of the role of the trace in the problematic of the role of reference in history owes to this magnificent meditation. Essentially, it owes to it the idea that a trace is distinguished from all the signs that get organized into systems, because it disarranges some “order.” The trace is “this disarrangement expressing itself” (p. 63). The trace left by a wild animal disarranges the vegetation of the forest: “the relationship between signified and signification, in the trace, is not one of correlation but one of unrightness” (p. 59). I am aware that in saying this Lévinas places the absent outside of any memory, assigning it to an immemorial past. The impact of his meditation on my analysis, however, is that it underlines the strangeness of the trace which “is not a sign like others” (p. 60), inasmuch as it is always a passage that it indicates, not some possible presence. His remark also holds for the historian’s trace/sign: “hence taken as a sign, the trace still has this as exceptional about it in relation to other signs: it signifies beyond any intention of giving a sign and beyond every project for which it may have been the intended object” (ibid.). Is this not what Marc Bloch designated as “witnesses in spite of themselves”?

I do not wish to bring down to the level of historical immannence this meditation on the trace wholly dedicated to a “past that has absolutely taken place,” “a past more distant than any past and any future which are still ordered in terms of my own time . . . toward the past of the Other where eternity is indicated, an absolute past that reunites every time” (p. 63). I would rather leave open the possibility that in the last analysis there is a relative Other, a historical Other; that in some way the remembered past is meaningful on the basis of an immemorial past. Perhaps this is the possibility that literature holds open when some “tale about time” points to some form of eternity.\textsuperscript{43} Who knows what underground connections may attach this literature to the infinity of the absolute Other, in Lévinas’s sense, an absolute Other whose trace appears in the visage of other people? However that may be, the connection between my analysis and Lévinas’s meditation may be summed up as follows: the trace signifies something without making it appear.

The trace is thus one of the more enigmatic instruments by means of which historical narrative “refigures” time. It refigures time by constructing the junction brought about by the overlapping of the existential and the empirical
in the significance of the trace. Indeed, historians, as historians, do not know what they are doing when they constitute signs as traces. With regard to such traces, they stand in a relationship of usage. It is in frequenting archives and consulting documents that historians look for the trace of the past as it actually occurred. The problem of what the trace as such signifies is not the historian's but the philosopher's.

5

Fiction and Its Imaginative Variations on Time

Our task here is to think of the world—or rather the worlds—of fiction in counterpoint to the historical world, insofar as this relates to the resolution of the aporias of temporality brought to light by phenomenology.

In volume 2 I introduced the concept of imaginative variations, which will guide our analyses in this chapter, to characterize in terms of one another the diverse fictive experiences of time set forth in our discussions of Mrs. Dalloway, Der Zauberberg, and A la recherche du temps perdu. But there we confined ourselves to using this concept without being able to analyze it. This was so for two reasons. First, we still lacked a fixed term of comparison in relation to which the fictive experiences of time are imaginative variations, not just in relation to one another but simply as fictions. This fixed term was recognized only at the end of our analysis of the constitution of historical time through the reinscription of phenomenological time on cosmic time. This phenomenon of reinscription is the invariant with respect to which our tales about time appear as imaginative variations. In addition, this contrast lacked the background against which it could stand out, namely, the aporetic of time, which provided the opening for this third volume. I want to stress the role of this third partner in our three-way conversation. It is not enough to oppose, term by term, such imaginative variations on time to the fixed constitution of historical time; we must also be able to say to what common aporias the variable constitution of fictive time and the invariable constitution of historical time provide a different response. Without this common reference to the aporias of temporality, historical time and the imaginative variations produced by our tales about time would remain disconnected from one another and strictly speaking would be incomparable with one another.

THE NEUTRALIZATION OF HISTORICAL TIME

The most visible but not necessarily the most decisive feature in the opposition between fictive time and historical time is the emancipation of the nar-


54. I am adopting here the distinction made by Hervé Barreau in La Construction de la notion de temps (Strasbourg: Atelier d'impression du Département de Physique, 1985).


56. Toulmin and Goodfield cite a poem by John Donne deploiring "the world's proportion disfigured" (ibid., p. 77).

57. Ibid., pp. 141–70.

58. Ibid., pp. 197–229.

59. Ibid., p. 251.

60. The full significance of this paradox is revealed only when narrative, understood as a mimesis of action, is taken as the criterion for this meaning.


62. The discontinuity between a time without a present and a time with a present does not seem to me to be incompatible with C. F. von Weizsäcker's hypothesis concerning the irreversibility of physical processes and the temporal logic of probability. According to von Weizsäcker, quantum physics forces us to reinterpret the second law of thermodynamics, which links the direction of time to the entropy of a closed system, in terms of probabilities. The entropy of a given state must henceforth be conceived as the measure of the probability of the occurrence of this state—more probable earlier states being transformed into more probable later ones. If we ask what is meant by the terms "earlier" and "later" implied by the metaphors of the direction of time or the arrow of time, the renowned physicist replies that everyone in our culture, hence every physicist, implicitly understands the difference between past and future. The past is more like the order of facts; it is unalterable. The future is the possible. Probability, then, is a quantitative, mathematizable grasp of possibility. As for the probability of becoming, in the direct sense in which it is taken by physics here, it will always be in the future. It follows that the quantitative difference between past and future is not a consequence of the second law of thermodynamics. Instead it constitutes its phenomenological premise. It is only because we first have an understanding of this difference that we are able to do physics. Generalizing this thesis, we can say that this distinction is constitutive for the fundamental concept of experience. Experience draws a lesson from the past for the future. Time, in the sense of this qualitative difference between fact and possibility, is a condition for the possibility of experience. So, if experience presupposes time, the logic in which we describe the propositions express-

ing experience must be a logic of temporal statements, more precisely, a logic of future modalities—cf. "Zeit, Physik, Metaphysik," in Die Erfahrung der Zeit. Gedenkschrift für Georg Picht, ed. Christian Link (Stuttgart: Klett Cotta, 1984), pp. 22–24. Nothing in this argument challenges the distinction between instants as indistinguishable and the present as distinguishable. The qualitative difference between the past and the future is actually a phenomenological difference in the sense of Husserl and Heidegger. However, the proposition "the past is factual, the future possible," says more than this. It connects together lived-through experience, in which the distinction between past and future takes on meaning, and the notion of a course of events including the notions of an earlier state and a later one. The problem that remains has to do with the congruence of two irreversibilities: that of the relation past/future on the phenomenological plane, and that of the relation before/after on the plane of physical states, in which former states are considered to be more improbable and later ones more probable.

63. We shall return at length to the problem of dating within the framework of a study of connectors set in place by historical thought between cosmic time and phenomenological time.

64. This is perhaps the sense we should give to the bothersome expression faktisch in Heidegger. While adding a foreign accent to worldliness—an existential term—it clings to worldliness thanks to the phenomenon of contamination between the two orders of the discourse on time.

65. The objection of circularity that could easily be directed at the reversibility of all these analyses is no more threatening here than it was when I turned this argument against my own analyses in Part I in volume 1, when I introduced the stage of mimesis. Circularity is a healthy sign in any hermeneutical analysis. This suspicion of circularity can, in any event, be attributed to the basic aporetical character of the question of time.

SECTION TWO

1. Time and Narrative, 1: 70–71.
2. Ibid., pp. 172–225.
3. Ibid., 2: 100–152.
4. Ibid., 1: 76–77.
5. Ibid., pp. 77–82.

CHAPTER FOUR

1. See above, p. 17.
2. Physics, IV, 12, 220b1–222a9.
3. We may characterize the following analysis as a transcendental one inasmuch as it is the universal aspect of the institution of the calendar that is addressed. Thus it is to be distinguished from, without rejecting, the genetic approach practiced by French sociologists at the beginning of this century. There the problem of the calendar was treated within the framework of the social origin of reigning notions, including that of time. The danger for this school of thought was its making a collective consciousness the source of all these notions, somewhat like a Platonic Nous. This danger was greatest in Durkheim, in his The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, for whom social origin and religious origin tended to become confused. It was less present in the work of Maurice Halbwachs cited above, p. 275, n. 3. There the project of a total genesis of concepts was reduced to more modest proportions, the collective memory being attributed to some specific group rather than to society in general. However, on oc-
to the concept of a "generation," encountered as I shall discuss further below in the work of Dilthey: "Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historicizing of Dasein" (Being and Time, p. 436). Heidegger acknowledges this reference to Dilthey in a footnote.


11. Cf. my discussion of his important essay on this topic below, pp. 111–12.

12. Dilthey discusses this problem in a study devoted to the history of the moral and political sciences: "Über das Studium der Geschichte der Wissenschaften vom Menschen, der Gesellschaft und dem Staat" (1875), reprinted in Wilhelm Dilthey, Gesammelte Schriften (Leipzig: B. G. Teubner, 1924) 5:31–73. Only a few pages of this essay are directly related to our topic (pp. 36–41). Among the auxilliary concepts of this history, Dilthey is especially interested in those that constitute the "scaffolding [das Gerüst] of the course [der Verlauf] of intellectual movements" (ibid., p. 36). One of these is the concept of a generation. Dilthey also made use of this concept in his biography of Schleiermacher, without providing a theoretical justification for it or seeing the difficulties it involves. Mannheim's essay is more thoroughgoing in his analysis: Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of Generations," in idem, Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge, ed. Paul Kecskemeti (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1952), pp. 276–322. He also gives a bibliography of the discussion to 1927, when this article was first published.

13. Other thinkers had noted how little individuals in the same age-group were each other's contemporaries, as well as how individuals of different ages could share the same ideals at a given historical moment. In the work of the art historian Pinter, Mannheim finds the notion of the noncontemporaneity of the contemporaneous (Ungleichzeitigkeit des Gleichzeitigen) (in "The Problem of Generations," p. 285). Its kinship to the Heideggerian concept of destiny (Geschick) is not concealed. Mannheim cites favorably the famous text from Being and Time discussed above in chapter 3.

14. Regarding the biological, psychological, cultural, and spiritual aspects of the notion of growing up, the standard work is still Michel Philipot, L'Echelle des âges (Paris: Seuil, 1968).

15. Nor does Dilthey make this idea of continuity, which allows for interruptions, steps backward, subsequent renewals, and transfers from one culture to another, too rigid. What is essential is that the connection between old and new not suffer from total discontinuity. Below (in chapter 9), I shall take up again the discussion of this problem of continuity in history.

16. His source of inspiration in Husserl's work is the fifth Cartesian Meditation, in which Husserl attempts to give our knowledge of another person an intuitive status on the same level as that of self-reflection, by means of the analogical appreciation of the phenomenon of "pairing" (Paarung). However, unlike Husserl, Schutz takes as hopeless, useless, and even detrimental the enterprise of constituting our experience of the other person within (in) and starting from (aus) egological consciousness. Experience of the other person for Schutz is as primitive a given as is experience of one's own self, and, it should be added, just as immediate. This immediacy is not so much that of a cognitive operation as of a practical faith. We believe in the existence of the other person because we act upon and with that person, and because we are affected by that person's action. In this sense, Schutz rediscovers Kant's great insight in the Critique of Practical Reason: we do not know the other person, but we treat him or her as a person or a thing. The existence of the other is implicitly admitted by the mere fact that we comport ourselves toward this person in one way or another.

17. For Weber, too, "orientation toward the other" is a structure of sociales Wirken (cf. Economy and Society, ed Günther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim
Fischhoff et al. [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978], §§1 and 2). We practically affect and are affected by the other person.


19. It is not that imagination plays no role in those relationships Schutz takes as direct. My own motives already require, if they are to be clarified, a kind of imaginative reenactment. So do my partner’s. When I ask you a question, for example, I imagine in the future perfect tense how you will have answered me. In this sense, even an allegedly direct social relationship is already symbolically mediated. The synchrony between two streams of consciousness is assured by the correspondence between the prospective motives of one of them and the explicative motives of the other.

20. “On the contrary, all experience of contemporaries is predicative in nature. It is formed by means of interpretive judgments involving all my knowledge of the social world, although with varying degrees of explicitness” (ibid., p. 183). It is particularly noteworthy that Schutz attributes the phenomenon of “recognition” to this abstract level, in a sense distinct from Hegel’s, as “a synthesis of my own interpretations of his experiences” (p. 184). Whence his expression, a “synthesis of recognition” (ibid.).

21. I am following the broad distinction in Schutz’s analysis between a we-orientation and a they-orientation, between a direct kind of orientation and an anonymous form based on typifications. Schutz takes great care to nuance this opposition with a careful study (at which he excels) of the degrees of anonymity in the world of contemporaries. The result is a series of figures that warrants the progression toward complete anonymity. For example, certain collective forms—a governing board, a state, a nation, a people, a class—are still close enough to us that we attribute responible actions to them by analogy. Artificial objects, on the contrary (libraries, for example), are closer to the pole of anonymity.

22. It is even more curious that Schutz says so little about the world of successors. Undoubtedly this was due to the fact that he considers the social phenomenon as something that has already taken shape. This is why it only overlaps time up to the present now. But it is also because he puts too much emphasis on the determined, already accomplished aspect of the past. (This is debatable, insofar as the meaning of the past for us is constantly being reinterpreted.) It is why for Schutz the future has to be completely undetermined and undetermined (cf. ibid., p. 214). (This too is debatable, insofar as, through our expectations, our fears, our hopes, our predictions, and our plans, the future is at least in part tied to our actions.) That the world of successors is by definition not historical is admissible; that it is therefore absolutely free is contestable as an implication. Below, I shall draw on the reflections of Reinhart Koselleck about our horizon of expectation to forge a more complete and more balanced conception of the world of contemporaries, of predecessors, and of successors. Schutz’s major contribution to our problem is his having seen, on the basis of what is still a Husserlian phenomenology of intersubjectivity, the transitional role played by anonymity between private time and public time.

23. Criticism of the testimony of surviving witnesses is more difficult to carry out, due to the inextricable confusion with the quasi-present, remembered as it was experienced at the moment of the event, than is a reconstruction founded only on documents, without even taking into account the distortions inherent in the selection made due to interest—or disinterest—by memory.

24. “Since my knowledge of the world of predecessors comes to me through signs, what these signs signify is anonymous and detached from any stream of consciousness” (ibid., p. 209).

information. Instead of the fact that leads to the event and to a linear history, to a progressive memory, the privileged position passes to the datum, which leads to the series and to a discontinuous history. Collective memory reevaluates itself, organizing itself into a cultural patrimony. The new document is stored in data bases and dealt with by means of such structures. A new discipline has arisen, one that is still taking its first steps, and that must respond in contemporary terms to the requirement for calculations as well as to the constantly increasing criticism of its influence on our collective memory” (ibid., p. 42). Foucault’s opposition between the continuity of memory and the discontinuity of the history of ideas will be discussed further, within the context of an analysis devoted to the notion of tradition, owing to the place that the notion of discontinuity takes there (cf. below, pp. 142–56).

34. Marc Bloch’s *The Historian’s Craft*, trans. Peter Putnam (New York: Knopf, 1953), is filled with a number of terms taken to be synonymous with one another: “testimony,” “remains,” “vestiges,” “residues,” and finally “tracks” (or in the English translation of Bloch’s work: “tracks”). What “do we really mean by document, if it is not a ‘track,’ as it were—the mark, perceptible to the senses, which some phenomenon, in itself inaccessible, has left behind?” (p. 55). Everything is said here. But everything is an enigma.


37. See above, chap. 3, n. 34.


39. Recall the text cited earlier: “We contend that what is *primarily* historical is Dasein. That which is *secondarily* historical, however, is what we encounter within-the-world [innenweltlich]—not only equipment ready-to-hand, in the widest sense, but also the environing *Nature* as the ‘very soil of history’” (ibid., p. 433).

40. The remainder of the cited passage directly concerns my own proposal about the trace as one category of historical time: “It belongs to Dasein’s average kind of Being, and to that understanding of Being which proximally prevails. Thus proximally and for the most part, even history gets understood *publicly* as happening *within-time*” (ibid.; his emphases).

41. The difficulty in pinning down the use of the term *faktisch* in *Being and Time* also bears witness to this fact.


43. As was the case in each of the three works we considered at the end of Part III in volume 2: *Mrs. Dalloway, Der Zauberberg*, and *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

Chapter Five

1. With few exceptions, the analyses that follow refer without explicitly quoting them to the literary texts analyzed at the end of Part III in Volume 2 and the phenomenological theories discussed at the beginning of Part IV in this volume.

2. This method of correlation implies that we be attentive exclusively to the discoveries made by fiction as such and to their philosophical lessons, in contrast to all the attempts, however legitimate these may be in their own order, to spot a philosophical influence at the origin of the literary work under consideration. I have already expressed my reasons for this position on several occasions. Cf. *Time and Narrative*, 2:190, n. 23, and 132–33.

3. Comparing this with the solution contributed by history to the aporias of time calls for considering these aporias in the opposite order to that we encountered in our

aporeticals of time. We move in this way from the aporias that phenomenology invents to those it discovers. The didactic advantages of the strategy adopted here are not negligible. First of all, we thereby go straight to the principle underlying the dissymmetry between fiction and history. Next, we avoid the trap of limiting fiction to the exploration of internal time-consciousness, as if the function of fiction, with respect to the antagonism between the rival perspectives on time, were limited to a simple retreat outside the field of conflict. On the contrary, it is up to fiction to explore this very antagonism in its own way, by submitting it to specific variations. Finally, fiction’s treatment of the aporias that are constitutive of phenomenological time will take on new relief as a result of being placed against the background of the confrontation, at the heart of fiction, between phenomenological time and cosmic time. The full range of nonlinear aspects of time will, therefore, be unfolded before us.


8. For this expression borrowed from Dilthey (*Zusammenhang des Lebens*), see above, p. 111. I shall return in the closing pages of this work to the same problem under a new title, that of narrative identity. This notion will crown the union of history and fiction under the aegis of the phenomenology of time.

Chapter Six


2. “Historical conceptions are *Vertretungen* meant to signify [bedeuten] what once was... *einst war* in a considerably more complicated way open to inexhaustible description” (ibid.). Contrary to Theodor Lessing, for whom history alone confers sense on the nonsensical (the *sinllos*), this Gegenüber imposes a directive and a corrective on historical research, removing it from the arbitrariness that seems to affect the work of selection and organization that the historian performs. Otherwise, how could the work of one historian correct that of another and claim to be closer to what happened (treffen)? Heussi also caught sight of those features of the Gegenüber that make standing-for such a riddle for historical knowledge, namely (following Troltsch), the overwhelming richness of this Gegenüber, which inclines it toward the side of meaninglessness, along with the multivocal structures of the past, which draw it toward intelligibility. In sum, the past consists of “the plenitude of possible incitations to historical configuration” (‘die Fülle der möglichen Anreize zu historischer Gestaltung’) (ibid., p. 49).

3. This term, *représentance*, is found in François Wahl, ed., *Qu’est-ce que le structuralisme*? (Paris: Seuil, 1968), p. 11.

4. In this regard, Bloch’s *Historian’s Craft* is revealing. He is quite aware of the problem of the trace, which arises for him by way of the notion of a document (‘what do we really mean by *document*, if it is not a ‘trace,’ as it were—the mark, perceptible to the senses, which some phenomenon, in itself inaccessible, has left behind?’) (ibid., p. 55; trans. altered). This enigmatic reference to the trace is immediately attached to the notion of indirect observation familiar to the empirical sciences, insofar as the physicist or the geographer, for example, depend on observations made by others. Of