II

Theory and Method in the Historical Determination of Time

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Begriffsgeschichte and Social History

According to a well-known saying of Epictetus, it is not deeds that shock humanity, but the words describing them.[1] Apart from the Stoic point that one should not allow oneself to be disturbed by words, the contrast between "pragmata" and "dogmata" has aspects other than those indicated by Epictetus's moral dictum. It draws our attention to the autonomous power of words without the use of which human actions and passions could hardly be experienced, and certainly not made intelligible to others. This epigram stands in a long tradition concerned with the relation of word and thing, of the spiritual and the lived, of consciousness and being, of language and the world. Whoever takes up the relation of *Begriffsgeschichte* to social history is subject to the reverberations of this tradition. The domain of theoretical principles is quickly broached, and it is these principles which will here be subjected to an investigation from the point of view of current research.[2]

The association of *Begriffsgeschichte* to social history appears at first sight to be loose, or at least difficult. For a *Begriffsgeschichte* concerns itself (primarily) with texts and words, while a social history employs texts merely as a means of deducing circumstances and movements that are not, in themselves, contained within the texts. Thus, for example, when social history investigates social formations or the construction of constitutional forms—the relations of groups, strata, and classes—it goes beyond the immediate context of action in seeking medium- or long-term structures and their change. Or it might introduce economic theorems for the purpose of scrutinizing individual

events and the course of political action. Texts and their attributed conditions of emergence here possess only a referential nature. The methods of *Begriffsgeschichte*, in contrast, derive from the sphere of a philosophical history of terminology, historical philology, semasiology, and onomatology; the results of its work can be evaluated continually through the exegesis of texts, while at the same time, they are based on such exegesis.

This initial contrast is superficially quite striking. Once engaged methodologically, however, it becomes apparent that the relation of *Begriffsgeschichte* and social history is more complex than would be the case if the former discipline could in fact be reduced to the latter. This is immediately apparent when considering the domain of objects which the respective disciplines study. Without common concepts there is no society, and above all, no political field of action. Conversely, our concepts are founded in politicosocial systems that are far more complex than would be indicated by treating them simply as linguistic communities organized around specific key concepts. A "society" and its "concepts" exist in a relation of tension which is also characteristic of its academic historical disciplines.

An attempt will be made to clarify the relation of both disciplines at three levels:

1. To what extent *Begriffsgeschichte* follows a classical critical-historical method, but by virtue of its greater acuity, also contributes to the tangibility of sociohistorical themes. Here, the analysis of concepts is in a subsidiary relation to social history.
2. To what extent *Begriffsgeschichte* represents an independent discipline with its own method, whose content and range are to be defined parallel to social history, while both disciplines, at the same time, mutually overlap.
3. To what extent *Begriffsgeschichte* poses a genuine historical claim without whose solution an effective social history cannot be practiced.

There are two limitations on the following considerations: first, they do not deal with linguistic history, even as a part of social history, but rather with the sociopolitical terminology relevant to the current condition of social history. Second, within this terminology and its numerous expressions, emphasis will be placed on concepts whose semantic "carrying capacity" extends further than the "mere" words employed in the sociopolitical domain.[3]

The Method of *Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History

So that the critical-historical implications of *Begriffsgeschichte* might here be demonstrated to be a necessary aid to social history, it is most convenient to begin with an example. It comes from the time of the French, and of the emergent industrial, revolutions; hence, from a zone that was to prove decisive for the development both of sociology and of sociohistorical questions.

Hardenberg, in his well-known September Memorandum of the year 1807, drew up guidelines for the reorganization of the Prussian state. The entire state was to be socially and economically restructured according to the experiences of the French Revolution. Hardenberg wrote:

A rational system of ranks, not favoring one *Stand* over another, but rather providing the citizens of all *Stände* with their places alongside each other according to specific classes, must belong to the true needs of a state, and not at all to its immaterial needs.[4]

In order to understand what is, for Hardenberg's future reform policy, a programmatic statement, an exegesis is required which, through a critique of the sources, can unlock the specific concepts which the policy contains. The transfer of the traditional differentiation between "true" and "immaterial" from the *Stände* to the state was a conception current for just half a century and will not be examined here. What is initially striking, however, is that Hardenberg opposes the vertical ranking of the *Stände* with a horizontal articulation of classes. The *Standesordnung* is evaluated pejoratively insofar as it implies the favoring of one *Stand* over another, while all members of these *Stände* are, at the same time, citizens and as such should be equal. In this statement they do, as citizens, remain members of a *Stand*; but their functions are defined "according to specific classes," and it is in this way that a rational system of ranks should arise.

Such a statement, liberally sprinkled as it is with politico-social expressions, involves, on the purely linguistic level, not inconsiderable difficulties, even if the political point, exactly on account of its semantic ambiguity, is clear. The established society of orders is to be replaced by a society of citizens (formally endowed with equal rights), whose membership in classes (yet to be defined politically and economically) should make possible a new, state-based system of ranks.

It is clear that the exact sense can be obtained only by reference to the complete Memorandum; but it is also necessary to take into account the situation of the author and the addressee. Due regard also must be paid to the political situation and the social condition of contemporary Prussia; just as, finally, the use of language by the author, his contemporaries, and the generation preceding him, with whom he shared a specific linguistic community, must be considered. All of these questions belong to the usual critical-historical, and in particular historical-philological, method, even if problems arise that are not soluble by this method alone. In particular, this concerns the social structure of contemporary Prussia, which cannot be adequately comprehended without an economic, political, or sociological framework for investigation.

Specific restriction of our investigation to the concepts actually employed in such a statement proves decisive in helping us pose and answer the sociohistorical questions that lie beyond the comprehension of such a statement. If we pass from the sense of the sentence itself to the historical arrangement of the concepts used, such as *Stand*, "class," or "citizen," the diversity of the levels of contemporary experience entering this statement soon becomes apparent.

When Hardenberg talks of citizens (*Staatsbürger*), he is using a technical term that had just been minted, that is not to be found in the Prussian Civil Code, and that registered a polemical engagement with the old society of orders. Thus, it is a concept that is consciously deployed as a weapon in the struggle against the legal inequalities of the *Stände*, at a time when a set of civil rights which could have endowed the Prussian citizen with political rights did not exist. The expression was novel, pregnant with the future; it referred to a constitutional model yet to be realized. At the same time, at the turn of the century, the concept of *Stand* had an endless number of shades of meaning—political, economic, legal, and social—such that no unambiguous association can be derived from the word itself. Insofar as Hardenberg thought of *Stand* and privilege as the same thing, he critically undermined the traditional rights of domination and rule of the upper *Stände*, while in this context, the counterconcept was "class." At this time, the concept "class" possessed a similar variety of meanings, which overlapped here and there with those of *Stand*. Nevertheless, it can be said for the language in use among the German, and especially the Prussian, bureaucracies, that a class at that time was defined more

in terms of economic and legal-administrative criteria than in terms of political status or birth. In this connection, for instance, the physiocratic tradition must be taken into account, a tradition within which the old *Stände* were first redefined according to economic criteria: a design which Hardenberg shared in its liberal economic intention. The use of "class" demonstrates that here a social model which points to the future is set in play, while the concept of *Stand* is related to a centuries-old tradition: it was once again given legal expression in the Civil Code, but the Code's ambivalence was already increasingly apparent and in need of reform.

Surveying the space of meaning of each of the central concepts employed here exposes, therefore, a contemporary polemical thrust; intentions with respect to the future; and enduring elements of past social organization, whose specific arrangement discloses a statement's meaning. The activity of temporal semantic construal simultaneously establishes the historical force contained within a statement.

Within the practice of textual exegesis, specific study of the use of politicosocial concepts and the investigation of their meaning thus assumes a sociohistorical status. The moments of duration, change, and futurity contained in a concrete political situation are registered through their linguistic traces. Expressed more generally, social conditions and their transformation become in this fashion the objects of analysis.

A question equally relevant to *Begriffsgeschichte* and social history concerns the time from which concepts can be used as indicators of politico-social change and historical profundity as rigorously as is the case with our example. It can be shown for German-speaking areas from 1770 onward that both new meanings for old words and neologisms proliferate, altering with the linguistic arsenal of the entire political and social space of experience, and establishing new horizons of expectation. This is stimulating enough without posing the question of priority in this process of change between the "material" and the "conceptual." The struggle over the "correct" concepts becomes socially and politically explosive.

Our author, Hardenberg, likewise sets great store by conceptual distinctions, insisting on linguistic rules which have, since the French Revolution, belonged to the everyday business of politicians. Thus he addressed noble estate owners in assemblies, as well as in writing, as "estate owners" (*Gutsbesitzer*), while he did not forbear from receiving

representatives of regional *Kreisstände* quite properly as *ständische* deputies. "By confusing the names, the concepts also fall into disorder," Hardenberg's opponent, Marwitz, stated irritably, "and as a result the old Brandenburg Constitution is placed in mortal danger." While correct in his conclusion, Marwitz deliberately overlooked the fact that Hardenberg was using new concepts and hence initiating a struggle over the naming of the new form of social organization, a struggle which drags on through the following years in all written communication between the old *Stände* and the bureaucracy. Marwitz certainly recognized that what was at stake in this naming of *ständisch* organization was the title of right that he sought to defend. He therefore disavowed a mission of his fellow *Stand* members to the chancellor because they had announced themselves as "inhabitants" of the *Mark* Brandenburg. They could do that, he suggested, as long as the question concerned "the economic. If the issue, on the other hand, concerns our rights, then this single word—inhabitant—destroys the point of the mission."[5] In this fashion, Marwitz refused to follow any further the course toward which, on economic grounds, other members of his *Stand* were then inclined. They sought to exchange their political privileges for economic advantage.[6]

The semantic struggle for the definition of political or social position, and defending or occupying these positions by means of such a definition, is conflict which belongs quite certainly to all times of crisis that we can register in written sources. Since the French Revolution, this struggle has become sharper and has altered structurally; concepts no longer merely serve to define given states of affairs, they reach into the future. Increasingly, concepts of the future were created; positions that were to be captured had first to be formulated linguistically before it was possible to even enter or permanently occupy them. The substance of many concepts was thus reduced in terms of actual experience and their aspirations to realization proportionally increased. Actual, substantial experience and the space of expectation coincide less and less. It is in this tendency that the coining of numerous "isms" belongs, serving as concepts for assembly and movement of newly ordered and mobilized masses, stripped of the organizational framework of the *Stände*. The breadth of usage of such expressions reached, as today, from slogan to scientifically defined concept. One needs only to think of "conservatism," "liberalism," or "socialism."

Ever since society has been swept into industrial movement, the political semantic of its related concepts has provided a means of comprehension in the absence of which, today, the phenomena of the past cannot be perceived. It is necessary only to think of the shifts in meaning and the function of the concept "revolution," which at first offered a model formula for the probable recurrence of events; was then reminted as a concept of historicophilosophical objective and political action; and is for us today an indicator of structural change. Here, *Begriffsgeschichte* becomes an integral part of social history.

From this, a methodologically minimal claim follows: namely, that social and political conflicts of the past must be interpreted and opened up via the medium of their contemporary conceptual limits and in terms of the mutually understood, past linguistic usage of the participating agents.

Thus the conceptual clarification of the terms introduced here by way of example, such as *Stand*, class, estate owner, owner, the economic, inhabitant, and citizen, serve as a prerequisite for interpreting the conflict between the Prussian reform group and the Prussian Junkers. The fact that the parties involved overlapped personally and socially makes it all the more necessary to semantically clarify the political and social fronts within this stratum, so that we are able to seize upon hidden interests and intentions.

Begriffsgeschichte, therefore, is initially a specialized method for source criticism, taking note as it does of the utilization of terminology relevant to social and political elements and directing itself in particular to the analysis of central expressions having social or political content. It goes without saying that historical clarification of past conceptual usage must refer not only to the history of language but also to sociohistorical data, for every semantic has, as such, an involvement with nonlinguistic contents. It is this that creates its precarious marginality for the linguistic sciences[7] and is, at the same time, the origin of its great advantages for the historical sciences. The condensation effected by the work of conceptual explanation renders past statements precise, bringing more clearly into view the contemporary intentional circumstances or relations in their form.

The Discipline of *Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History

Up to this point the emphasis has been laid on source criticism in the specification of concepts as an aid in formulating sociohistorical ques-

tions: *Begriffsgeschichte* is, however, capable of doing more than this would indicate. More precisely, its methodology lays claim to an autonomous sphere which exists in a relation of mutually engendered tension with social history. From the historiographic point of view, specialization in *Begriffsgeschichte* had no little influence on the posing of questions within social history. First, it began as a critique of a careless transfer to the past of modern, context-determined expressions of constitutional argument,[8] and second, it directed itself to criticizing the practice in the history of ideas of treating ideas as constants, articulated in differing historical figures but of themselves fundamentally unchanging. Both elements prompted a greater precision in method, such that in the history of a concept it became possible to survey the contemporary space of experience and horizon of expectation, and to investigate the political and social functions of concepts, together with their specific modality of usage, such that (in brief) a synchronic analysis also took account of the situation and conjuncture.

Such a procedure is enjoined to translate words of the past and their meanings into our present understanding. Each history of word or concept leads from a determination of past meanings to a specification of these meanings for us. Insofar as this procedure is reflected in the method of *Begriffsgeschichte*, the synchronic analysis of the past is supplemented diachronically. It is a methodological precept of diachrony that it scientifically defines anew the registration of the past meanings of words.

Over time, this methodological perspective consistently and substantially transforms itself into a history of the particular concept in question. Insofar as concepts, during this second phase of investigation, are detached from their situational context, and their meanings ordered according to the sequence of time and then ordered with respect to each other, the individual historical analyses of concepts assemble themselves into a history of the concept. Only at this level is historical-philological method superseded, and only here does *Begriffsgeschichte* shed its subordinate relation to social history.

Nevertheless, the sociohistorical payoff is increased. Precisely because attention is directed in a rigorously diachronic manner to the persistence or change of a concept does the sociohistorical relevance of the results increase. To what extent has the intentional substance of one and the same word remained the same? Has it changed with the passage of time, a historical transformation having reconstructed the sense of the

concept? The persistence and validity of a social or political concept and its corresponding structure can only be appreciated diachronically. Words that have remained in constant use are not in themselves a sufficient indication of the stability of their substantial meaning. Thus, the standard term *Bürger* is devoid of meaning without an investigation of the conceptual change undergone by the expression "Bürger": from (*Stadt-*)*Bürger* (burgher) around 1700 via (*Staats-*)*Bürger* (citizen) around 1800 to *Bürger* (bourgeois) as a nonproletarian around 1900, to cite as an example only a very crude framework.

Stadtbürger was a concept appropriate to the *Stände*, in which legal, political, economic, and social definitions were indifferently united—definitions which, with other contents, made up the remaining concepts of the *Stand.*

Toward the end of the eighteenth century, the *Stadtbürger* was no longer defined in the *Allgemeines Landrecht* (Prussian Civil Code) in terms of a listing of positive criteria (as in the draft), but negatively, as belonging neither to the peasant or noble *Stand.* In this fashion, a claim was registered in a negative manner for a higher generality, which was then conceptualized as *Staatsbürger.* The negation of the negation was accordingly achieved as, in 1848, the *Staatsbürger* assumed positively determined rights which had previously been enjoyed only by "inhabitants" and shareholders of a free economic society. Against the background of the formal legal equality of a liberal economic society underwritten by the state, it was then possible to assign this *Bürger*, in a purely economic fashion, to a class according to which political or social functions were only subsequently derived. This generalization is true both for systems of voting by class and for Marx's theory.

It is the diachronic disposition of elements which discloses long-term structural changes. This is, for instance, characteristic of the creeping transformation of the meaning of *societas civilis*, or politically constituted society, to *bürgerliche Gesellschaft sine imperio*, which can finally be conceived as an entity separate from the state; this is a piece of knowledge relevant to social history, which can only be gained at the level of the reflections engendered by *Begriffsgeschichte.*[9]

Hence, the diachronic principle constitutes *Begriffsgeschichte* as an autonomous domain of research, which methodologically, in its reflection on concepts and their change, must initially disregard their extralinguistic content—the specific sphere of social history. Persistence,

change, or novelty in the meaning of words must first be grasped before they can be used as indices of this extralinguistic content, as indicators of social structures or situations of political conflict.

Considered from a temporal aspect, social and political concepts can be arranged into three groups. First are such traditional concepts as those of Aristotelian constitutional thought, whose meanings have persisted in part and which, even under modern conditions, retain an empirical validity. Second are concepts whose content has changed so radically that, despite the existence of the same word as a shell, the meanings are barely comparable and can be recovered only historically. The variety of meanings attached today to the term *Geschichte*, which appears to be simultaneously its own subject and object, comes to mind, in contrast with the *Geschichten* and *Historien*, which deal with concrete realms of objects and persons; one could also cite "class" as distinct from the Roman *classis*. Third are recurrently emerging neologisms reacting to specific social or political circumstances that attempt to register or even provoke the novelty of such circumstances. Here, "communism" and "fascism" can be invoked.

Within this temporal scheme there are, of course, endless transitions and superimpositions. The history of the concept "democracy" can, for example, be considered under all three aspects. First, ancient democracy as a constantly given, potential constitutional form of the Polis: here are definitions, procedures, and regularities that can still be found in democracies today. The concept was modernized in the eighteenth century to characterize new organizational forms typical of the large modern state and its social consequences. Invocation of the rule of law and the principle of equality took up and modified old meanings. With respect to the social transformations following the industrial revolution, however, the concept assumed new valencies: it became a concept characterizing a state of expectation which, within a historicophilosophical perspective—be it legislative or revolutionary—claimed to satisfy newly constituted needs so that its meaning might be validated. Finally, "democracy" became a general concept replacing "republic" (*politeia*), that consigned to illegality all other constitutional types as forms of rule. This global universality, usable for a variety of distinct political tendencies, made it necessary to refurbish the concept by adding qualifying expressions. It was only in this manner that it could retain any functional effectivity: hence arise representative, Christian, social, and people's democracies, and so forth.

Persistence, change, and novelty are thus conceived diachronically along the dimension of meanings and through the spoken form of one and the same word. Temporally testing a possible *Begriffsgeschichte* according to persistence, change, and novelty leads to the disposition of persisting, overlapping, discarded, and new meanings which can only become relevant for a social history if the history of the concept has been subject to a prior and separate analysis. As an independent discipline, therefore, *Begriffsgeschichte* delivers indicators for social history by pursuing its own methods.

This restriction of analysis to concepts has to be elaborated further, so that the autonomy of the method can be protected from a hasty identification with sociohistorical questions related to extralinguistic content. Naturally, a linguistic history can be outlined which can itself be conceived as social history. A *Begriffsgeschichte* is more rigorously bounded. The methodological limitation to the history of concepts expressed in words must have a basis that renders the expressions "concept" and "word" distinguishable. In whatever way the linguistic triad of word (signification)—meaning (concept)—object is employed in its different variants, a straightforward distinction—initially pragmatic—can be made in the sphere of historical science: sociopolitical terminology in the source language possesses a series of expressions that, on the basis of critical exegesis, stand out definitively as concepts. Each concept is associated with a word, but not every word is a social and political concept. Social and political concepts possess a substantial claim to generality and always have many meanings—in historical science, occasionally in modalities other than words.

Thus it is possible to articulate or linguistically create a group identity through the emphatic use of the word "we," while such a procedure only becomes conceptually intelligible when the "we" is associated with collective terms such as "nation," "class," "friendship," "church," and so on. The general utility of the term "we" is substantiated through these expressions but on a level of conceptual generality.

The stamping of a word as a concept might occur without noticeable disturbance, depending on the linguistic use of the sources. This is primarily because of the ambiguity of all words, a property shared by concepts as words. Their common historical quality is based on this. This ambiguity can be read in diverse ways, according to whether a word can be taken as a concept or not. Intellectual or material meanings are indeed bound to the word, but they feed off the intended

content, the written or spoken context, and the historical situation. This is equally true for both word and concept. In use, however, a word can become unambiguous. In contrast, a concept must remain ambiguous in order to be a concept. The concept is bound to a word, but is at the same time more than a word: a word becomes a concept when the plenitude of a politicosocial context of meaning and experience in and for which a word is used can be condensed into one word.

Consider the variety of objects that enter the word "state" so that it may become a concept: domination, domain, bourgeoisie, legislation, jurisdiction, administration, taxation, and army, to invoke only present-day terms. A variety of circumstances with their own terminology (and conceptuality) are taken up by the word "state" and made into a common concept. Concepts are thus the concentrate of several substantial meanings. The signification of a word can be thought separately from that which is signified. Signifier and signified coincide in the concept insofar as the diversity of historical reality and historical experience enter a word such that they can only receive their meaning in this one word, or can only be grasped by this word. A word presents potentialities for meaning; a concept unites within itself a plenitude of meaning. Hence, a concept can possess clarity but must be ambiguous. "All concepts escape definition that summarize semiotically an entire process; only that which has no history is definable" (Nietzsche). A concept binds a variety of historical experience and a collection of theoretical and practical references into a relation that is, as such, only given and actually ascertainable through the concept.

It becomes plain here that, while concepts have political and social capacities, their semantic function and performance is not uniquely derivative of the social and political circumstances to which they relate. A concept is not simply indicative of the relations which it covers; it is also a factor within them. Each concept establishes a particular horizon for potential experience and conceivable theory, and in this way sets a limit. The history of concepts is therefore able to provide knowledge which is not obtainable from empirical study (*Sachanalyse*). The language of concepts is a consistent medium in which experiential capacity and theoretical stability can be assessed. This can, of course, be done sociohistorically, but sight must not be lost of the method of *Begriffsgeschichte*.

Naturally, the autonomy of the discipline must not be allowed to lead to a diminution of actual historical materiality simply because the latter is excluded for a specific section of the investigation. On the contrary, this materiality is itself given voice by withdrawing the analytical frame from the linguistic constitution of political situations or social structures. As a historical discipline, *Begriffsgeschichte* is always concerned with political or social events and circumstances, although indeed, only with those which have been conceptually constituted and articulated in the source language. In a restricted sense it interprets history through its prevailing concepts, even if the words are used today, while in turn treating these concepts historically, even if their earlier usage must be defined anew for us today. If we were to formulate this in a somewhat exaggerated fashion, we could say that *Begriffsgeschichte* deals with the convergence of concept and history. History would then simply be that which had already been conceptualized as such. Epistemologically, this would imply that nothing can occur historically that is not apprehended conceptually. But apart from this overvaluation of written sources, which is neither theoretically nor historically sustainable, there lurks behind this theory of convergence the danger of an ontological misunderstanding of *Begriffsgeschichte*. This would result in the sociohistorical dissipation of the critical impulse toward the revision of the history of ideas or of intellectual history, and along with this, the potential critique of ideologies that *Begriffsgeschichte* can initiate.

Moreover, the method of *Begriffsgeschichte* breaks out of the naive circular movement from word to thing and back. It would be a theoretically irredeemable short circuit if history were to be constructed out of its own concepts, establishing a kind of identity between linguistically articulated *Zeitgeist* and the conjunction of events. Rather, there exists between concept and materiality a tension which now is transcended, now breaks out afresh, now appears insoluble. Between linguistic usage and the social materialities upon which it encroaches or to which it targets itself, there can always be registered a certain hiatus. The transformation of the meaning of words and the transformation of things, the change of situation and the urge to rename, correspond diversely with each other.

Methodological complications follow from this. The investigation of a concept cannot be carried out purely semasiologically; it can never limit itself to the meanings of words and their changes. A *Begriffsgeschichte*

must always keep in view the need for findings relevant to intellectual or material history. Above all, the semasiological approach must alternate with the onomasiological; i.e., *Begriffsgeschichte* must register the variety of names for (identical?) materialities in order to be able to show how concepts are formed. So, for instance, the phenomenon of *Säkularisation* cannot be investigated solely on the basis of the expression itself.[10] For the historical treatment of words, parallel expressions like *Verweltlichung* (secularization) and *Verzeitlichung* (temporalization) must be introduced; the domain of church and constitutional law must be taken into account historically; and in terms of intellectual history, the ideological currents which crystallized around the expression must be examined—all before the concept *Säkularisation* is sufficiently worked up as a factor in and indicator of the history to which it relates.

To take another phenomenon, the federal structure of the old *Reich* belongs to long-term political and legal facticities which have, from the late Middle Ages down to the Federal Republic of today, laid down a specific framework of political potential and political action. The history of the word *Bund* by itself, however, is not adequate to clarify federal structure in the historical process. We can sketch this very roughly here. Formed in the thirteenth century, the term *Bund* was a relatively late creation of German jurisprudence. *Bundesabmachungen* (*Einungen*), insofar as they could not be subsumed under such Latin expressions as *foedus*, *unio*, *liga*, and *societas*, initially could only be employed orally in this legal language. At first, it was the aggregation of completed and named *Verbündnisse* that brought about the condensation into the institutional expression *Bund*. Then, with the increasing experience of *Bünde*, linguistic generalization was possible, which then became available as the concept *Bund*. From then on, it was possible to reflect conceptually on the relation of a *Bund* to the *Reich* and on the constitution of the *Reich* in the form of a *Bund*. But this possibility was barely made use of in the final decades of the Middle Ages. The concept's center of gravity remained associated with estate rights; in particular, designating *Städtebünde* (town unions), as opposed to *fürstlichen Einungen* (unions constituted of the rulers of principalities) or *ritterschaftlichen Gesellschaften* (societies of knights). The religious loading of the concept *Bund* in the Reformation era resulted—in contrast with the Calvinist world—in its political corrosion. As far as Luther was concerned, only God was capable of creating a *Bund*,

and it was for this reason that the Schmalkand *Vorstand* never characterized itself as a *Bund.* It only became referred to as such historiographically at a much later time. Simultaneous and emphatic use of the term, in a religious as well as a political sense, by Müntzer and peasants in 1525 led to discrimination against usage in the form of a taboo. It thus went into retreat as a technical term of constitutional law, and the confessional forces assembled themselves under expressions which were initially interchangeable and neutral, such as *Liga* and *Union.* In the bloody disputes that followed, these expressions hardened into religious battle cries which in turn became notorious in the course of the Thirty Years War. From 1648 on, French terms like *Allianz* permeated the constitutional law of the states in the empire. Penetrated by terminology drawn from the Law of Nations, it was covertly subject to alteration. It was only with the dissolution of the old imperial *Standesordnung* that the expression *Bund* reemerged, and this time it did so at the levels of society, state, and law, simultaneously. The social expression *bündisch* was coined (by Campe); the legal distinction of *Bündnis* and *Bund*—equivalent in meaning earlier—could now be articulated; and ultimately, with the end of the *Reich*, the term *Bundestaat* was discovered, which first brought the formerly insoluble constitutional aporia into a historical concept oriented to the future.[11]

This brief outline should suffice to indicate that a history of the meanings of the word *Bund* is not adequate as a history of the problems of federal structure "conceptualized" in the course of *Reich* history. Semantic fields must be surveyed and the relation of *Einung* to *Bund*, of *Bund* to *Bündnis*, and of these terms to *Union* and *Liga* or to *Allianz* likewise investigated. It is necessary to question the (shifting) concepts in apposition, clarifying in this fashion the political fronts and religious and social groupings that have formed within federal potentialities. New constructions must be interpreted; e.g., it must be explained why the expression *Föderalismus*, entering language in the latter eighteenth century, did not in the nineteenth become a central concept of German constitutional law. Without the invocation of parallel or opposed concepts, without ordering generalized and particular concepts, and without registering the overlapping of two expressions, it is not possible to deduce the structural value of a word as "concept" either for the social framework or for the disposition of political fronts. Through the alternation of semasiological and onomasiological questions, *Begriffsgeschichte* aims ultimately at *Sachgeschichte.*[12]

The variant valency of the expression *Bund* can be especially suggestive of those constitutional conditions only conceptually formulable (or not) in terms of it. Insight into constitutional history is thus provided by a retrospectively oriented clarification and modern definition of past usage. Discovering whether the expression *Bund* was used as a concept associated with *Stand* rights, whether it was a concept of religious expectation, or whether it was a concept of political organization or an intentional concept based on the Law of Nations (as in Kant's minting of *Völkerbund*): clarifying such things means discovering distinctions which also "materially" organize history.

Put in other terms, *Begriffsgeschichte* is not an end in itself, even if it follows its own method. Insofar as it delivers indices and components for social history, *Begriffsgeschichte* can be defined as a methodologically independent part of sociohistorical research. From this autonomy issues a distinct methodological advantage related to the joint theoretical premises of *Begriffsgeschichte* and social history.

On the Theory of *Begriffsgeschichte* and of Social History

All examples introduced so far—the history of the concepts of *Bürger*, democracy, and *Bund*—have one thing formally in common: they (synchronically) treat circumstances and (along the dimension of diachrony) their transformation. In this way, they are organized in terms of what in the domain of social history might be called structures and their change. Not that one can be directly deduced from the other, but *Begriffsgeschichte* has the advantage of reflecting this connection beween concept and actuality. Thus there arises for social history a productive tension, pregnant with knowledge.

It is not necessary for persistence and change in the meanings of words to correspond with persistence and change in the structures they specify. Since words which persist are in themselves insufficient indicators of stable contents and because, vice versa, contents undergoing long-term change might be expressed in a number of very different ways, the method of *Begriffsgeschichte* is a *conditio sine qua non* of social historical questions.

One of the advantages of *Begriffsgeschichte* is that by shifting between synchronic and diachronic analysis, it can help to disclose the persistence of past experience and the viability of past theories. By changing perspective it is possible to make visible dislocations that exist between

words whose meaning is related to a diminishing content and the new contents of the same word. Moribund meanings which no longer correspond to reality, or realities which emerge through concepts whose meaning remains unrecognized, can then be noted. This diachronic review can reveal layers which are concealed by the spontaneity of everyday language. Thus the religious sense of *Bund* was never completely abandoned once it became descriptive of social and political organization in the nineteenth century. This was acknowledged by Marx and Engels when they created the "Manifesto of the Communist Party" out of the "articles of faith" of the *Bund der Kommunisten.*

Begriffsgeschichte is therefore capable of clarifying the multiple stratification of meaning descending from chronologically separate periods. This means that it goes beyond a strict alternation of diachrony and synchrony and relates more to the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*) that can be contained in a concept. Expressed differently, it deals with the theoretical premises of social history when it seeks to evaluate the short, medium, or long term, or to weigh events and structures against one another. The historical depth of a concept, which is not identical with the chronological succession of its meanings, in this fashion gains systematic import, which must be duly acknowledged by all sociohistorical research.

Begriffsgeschichte thus takes as a theoretical principle the idea that persistence and change must be weighed against each other, and measured in terms of each other. To the extent that this is conducted in the medium of language (both of the original source and of modern scientific discourse), it reflects the theoretical presuppositions with which even a social history concerned with "materiality" must come to terms.

It is a general property of language that each of the meanings of a word reach further than the singularity to which historical events can lay claim. Each word, even each name, displays a linguistic potentiality beyond the individual phenomenon that it characterizes or names at a given moment. This is equally true of historical concepts, even if they initially serve to conceptually assemble the singularity of complex structures of experience. Once "minted," a concept contains within itself, purely linguistically, the possibility of being employed in a generalized manner, of constructing types, or of disclosing comparative insights. The reference to a particular party, state, or army linguistically involves a plane which potentially includes parties, states,

or armies. A history of related concepts leads to structural questions that social history has to answer.

Concepts do not only teach us the uniqueness of past meanings but also contain the structural possibilities, treat the concatenations of difference, which are not detectable in the historical flow of events. For the social historian prepared to think conceptually, seizing past facts, relations, and processes, these concepts become the formal categories which determine the conditions of possible history. It is only concepts which demonstrate persistence, repeatable applicability, and empirical validity—concepts with structural claims—which indicate that a once "real" history can today appear generally possible and be represented as such.

This becomes even clearer if the method of *Begriffsgeschichte* is applied to the relation of the language of original source and the language of analysis. All historiography operates on two levels: it either investigates circumstances already articulated at an earlier period in language, or it reconstructs circumstances which were not articulated into language earlier but which can be worked up with the help of specific methods and indices. In the first case, the received concepts serve as a heuristic means of access to the understanding of past reality. In the second case, history makes use of categories constructed and defined *ex post*, employed without being present in the source itself. This involves, for example, principles of theoretical economics being used to analyze early phases of capitalism in terms unknown at that time; or political theorems being developed and applied to past constitutional relations without having to invoke a history in the optative mood. In either case, *Begriffsgeschichte* makes plain the difference prevailing between past and present conceptualization, whether it translates the older usage and works up its definition for modern research, or whether the modern construction of scientific concepts is examined for its historical viability. *Begriffsgeschichte* covers that zone of convergence occupied by past and present concepts. A theory is therefore required to make understanding the modes of contact and separation in time possible.

It is clearly inadequate, to cite a known example, to move from the usage of the word *Staat* (*status*, *état*) to the modern state, as has been demonstrated in detail recently.[13] The question why, at a particular time, particular phenomena are brought into a common concept remains a suggestive one. Thus, for instance, it was only in 1848 that

the Prussian states were legally established as a state by Prussian jurisprudence, in spite of the established existence of the army and bureaucracy, i.e., at a time when liberal economic society had relativized the distinctions associated with the *Stände* and engendered a proletariat which had penetrated every province. Jurisprudentially, it was in the form of a bourgeois constitutional state that the Prussian state was first baptized. Certainly, singular findings of this nature do not prevent historical discourse from scientifically defining established historical concepts and deploying them in different periods and domains. If an extension of the term is warranted by a *Begriffsgeschichte*, then it is possible to talk of a "state" in the High Middle Ages. Naturally, in this way, *Begriffsgeschichte* drags social history with it. The extension of later concepts to cover earlier periods, or the extension of earlier concepts to cover later phenomena (as is today customary in the use of "feudalism"), establishes a minimum of common ground, at least hypothetically, in their objective domains.

The live tension between actuality and concept reemerges, then, at the level of the source language and of the language of analysis. Social history, investigating long-term structures, cannot afford to neglect the theoretical principles of *Begriffsgeschichte*. In every social history dealing with trends, duration, and periods, the level of generality at which one operates is given only by reflection on the concepts in use, in this way theoretically assisting clarification of the temporal relation of event and structure, or the succession of persistence and transformation.

For example, *Legitimität* was first a category in jurisprudence and was subsequently politicized in terms of traditionalism and deployed in interparty strife. It then took on a historicotheoretical perspective and was colored propagandistically according to the politics of whoever happened to be using the expression. All such overlapping meanings existed at the time when the term was scientifically neutralized by Max Weber, making it possible to establish typologies of forms of domination. He thus extracted from the available reserve of possible meanings a scientific concept; this was both formal and general enough to describe constitutional potentialities both long-term and short-term, shifting and overlapping, which then disclosed historical "individualities" on the basis of their internal structures.

Begriffsgeschichte embodies theoretical principles that generate statements of a structural nature which social history cannot avoid confronting.

History, Histories, and Formal Structures of Time

The dual ambiguity of the modern linguistic usage of *Geschichte* and *Historie*—both expressions denoting event and representation—raises questions that we wish to investigate further. These questions are both historical and systematic in nature. The peculiar meaning of history, such that it is at the same time knowledge of itself, can be understood as a general formulation of an anthropologically given arc linking and relating historical experience with knowledge of such experience. On the other hand, the convergence of both meanings is a historically specific occurrence which first took place in the eighteenth century. It can be shown that the formation of the collective singular *Geschichte* is a semantic event that discloses our modern experience. The concept "history pure and simple" laid the foundation for a historical philosophy within which the transcendental meaning of history as space of consciousness became contaminated with history as space of action.

It would be presumptuous to claim that, in the constitution of the concepts "history pure and simple" or "history in general" (underwritten specifically by German linguistic developments), all events prior to the eighteenth century must fade into a prehistory. One need only recall Augustine, who once stated that, while human institutions constituted the thematic of *historia*, *ipsa historia* was not a human construct.[1] History itself was claimed to derive from God and be nothing but the *ordo temporum* in which all events were established and according to which they were arranged. The metahistorical (and also temporal) meaning of *historia ipsa* is thus not merely a modern construction but had already been anticipated theologically. The interpretation according

to which the experience of modernity is opened up only with the discovery of a history in itself, which is at once its own subject and object, does have strong semantic arguments in its favor. It was in this fashion that an experience was first articulated that could not have existed in a similar way before. But the semantically demonstrable process involving the emergence of modern historical philosophies should not itself be exaggerated in a historicophilosophical manner. We should, rather, be given cause to reflect on the historical premises of our own historical research by this once-formulated experience of history in and for itself, possessing both a transcendent and a transcendental character. Theoretical premises must be developed that are capable of comprehending not only our own experience, but also past and alien experience; only in this way is it possible to secure the unity of history as a science. Our sphere of investigation is not simply limited to that history which has, since the onset of modernity, become its own subject, but must also take account of the infinite histories that were once recounted. If we are to seek potential common features between these two forms, the unity of the latter under the rubric of *historia universalis* can only be compared with history pure and simple. I propose, therefore, to interrogate the *temporal structures* which may be characteristic of both history in the singular and histories in the plural.

Bound up in this question, naturally, is a methodological as well as a substantive intention, which has a dual aim. History as a science has, as it is known, no epistemological object proper to itself; rather, it shares this object with all social and human sciences. History as scientific discourse is specified only by its methods and through the rules by means of which it leads to verifiable results. The underlying consideration of temporal structure should make it possible to pose specific historical questions which direct themselves to historical phenomena treated by other disciplines only in terms of other systematic features. To this extent, the question of temporal structure serves to theoretically open the genuine domain of our investigation. It discloses a means of adequately examining the whole domain of historical investigation, without being limited by the existence, since around 1780, of a history pure and simple that presents a semantic threshold for our experience. Only temporal structures, that is, those internal to and demonstrable in related events, can articulate the material factors proper to this domain of inquiry. Such a procedure makes it

possible to pose the more precise question of how far this "history pure and simple" does in fact distinguish itself from the manifold histories of an earlier time. In this way, access should be gained to the "otherness" of histories before the eighteenth century without, at the same time, suppressing their mutual similarity and their similarities to our own history.

Finally, the question of temporal structures is formal enough to be able to extract in their entirety the mythological or theological interpretations of possible courses of historical events and historical description. This will reveal that many spheres which we today treat as possessing innate historical character were earlier viewed in terms of other premises, which did not lead to the disclosure of "history" as an epistemological object. Up until the eighteenth century, there was an absence of a common concept for all those histories, *res gestae*, the *pragmata* and *vitae*, which have since that time been collected within the concept "history" and, for the most part, contrasted with Nature.

Before presenting some examples of "prehistorical" experience in their temporal dimensionality, three modes of temporal experience will be recalled in a schematic fashion:

1. The irreversibility of events, before and after, in their various processual contexts.

2. The repeatability of events, whether in the form of an imputed identity of events, the return of constellations, or a figurative or typological ordering of events.

3. The contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous (*Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeitigen*). A differential classification of historical sequences is contained in the same naturalistic chronology. Within this temporal refraction is contained a diversity of temporal strata which are of varying duration, according to the agents or circumstances in question, and which are to be measured against each other. In the same way, varying extensions of time are contained in the concept *Gleichzeitigkeit der Ungleichzeitigen*. They refer to the prognostic structure of historical time, for each prognosis anticipates events which are certainly rooted in the present and in this respect are already existent, although they have not actually occurred.

From a combination of these three formal criteria it is possible to conceptually deduce progress, decadence, acceleration, or delay, the "not yet" and the "no longer," the "earlier" or "later than," the "too early" and the "too late," situation and duration—whatever differ-

entiating conditions must enter so that concrete historical motion might be rendered visible. Such distinctions must be made for every historical statement that leads from theoretical premises to empirical investigation. The temporal determinations of historical occurrences, once encountered empirically, can be as numerous as all the individual "events" which one meets with *ex post*, in the execution of action or in anticipation of the future.

Here, we initially wish to articulate the difference between natural and historical categories of time. There are periods that last until, for example, a battle is decided, during which the "sun stood still"; i.e., periods associated with the course of intersubjective action during which natural time is, so to speak, suspended. Of course, events and conditions can still be related to a natural chronology, and in this chronology is contained a minimal precondition of its actual interpretation. Natural time and its sequence—however it might be experienced—belong to the conditions of historical temporalities, but the former never subsumes the latter. Historical temporalities follow a sequence different from the temporal rhythms given in nature.

On the other hand, there are "historical," minimal temporalities which render natural time calculable. It still has to be established what minimum planetary cycle has to be supposed and recognized before it is possible to transform the temporalities of the stars into an astronomically rationalized, long-term, natural chronology. Here, astronomical time attains a historical valency; it opens up spaces of experience which gave rise to plans which ultimately transcended the yearly cycle.

It seems obvious to us today that the political and social space of action has become severely denaturalized under the impulse of technology. Its periodicity is less strongly dictated by nature than previously. It need only be mentioned that in the industrialized countries, the agricultural sector of the population, whose daily life was completely determined by nature, has fallen from 90 percent to 10 percent, and that even this remaining 10 percent are far more independent from natural determinations than was earlier the case. Scientific and technical domination of nature has indeed shortened periods of decision and action in war and politics to the extent that these periods have been freed of influence from the changing and changeable natural forces. This does not mean that freedom of action has thereby been increased. On the contrary, such freedom of action in the political domain seems

to shrink as it becomes increasingly dependent on technical factors, so that—paradoxical as it might seem—these could prove to represent a coefficient of delay for political calculation and action. Such reflections should serve only to remind us that a denaturalization of historical temporalities, insofar as it is demonstrable, might primarily be defined technically and industrially. It is technical progress, together with its consequences, that delivers the empirical basis of "history pure and simple." It distinguishes modernity from those civilizing processes that are historically registered in the developed cultures of the Mediterranean, Asia, and pre-Columbian America. The relations of time and space have been transformed, at first quite slowly, but in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, quite decisively. The possibilities of transport and communication have given rise to completely new forms of organization.

No one could claim that the intersubjective conditions of action in twentieth-century politics can be deduced solely from technology and that it is only today that one knows a historical time produced by human action. It is the case, rather, that a variety of temporal determinations are circulating whose discovery, experience, and formulation in writing must be attributed to the Greeks or the Jews. One has only to think of the chains of motives or modes of conduct whose effects were formulated by Thucydides or Tacitus. One could also think of the sevenfold relations possible between master and servant that Plato outlined as basic elements of political order, whose contradictory quality simultaneously provided the motive power of historical movement. Temporal elements are established in the classical writings that are still heuristically relevant enough to examine and employ as a frame for historical knowledge. There are temporal structures contained in everyday life, in politics, and in social relations which have yet to be superseded by any other form of time. A few examples follow.

1. The Greeks, without having a concept of history, identified the temporal processes within events. From Herodotus comes the sophisticated disputation in which the question of the optimal constitution is discussed.[2] While the protagonists of aristocracy and democracy each sought to highlight their own constitutions by proving the injuriousness of the others, Darius proceeded differently: he showed the immanent process by which each democracy and aristocracy was eventually led by its own internal disorders to monarchy. From this,

he concluded that monarchy should be introduced immediately, since it not only was the best constitutional form but would prevail in any case in the course of time. Aside from all technical, constitutional argument, he lent in this way a kind of historical legitimacy to monarchy that set it apart from all other constitutions. Such a form of proof can be characterized for us as historical. Before and after, earlier and later assume here in the consideration of forms of rule a temporal cogency immanent to its process, a cogency that is meant to enter into political conduct. One should also remember Plato's third book of Laws.[3] Plato examined the historical emergence of the contemporary variety of constitutions. In his "historical" review he did make use of myths and poets, but the process of historical proof is contained for us in the question of the probable period within which the known constitutional forms could emerge. A minimum period of experience, or a loss of experience was required before it became possible for a patriarchal constitution to develop and give way to a monarchic and, in turn, a democratic constitution. Plato worked with temporal hypotheses (as we would say today) and sought to derive a historical periodization of constitutional history from this history itself. The review of this history is reflected in such a manner that Plato observed that one could only learn from past incidents what could have occurred for the better, but that it was not possible to anticipate experiences, which required the expiry of a definite interval before they could be gathered.[4] This again is an eminently historical thought oriented to temporal sequence and is no longer bound to a heroic prehistory in the sense of the logographers. Measured against these "hypothetical" considerations of Plato, the Polybian schema of decline, fulfilled within three generations, is less elastic and more difficult to discharge empirically.[5]

These three doctrines of constitutional process share the idea of a space of political experience limited by nature. There was only a definite number of constitutional forms, and the real business of politics consisted in evading a threatened natural decline through the construction of a just combination of forms. The skillful management of a mixed constitution was (if you like) a "historical" task which is reflected from Plato to Aristotle to Cicero. Without acknowledging, or indeed even formulating, a domain of history pure and simple, all these examples register (by contrast to myth, even if also by means of it) a finite number of given constitutions, which while repeatable, are determined in such a way that they are not freely exchangeable

one for the other. They are subject to immanent material forces, as (for example) analyzed by Aristotle in his *Politics*, and overcoming these forces meant creating a "historical" space with its own temporality.

The formal, temporal categories noted above are contained in Greek figures of thought. Even if *Historie* as a body of knowledge and mode of exploration (*als Kunde und Erforschung*), to use Christian Meier's phrase, covers the whole human world and thus reaches beyond that domain which would later be called the Historical, it still shows what irreversible temporal processes and fateful intervals are. Implicitly, the ancients developed theorems regarding specific sequential spans, within which a constitutional transformation, given certain possibilities, is generally conceivable. This is a matter of historical temporalities which are indeed determined by nature and in this respect remain bound to it, but whose genuine structures enter into historical knowledge.

It was in this way that, within the Greek space of experience, diverse and historically variant constitutions coexist and are thereby comparable. The sequential course of the noncontemporaneous, which issued out of the diachronic approach, was thus demonstrable as the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous (*Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen*). This was masterfully developed in Thucydides' *Proömium*.

Within this experience was contained the repeatability of histories, or at least of their constellations, from which their exemplary and instructive nature could be deduced. This entire complex persists, as it is known, into the eighteenth century. The investigation of this complex as a unity remains a task to be undertaken by our science, even if the theoretical preparatory work necessary to achieve comparability is stunted, thanks to the primacy of a chronological arrangement of epochs within our guild.

Finally, in considering the naturally derived "historically immanent" concept of time, reference might be made to the metaphor present in the *corpus* doctrine,[6] ultimately taken up and developed by natural law in the Baroque era, which aimed at a *societas perfecta*. The comparisons of constitutions with the human body, together with its functions and ailments, customary since Antiquity, naturally introduce given constants against which decline or approximation might be measured. Here we have natural constants which, for their part, make possible temporal determinations without, however, involving a purely natural chronology based on biology or astronomy. Instead, historical motion is first recognizable as such because its interpretation is bound

up with natural, organic categories. It remains an open question whether a "history pure and simple," experienced historically or historically-philosophically, can escape this interpretive tendency stretching from Antiquity to the natural law of the eighteenth century. Probably not, for the naturalistic determinants that penetrate all histories—here more so, there less—are not, on their side, "historicizable" without remainder.

2. If we examine the Judeo-Christian tradition, another space of experience opens up. This tradition contains theological, temporal determinations which lay transverse to "empirical" findings. Without treating history directly, the Judeo-Christian interpretative approach introduces standards which exhibited historical structures of a kind not formulated previously. Seeing things from the point of view of the opponent—Herodotus's achievement and the methodological dictate of Lucian—was also possible for the Jews, if effected in a manner different from that of the Greeks. The Jews even gained a sense of their own history from the victories of their enemies. They could contritely accept defeat as a form of punishment, and this made their survival possible. Precisely because of their self-image as the chosen people, the Jews were able to integrate the great powers of the Orient into their own history. The absence of universal human history in the Old Testament does not mean that "humanity" had not entered into their own history.

As a further example of the enormous transformative power of theological experience and of the theological problematic, a power which serves knowledge, we turn to Augustine. Here we have a synthesis of both ancient and Judeo-Christian trains of thought. Whatever the apologetic motivation for Augustine might be, his doctrine of the two empires made it possible for him to develop an "enduring answer" to every historical situation. The historical declarations on temporality that Augustine made are not distinguished by their linear form and substantial determinations. Augustine theologically articulated an internal experience of temporality which made it possible for him to relativize the entire domain of earthly experience.[7] Whatever might happen on this earth was thereby structurally iteratable and in itself unimportant, while being, with respect to the Hereafter and the Last Judgment, unique and of the greatest importance. Exactly because the meaning of history lies beyond history itself, Augustine gained a freedom of interpretation for the sphere of human action and suffering,

providing him with the advantage of perceiving earthly events in an acute manner.

Augustine certainly made use of various doctrines concerning the age of the world—such as the doctrine of the three phases before, during, and after the Law (*Gesetz*), or the doctrine of *aetatis*. Such forms of periodization, reaching from mythology to modern historical philosophies, direct themselves fundamentally to ideas of origin and objective; the given situation is determined again and again by reference to implicit points of departure and termination. To this extent they represent transhistorical interpretive strategies. What was decisive in the case of Augustine—and this goes for all attempts to transform doctrines concerning the age of the world into forms of historical chronology—was his arrangement of the stages of the world's age in such a way that the period following the birth of Christ became the final epoch. Since the birth of Christ, therefore, nothing new could occur, and the Last Judgment was approaching. The sixth *aetas* is the final one and hence structurally uniform. Here, Augustine had gained a dual advantage. While he could no longer be surprised by anything empirical, theologically everything was novel once again. Augustine could define time, insofar as it was only the internal mode of experience of Augustine *qua* divine creation, specifically as a spiritual expectation of the future. This future, however, was theologically placed across the path of empirical histories, even if the latter were disclosed by the former as terminal histories. Thus, Augustine outlined a horizon for the *civitas terrena* within which he formulated a series of regularities which, in their formal structure, delineated the conditions of possible historical motion. He formulated enduring rules of an apparently atemporal nature, but which were, at the same time, necessary for the knowledge of historical movement: they present a framework within which comparability can be identified, and they offer constants that make prognoses possible. There is no such thing as a prognosis which projects itself into the absolute unknown; even possible transformations presuppose a minimal constancy within such changes.

Augustine therefore proposed the rule: "Non ergo ut, sit pax nolunt, sed ut ea sit quam volunt."[8] (Not that one shuns peace, but that each seeks his own peace.) The failure of peace in the earthly sphere was not due to a want of peaceful sentiment, but to the fact that at least two persons sought to attain peace and thereby generated a situation of conflict obstructing the attainment of peace. In this way historical

time was similarly released. This conception was naturally deduced in a theological manner by Augustine from his doctrine of the just peace to be found only in the Hereafter. But with this, he established for *civitas terrena* an enduring motive for historical turbulence that finds in a just peace no guarantee for its maintenance, and even in striving for such a peace finds no guarantee of its fulfillment.

He deduced a similar rule from his doctrine of the just war: the justness of a war, formulated as a moral postulate, provided no certainty that it was in fact just. Here, too, Augustine developed, at first theologically, a factor of movement which perpetually made it possible to deduce the earthly course of events from the relativity and limitation of prevailing forms of justice.[9]

Augustine drew a further regularity from Roman imperial history, whose immanent meaning he stripped of theological significance. The greater an empire becomes, he argued, the more warlike its desire for security; the weaker the external enemy, the more endangered its internal peace. With an almost automatic inevitability, the danger of civil war grows with the size of an empire, which in this process increasingly stabilizes its foreign relations.[10]

Thanks to his theologically founded approach, Augustine is able, within this domain of uniformity, to formulate insights which, even in the absence of their theological basis, reveal temporal sequential tendencies. Expressed in a modern fashion, Augustine produces formal categories which are introduced as a conditional network of possible historical motion. He makes structural long-term forecasts whose substantial terms are always related to the finitude of historical constellations and hence to their temporality, but whose reproduction is held to be probable under comparable circumstances.

The final example of what is for us a genuinely historical form of knowledge cloaked by theology comes from Bossuet, whose *Discours de l'histoire universelle* stems from Augustine. Following the Augustinian theodicy, Bossuet formulates statements which contain a similar theoretical capacity without having to be read theologically, in the same way that Lübbe claims Hegel's historical philosophy can be read. The constantly given difference between human design and fulfillment, between conscious engagement and unwelcome effect, or between unconscious action and deliberate intention: these differences are deduced by Bossuet quite traditionally from the will of God, and are explained as such. The ancient theological idea concerning the gulf

dividing divine providence and human design thus assumes historical validity. This arises in the transposition of the problematic of foresight and its workings into the continually surprising difference between plan and effect; out of the theological epiphenomena emerges a historical phenomenon. One gains an insight into the manner in which historical structures unfold over time. The heterogeneity of ends can be cited as a factor which is interpreted by Bossuet in a far more worldly manner than Augustine had ever done. Or again, Bossuet employs the ancient topos according to which cause and effect relate for centuries, but which can only be recognized *ex post* by historians through the assumption of providentiality. Such long-term sequences, which transcend the experience of any particular human community, no longer have any connection with mythical or theological epochal doctrines. They do stem from the doctrine of Providence, from whose predestined intention such long-term causal chains can be deduced. Should Providence as divine arrangement suffer an eclipse, it would be replaced not by human design but by that perspective which makes it possible for the observers of history (as with Fontenelle, for instance) to discover history in general, a history which gives rise to contexts of activity reaching over several human generations.

It is possible to regard men as the heirs of divine foresight. From this perspective, modern historical philosophy would indeed be a secularization or, to use Gilson's term, a metamorphosis of the Augustinian doctrine of the two empires.[12] But the question posed here concerning temporal structures and their presence within a historical experience of history is more productive. If one considers this, it might also be possible to discover a common standard for a possible critique of utopias. This would involve finding the temporal structures which could define as unreal the empirical content of both theological eschatology and historico-philosophical utopias. The point is not to deny the historical efficacy of such positions, but rather to indicate that the question of the extent to which they might be realized is easier to answer.

In this context it would also be appropriate to investigate the typological and figurative referential field which should be contained within a time prophetic in itself.[13] It remains an open question whether modern developmental doctrines, which conceive the sequential phases of the French Revolution typologically, represent a straightforward secularization or whether they represent a proper form of knowledge.

Certainly all the temporal declarations noted above arose in a premodern context which never organized itself in terms of "history in general" but which had developed against the grain of all potential individual histories. What we today call history was certainly discovered, but history was never explained in terms of history. The naturalistic attachment of historical process in the world of Greek cosmology or in the theological *ordo temporum* of the Judeo-Christian salvational doctrine involved historical knowledge which could be attained only by turning away from history as totality. This partly answers our question about the connection between the unitary history of modernity and the multitude of individual histories of the entire past. It might be discerned that historical structures and temporal experience had long been formulated before the point when the history of progress and historism, "history pure and simple," could be semantically appropriated.

In conclusion, we can once again pose the contrasting question: by means of which categories can the specificity of modern history be distinguished from the regularity of recurring sequences outlined above? To deal with this, it is necessary to introduce into our hypothesis coefficients of motion and acceleration which are no longer derivative of expectations of the Last Judgment (as was earlier the case), but which instead remain adequate to the empirical factors of a world increasingly technical in nature.

Our modern concept of history has initially proved itself for the specifically historical determinants of progress and regress, acceleration and delay. Through the concept "history in and for itself," the modern space of experience has in several respects been disclosed in its modernity: it is articulated as a *plurale tantum*, comprehending the interdependence of events and the intersubjectivity of actions. It indicates the convergence of *Historie* and *Geschichte*, involving the essence of both transcendental and historicophilosophical imperatives. Finally, it expresses the step from a universal history in the form of an aggregate to a world history as a system,[14] conceptually registering history's need for theory and relating it to the entire globe as its domain of action.

It has since been possible to grasp history as a process freed of immanent forces, no longer simply deducible from natural conditions, and hence no longer adequately explained in their terms. The dynamic of the modern is established as an element *sui generis*. This involves a process of production whose subject or subjects are only to be

investigated through reflection on this process, without this reflection leading, however, to a final determination of this process. A previously divine teleology thus encounters the ambiguity of human design, as can be shown in the ambivalence of the concept of progress, which must continually prove itself both finite and infinite if it is to escape a relapse into the naturalistic and spatial sense it earlier embodied. Likewise, the modern concept of history draws its ambivalence from the necessity (even if only decreed aesthetically) of conceiving of history as a totality, but a totality that can never be complete, for, as we know, the future remains unknown.

Representation, Event, and Structure

Epistemologically, the question of representation—arising from the narrative properties of historical description—involves a diversity of temporal extensions of historical movement.[1] The fact that a "history" exists as an extralinguistic entity does not only set limits to representational potential but also requires the historian to pay great attention to the nature of source material. This itself contains a variety of indices of temporal orders. Seen from the historian's point of view, therefore, the question can be reversed: we have here a variety of temporal layers, each of which necessitates a different methodological approach. But there is a preliminary decision contained in this for the historian. In the process of representation, distinct communicative forms emerge, for, as in Augustine's words, "narratio demonstrationi similis (est)."[2] To anticipate my thesis: in practice, it is not possible to maintain a boundary between narration and description; in the theory of historical temporalities there is no complete interrelation between the levels of different temporal extensions. For the sake of clarifying this thesis, I initially assume that "events" can only be narrated, while "structures" can only be described.

1. Events that can be separated *ex post* from the infinity of circumstances—or in relation to documents, from the quantity of affairs—can be experienced by contemporary participants as a coherent event, as a discernible unity which can be narrated. This explains, for instance, the priority of eyewitness accounts which were regarded, up until the eighteenth century, as a particularly reliable primary source of evidence. This explains the high source value placed on a traditional *Geschichte* that recounts a once-contemporary occurrence.

It is initially natural chronology that provides the framework within which a collection of incidents join into an event. Chronological accuracy in the arrangement of all elements contributing to an event is, therefore, a methodological postulate of historical narrative. Thus, for the meaning of historical sequence, there is a *threshold of fragmentation*[3] below which an event dissolves. A minimum of "before" and "after" constitutes the significant unity which makes an event out of incidents. The content of an event, its before and after, might be extended; its consistency, however, is rooted in temporal sequence. Even the intersubjectivity of an event must, insofar as it is performed by acting subjects, be secured to the frame of temporal sequence. One need only recall the histories of the outbreak of war in 1914 or 1939. What really happened in terms of the interdependence of what was done and what was neglected, was shown only in the hours that followed, in the next day.

The transposition of once-direct experience into historical knowledge—even if it is an unexpected meaning released as the fragmentation of a past horizon of expectation gains recognition—is dependent upon a chronologically measurable sequence. Retrospect or prospect as stylistic devices of representation (for instance, in the speeches of Thucydides) serve to clarify the critical or decisive point in the course of a narrative.

The before and after constitute the semantic dimensions of a narrative—"veni, vidi, vici"—but only because historical experience of what constitutes an event is always constrained by temporal sequence. Schiller's dictum that world history is the tribunal of the world can also be understood in this way. "What is left undone one minute / is restored by no eternity." Whoever hesitates to assume the consequence of Schiller's statement, and permit eschatology to enter into the processual course of history, must nevertheless make the sequence of historical time the guiding thread of representation, rendering "narratable" the irreversible course of event in politics, diplomacy, and civil or other wars.

Natural chronology is, of course, empty of sense with respect to history, which is why Kant demanded that chronology be arranged according to history and not history according to chronology.[4] The establishment of a historical chronology requires "structuration." This involves the unfamiliar form of a diachronic structure. There are diachronic structures which are internal to the course of events. Every history testifies to the fact that the acting subjects perceive a certain

duration: of inauguration, high points, peripeteia, crises, and termination. It is possible to recognize internal determinants for successions of events—the distribution of possibilities, the number of adversaries, and, above all, the limitation or opening up of definite tempi—which all contribute to the structuring of diachrony. Consequently, it is possible to compare sequences of revolutions, wars, and political constitutions at a definite level of abstraction or typology. Besides such diachronic structures for events, there are also longer-term structures, which are more familiar today.

2. The dictates of a sociohistorical problematic have recently caused the word "structure" to penetrate history, in particular as "structural history."[5] "Structure," here, concerns the temporal aspects of relations which do not enter into the strict sequence of events that have been the subject of experience. Such structures illuminate long-term duration, stability, and change. The categories of "long term" and "medium term" formulate in a more demanding fashion what was in the past century treated in terms of "situations" (*Zustände*). The semantic trace of "layering"—a spatial conception tending toward the static—is summoned up metaphorically through an expansion of "structural history."

While before and after are for narratable events absolutely constitutive, the definition of chronological determinants is clearly less crucial to the possibility of describing situations or long-term factors. This is implied within the mode of experience for structural givens, for, while such experience enters into a momentary event, it is preexistent in a sense different from that contained in a chronological precedent. Such structures have names—constitutional forms, and modes of rule—which do not change from one day to the next and are the preconditions of political action. We can also take productive forces and relations of production which alter in the long term, perhaps by degrees, whereas nevertheless determining and shaping social life. And again, it is here that constellations of friend and foe definitive of peace or war belong, which can become entrenched without corresponding to the interests of either party. Here again, considerations of space and geography are related to their technical disposition, from which arise lasting possibilities for political action and economic and social behavior. We can also consider under this heading unconscious patterns of behavior which are either induced by specific institutions or characterize such institutions, but which in any case admit or limit the potentiality for experience and action. Further, there is the natural succession of gen-

erations, containing possibilities for the creation of conflict or the formation of tradition according to their domains of experience, quite apart from actions and their transpersonal results. Lastly, customs and systems of law regulating in the long or medium term the process of social or international life should be considered here.

Without weighing the relation of one such structure against another, it can be generally stated that the temporal constants of these structures transcend the chronologically ascertainable space of experience available to the specific subjects involved in an event. While events are caused or suffered by specific subjects, structures as such are supra-individual and intersubjective. They cannot be reduced to individual persons and seldom to exactly determinable groups. Methodologically, therefore, they demand functional determinants. Structures do not in this way become entities outside of time, but rather gain a processual character, which can then enter into everyday experience.

There are, for example, long-term elements which prevail whether they are promoted or opposed. Today, when considering the rapid industrial recovery after the 1848 Revolution, one can ask whether it occurred because of or in spite of the failure of revolution. Arguments exist both for and against; neither need be compelling, but both indicate the movement that swept across the stream of political forces of Revolution and Reaction. In this case, it is possible that the Reaction had a more revolutionary effect than the Revolution itself. If, then, Revolution and Reaction are both indices of the same movement, a movement which feeds from both political camps and is propelled onward by both, this dualism obviously implies a historical movement—the irreversible progress of long-term structural change—which transcends the political bipolarity of Revolution and Reaction.

What is today a methodological reflection of structural history can belong quite well to the everyday experience of once-living generations. Structures and their transformation are detectable empirically as long as their temporal span does not reach beyond the unity of the memory of the relevant generations.

There certainly are also structures which are so enduring that they remain in the domain of the unconscious or the unknown, or whose transformation is so slow that it escapes awareness. In these cases, only social science or history as a science of the past can provide information beyond the perceptible experience of given generations.

3. Events and structures thus have in the experiential space of historical movement diverse temporal extensions; these constitute the object of history as a science. Traditionally, the representation of structures is close to description (for example, the *Statistik* of enlightened absolutism), while that of events is closer to narration (the pragmatic *Historie* of the eighteenth century). Attributing *Geschichte* to either one or the other would be to express an unfounded preference. Both levels, event and structure, are related to each other without merging. Moreover, both levels shift their valency, the relation of their mutual arrangement, according to the problem that is posed.

Statistical time series thus live on concrete individual events which possess their own time, but which gain only structural expressiveness within the framework of long periods. Narration and description are interlocked, and the event becomes the presupposition of structural expression.

On the other hand, more or less enduring, or longer-term structures, are the conditions of possible events. That a battle can be executed in the simple rhythm "veni, vidi, vici" presupposes specific forms of domination, technical disposal over natural conditions, a comprehensible relation of friend and foe, etc.; that is, structures belonging to the event of this battle, which enter into it by determining it. The history of this one battle, therefore, has dimensions of different temporal extension contained in the narration or description long "before" the effect which lends "meaning" to the event of the battle is reflected. This is a matter of structures "in eventu," to use a phrase of H. R. Jauss's, notwithstanding the hermeneutical reassurance that they will only "post eventum" become semantically comprehensible. It is such structures that provide the general basis upon which Montèsquieu can preserve the chance nature in the events of a battle which is, at the same time, decisive for a war.[6]

With respect to individual events, therefore, there are structural conditions which make possible the course of an event. Such structures may be described, but they can also be included in the context of a narrative, provided that they assist in clarifying events through their nonchronological, causal character.

Conversely, structures are only comprehensible in the medium of the events within which structures are articulated, and which are tangible as structures within them. A trial involving labor law, for instance, can be both a dramatic history in the sense of "event" and simulta-

neously an index of long-term social, economic, and legal elements. The valency of narrated history and the form of its reproduction shift according to the problematic: it is then, accordingly, differentially classified with respect to temporality. Either the dramatic before and after of the incident, the trial, and its outcome—together with its consequences—are treated, or the history is split down into its elements and provides indices of social conditions which the course of events makes visible. The description of such structures can be even "more dramatic" than the account of the trial itself. "The perspective relevance of a transcendent narrative statement" (Jauss)—even if a *conditio sine qua non* of historical knowledge—in this case cedes its privileged position to the perspective relevance of a transcending structural analysis.

The process of upgrading and regrading can be carried through from individual event to world history. The more rigid the systematic context, the more long-term the structural aspects, the less are they narratable within the terms of a strict before and after. Similarly, "duration" can historiographically become an event itself. Accordingly, as perspective alters, medium-range structures can be introduced as a sole complex of events within a greater context; we might take, as an example, the mercantile *Ständeordnung*. There they gain a specific and chronologically ascertainable valency so that, for instance, economic forms and relations of production can be separated into appropriate epochs. Structures once described and analyzed then become narratable as a factor within a greater context of events. The processual character of modern history cannot be comprehended other than through the reciprocal explanation of events through structures, and vice versa.

Nonetheless, there remains an indissoluble remainder, a methodological aporia, which does not allow the contamination of event and structure. There is a hiatus between both entities, for their temporal extension cannot be forced into congruence, neither in experience nor in scientific reflection. The interrelation of event and structure must not be permitted to lead to the suppression of their differences if they are to retain their epistemological object of disclosing the multiple strata of history.

The before and after of an event contains its own temporal quality which cannot be reduced to a whole within its longer-term conditions. Every event produces more and at the same time less than is contained in its pregiven elements: hence, its permanently surprising novelty.[7] The structural preconditions for the Battle of Leuthen are not sufficient

to explain why Frederick the Great won this battle in the manner he did. Event and structure can certainly be related: the Frederician military organization, its system of recruitment, its involvement in the agrarian structure of East Elbia, the system of taxation and military finance built upon this, Frederick's military skill within the tradition of military history: all this made the victory of Leuthen possible, but 5 December 1757 remains unique within its immanent chronological sequence.

The course of the battle, its effects on war politics, and the relevance of the victory in relation to the Seven Years War, can only be recounted in a chronological manner to be made meaningful. But Leuthen became a symbol. The outcome of Leuthen can take on a structural significance. The event assumed a structural status. Leuthen in the traditional history of the Prussian conception of the state, its exemplary effect on the revaluation of military risk in the military designs of Prussia–Germany (Dehio): these became lasting, long-term factors that entered into structural constitutional preconditions which had, in their turn, made the Battle of Leuthen possible.

If one methodically relates the modes of representation to the temporal extensions ascribed to them in the "domain of objects" of history, three consequences follow: first, however much they condition each other, the temporal levels do not merge; second, an event can, according to the shift of the investigated level, gain structural significance; and third, even duration can become an event.

This leads us to the epistemological relation of both concepts, which has until now only been outlined in their mode of representation and their corresponding temporal levels.

4. It would be erroneous to attribute to "events" a greater reality than so-called structures, on the grounds that the concrete course of the event is bound up with an empirically demonstrable before and after in a naturalistic chronology. History would be limited if so restricted at the expense of structures which, while operating on a different temporal level, are not thereby any less effective.

Today it is usual in history to change the level of proof, deducing and explaining one thing from another and by another. This shift from event to structure and back does not, however, resolve the problem of derivability: everything can be argued for, but not everything by means of anything. Only theoretical anticipation can decide which argument could or should count. Which structures provide the frame-

work of potential individual histories? Which incidents become an event, and which events combine in the course of past history?

It belongs to the historicity of our science that these various preliminary questions cannot be reduced to a common factor, and it is a methodological dictate to first clarify the question of temporal plane. For historical knowledge, event and structure are similarly "abstract" or "concrete," depending on the temporal plane on which they move. To be for or against the reality of the past is no alternative.

Two epistemological remarks can be made here: the facticity of events established *ex post* is never identical with a totality of past circumstances thought of as formerly real. Every event historically established and presented lives on the fiction of actuality; reality itself is past and gone. This does not mean, however, that a historical event can be arbitrarily set up. The sources provide control over what might not be stated. They do not, however, prescribe what may be said. Historians are negatively obliged to the witnesses of past reality. When interpretively extracting an event from its sources, an approach is made to the "literary narrator" (*Geschichtenerzähler*), who likewise pays homage to the fiction of actuality when seeking in this way to make *Geschichte* plausible.

The quality of reality of past events that are narrated is no greater epistemologically than the quality of reality contained in past structures, which perhaps reach far beyond the apprehended experience of past generations. Structures of great duration, especially when they escape the consciousness or knowledge of former participants, can even be (or have been) "more effective" the less they enter as a whole into a single, empirically ascertainable event. But this can only be the basis of hypothesis. The fictional nature of narrated events corresponds at the level of structures to the hypothetical character of their "reality." Such epistemological handicaps cannot, however, prevent the historian making use of fictionality and hypothesis so that past reality might be linguistically rendered as a condition of reality.

To do this, the historian employs historical concepts which take account both of the fullness of past events and of the need to be understood today by both historian and reader. No event can be narrated, no structure represented, no process described without the use of historical concepts which make the past "conceivable." But this conceptual quality goes further than the singularity of the past which it helps to conceptualize. Linguistically, the categories employed to

recount the unique event cannot claim the same uniqueness as the event in question. At this stage, this is a triviality. But it must be recalled to make clear the structural claim which arises on the basis of the unavoidable use of historical concepts.

Historical semantology[8] shows that every concept entering into a narrative or representation (e.g., state, democracy, army, and party, to cite only general concepts) renders relations discernible by a refusal to take on their uniqueness. Concepts not only teach us of the singularity (for us) of past meanings, but also contain structural potential, dealing with the contemporaneous in the noncontemporary, which cannot be reduced to the pure temporal succession of history.

Concepts which comprehend past states, relations, and processes become for the historian who employs them formal categories which are the conditions of possible histories. Only concepts with a claim to durability, repeated applicability, and empirical realizability—concepts with a structural content—open the way today for a formerly "real" history to appear possible and be represented as such.

5. From the diverse ordering of event and structure, and out of the long-term shifts of semantic content in historical concepts it is now possible to deduce the changing valency of *Historia magistra vitae.* A final remark can be made here:

The temporal extensions of historical circumstances, themselves varying in their susceptibility to exposition, provoke in their turn distinct historical doctrines. *Fabula docet* was always an empty term which could be filled in different ways and, as every collection of proverbs shows, provided with current directives. That concerns its contents. With respect to formal, temporal structure it can, by contrast, be asked at what level *Historie* teaches, can teach, or should teach: at the level of short-term contexts of action, with the situational moral supplied to history by the experiential model, or at the level of medium-term processes from which trends can be extrapolated for the future. In the latter case, history outlines the conditions of a possible future without delivering prognostications, or it relates to the level of meta-historical duration, which consequently is not yet timeless. Perhaps here belongs Robert Michels's social-psychological analysis of Social Democratic parties which sought the regularities within the constitution of elites, as a precautionary tale for political conduct. It is also here that the proverb "pride goeth before destruction" comes, a dictum

which simply formulates a historical possibility even if it arises only occasionally.

Where history indicates the possibility of repeatable events, it must be able to identify structural conditions sufficient for the creation of such an analogous event. Thucydides, Machiavelli, but also Montesquieu, Robert Michels, and to some extent, Guicciardini, have all, to use a modern expression, calculated in terms of such structural conditions.

If these conditions change—e.g., technology, economy, or the whole society together with its form of organization—then history must, as in modernity, be able to account for such changing structures. The structures themselves prove to be mutable, in any case more than was previously the case. For, where formerly long-term processes became abbreviated through altering or even accelerating speed, the spaces of experience were rejuvenated by the continual requirement to adapt. In this fashion, the singularity of history could simply become an axiom of all historical knowledge.

The singularity of events—the theoretical premise of both historism and of the doctrine of Progress—knows no iteratability and hence permits no direct instruction. To this extent, modern "history" has dethroned the older *Historia magistra vitae*. But the doctrine of individual singularity which marks out the modern concept of history, viewed structurally, relates less to the actual novelty of events that arise than to the singularity of modern transformations themselves. It proves itself in what is now called "structural change."

However, it does not yet follow from this that the future also escapes the application of historical teaching. Such teachings instead move on a temporal level organized in a different theoretical manner. Historical philosophy and the differential prognostics which followed from it both addressed themselves to the past so they could draw from it instruction for the future. Tocqueville, Lorenz von Stein, and Marx are all proof of this. If a step is taken out of the inherited space of experience into an unknown future, an initial effort is made to conceive this experience as a "new era." From this point on, the referential character of a "history" alters. Diagnosis and prognosis can continue to build upon enduring structures of a uniform natural kind, making possible conclusions for the future from a theoretically defined iterability. But this iteratability clearly does not cover the whole space of experience existent since the French and industrial revolutions. Long-

term structural transformation and its ever-shorter periodicity give rise to forecasts which direct themselves to the conditions of a possible future, not to its concrete individual features. "It is possible to forecast the approaching future, but one would not wish to prophesy individual events."[9]

Individual history is thus no longer an exemplar of its potential iteratability, or for avoiding iterability. It assumes, rather, a valency, in terms of a structural statement, for processual occurrence. Even when the heterogeneity of ends is introduced as a constant factor of destabilization, structural-historical analysis retains its prognostic potential. No economic planning today is possible without reference to the scientifically digested experiences of the world economic crisis of about 1930, a crisis which was itself unique. Should historical science dispense with this role in favor of the axiom of singularity? History indicates the conditions of a possible future which cannot be derived solely from the sum of individual events. But in the events which it investigates there appear structures which condition and limit that scope of the future. History thus shows us the boundaries of the possible otherness of our future without having to do without the structural conditions of possible repetition. In other words, a justifiable critique of the voluntaristic self-assurance of utopian planners of the future can only be effected if history as a *magistra vitae* draws instruction not from histories (*Geschichten*), but rather from the "structure of movement" of our history.

Chance as Motivational Trace in Historical Writing

Speaking about chance in terms of historiography is difficult, in that chance has its own history in the writing of history, but a history which has yet to be written. "Chance" can certainly be adequately clarified only when the complete conceptual structure of the historian making use of a "chance occurrence" is taken into account. For example, one could examine the counterconcept that the chance sets free, or the overall concept which is relativized. For instance, Raymond Aron begins his *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* with an antithesis taken from Cournot of "order" and "chance," and he concludes: "The historical fact is essentially irreducible to order: *chance is the foundation of history.*"[1] Measured against the model of a lawlike natural science, chance might constitute the essence of all history, but the influence of particular historical circumstances on such formulations is perfectly obvious. In the course of his investigation, Aron dissolves the crude antithesis, and accordingly the meaning of chance alters within his historical epistemology. An event can appear accidental or not according to the standpoint of the observer. This also does away historiographically with the idle antithesis of chance and necessity. Consideration of one set of circumstances can make an event appear accidental, but consideration of another set can make it appear unavoidable. This position is also adopted by Carr in his book on history; chance becomes a concept dependent upon perspective.[2] In this way, a level of reflection is achieved that treats chance systematically. However, this is not at all obvious, nor was it ever so.

Speaking temporally, chance is a pure category of the present. It is not derivative of the horizon of future expectation except as its

sudden manifestation; neither is it possible to experience it as the outcome of past causes: if it were, then it would no longer be chance. Insofar as historical writing aims at illuminating the temporal course of relations, chance remains an ahistorical category. But the category is not, because of this, unhistorical. Rather, chance is more suited to depict the startling, the new, the unforeseen, and like experiences in history. A circumstance might therefore initially arise on the basis of chance, or a fragile situation might need a chance occurrence as a stopgap. Wherever chance is made use of historiographically, it indicates an inadequate consistency of given conditions and an incommensurability in their results. It is precisely here that we may find its historical nature.

Without any doubt, it is a property of modern historical methodology to avoid chance wherever possible. By contrast, up until the eighteenth century, it was quite usual to make use of chance, or luck in the form of fortune, in the interpretation of histories. This custom has a long and very changeable history, which can only be broadly outlined here.[3] Fortuna was one of the few heathen deities transposed into the Christian historical panorama. With the bitter logic characteristic of the Christian "Enlightenment," Augustine had ridiculed the contradictions a goddess of chance brought with her. "Ubi est definitio illa Fortunae? Ubi est quod a fortuitis etiam nomen accepit? Nihil enim prodest eam colere, si fortuna est."[4] His purpose was to deduce all chance as the singular work of God, and to this extent Fortuna disappeared from a rigorous Christian experience of history. When, for instance, Otto von Freising introduces chance, as he often does, it is only to explain it as God's work.[5] Precisely the initial incomprehensible character of such works indicated God's hidden decree. Fortuna was theologically mediated and in this manner superseded.

If Fortuna was, despite this, received into the Christianizing world—whether in popular belief or in succession to Boethius—it was definitely because her place in everyday life or within the frame of *Historien* could not simply be left unoccupied. The complete ambiguity offered by Fortuna, from chance via "grace" to good or ill fortune, was a structural element for the representation of individual *Historien*.[6] She indicated the permanence of change, a transpersonal pattern of events which escaped the control of men and women. However virtue and belief might relate to her—whether deduced from God or (as later) discharged by God—Fortuna, stronger than the plans realized by hu-

mans, remained indicative of the changing times, of changing constellations.[7]

So far, both Christians and humanists were at one on the nature of Fortuna as "daughter of foresight" or "mother of chance."[8] The metaphor of the circling wheel,[9] which Boethius introduced into Christian historical interpretation, pointed to the iteratability of all occurrence, which in spite of all ups and downs could not introduce anything which was, in principle, new to the world before the time of the Last Judgment. At the same time, Fortuna could be employed as a symbol of the incommensurable for the justification of God—likewise for Boethius. It was possible to do this with respect to both luck and misfortune, which broke into a human context exactly because they did not appear immanent to it, although they made its meaning intelligible. The two faces of Fortuna opened up a space for all possible histories; her endowments created space for "all centuries."[10] Her changeability secured the ever-constant preconditions for earthly events and their representability. Fortuna belonged, so to say, to the doctrine of *Geschichten*, to the historical, and not to histories themselves. Thanks to her help, *Historie* was able to elevate itself into exemplariness. Until then, Fortuna could only be rationalized in a theological or moral-philosophical fashion, but not historically: as soon as she was interpreted empirically or pragmatically, she became pure chance.

The problem of historical accident was first prompted methodologically when foresight was replaced by arguments which were no longer sufficient to account for miracles and, of course, chance occurrences. It also required a particular type of historically immanent reason (for instance, psychological or pragmatic *causae*), ruling out Fortuna and thus rendering chance a problem. The famous nose of Cleopatra which, according to Pascal, changed the face of the world,[11] reaches from one epoch to another: chance becomes an immanent cause from which significant consequences can be drawn. Precisely the inconsequentiality and superficiality of the chance element suited it as a *causa*. Thus, in his *Antimachiavelli*, Frederick II traced the Peace of Utrecht to a pair of gloves that the Duchess of Marlborough had hastily ordered.[12]

In the eighteenth century, an entire historical tendency developed around such forms of argument; from Richer's *Essay sur les grands évenemens par les petites causes* (1758), to the derivation of state affairs, to the intrigues of mistresses; as Voltaire argued, the devastation of

Europe in the Seven Years War was sparked by the *amour propre* of two or three persons.[13] Chance here is fully at the service of arguments delivered by the moralizing historian. Thus, for example, Duclos wrote of the politics of Louis XIV: "When one considers our misfortunes, it is obvious that they must be entirely laid at our door; for our salvation, on the other hand, we have only chance to thank."[14] Chance is indicative of the absence of moral and rational modes of conduct which should belong to a proper politics. Chance, which can equally well be transient, is only the stopgap of a rationalizable politics.

"La fortune et le hasard sont des mots vides de sens," stated the young Frederick;[15] they emanate from the heads of poets and owe their origin to the deep ignorance of a world which had given hazy names (*des noms vagues*) to the effects of unknown causes. The misfortune (*l'infortune*) of a Cato, for example, was due only to the unforeseeable nature of overlapping cause and effect which the adverse times (*contre-temps*) had ushered in and which he, therefore, was not able to forestall. Frederick directed his efforts to the development of a political system that would permit him to place all of the circumstances of the time at the service of his plans. He thereby departed from the Fortuna of Machiavelli without, however, being able to completely do without the name's semantic content. Its place was taken by concepts of time (*temps* and *contre-temps*), but its room for maneuver was limited by the questions of causes and intentions. The timely chance then revealed itself as a collection of causes, becoming a mere name without reality. Thus, it also became clear, added Frederick, why "fortune" and "chance" were the sole survivors of the heathen deities (a passage, however, that Voltaire struck out of the page proofs for him).[16]

The extent to which chance dissolved under the purview of an enlightened historian, and where it nevertheless reemerged, be it on account of the situation or of the demands of representation, will now be shown in more detail in the work of von Archenholtz.

I

Von Archenholtz, formerly a captain in Royal Prussian service, was, in the second half of the eighteenth century, one of the most widely read historians and one of the authors of the "portrait of manners" (*Sittengemälde*), which can be seen as a forerunner of modern sociology. In his popular book on the Seven Years War, Archenholtz repeatedly

addressed the question of chance. In doing so, as in our problematic, he had to risk being suspected of making forbidden forays into extra-historical concepts for the sake of the consistency of his historical material, so that he might chivalrously conceal gaps in the evidential support for his representation. Let us consider three of the chance occurrences that Archenholtz concerned himself with. At the beginning, in the description of the infamous coalition of the Catholic courts of Vienna and Versailles—a coalition which appeared to overturn the entire established European political system, the shock effects of which were not dissimilar to those of the Hitler–Stalin pact of 1939—Archenholtz wrote: "This union of Austria and France, which both astonished the world and was considered to be a political masterstroke, was nothing but a coincidence (*Zufall*)."[17] As Archenholtz explained, France had no intention of destroying the King of Prussia, however enraged it might be over the Prussian treaty with England and however much Kaunitz might have aroused resentment in Paris. The primary objective of France was "the conquest of the Duchy of Hanover so that more important ends might be achieved in America." Here he identified a motive that Frederick also regarded in his memoirs as decisive and which occupies a central place in the subsequent historiography, since it characterizes the global context of the Seven Years War and makes it possible to view this war as the first world war of our planet.

What was the chance or coincidence that Archenholtz brought into play? He saw clearly the worldwide interdependence in which the political aims of the coalition were realized. But what appeared to be the primary objective, viewed from Versailles, was for the Prussian reader a mere coincidence. The coalition directed itself primarily against England, as far as the French Ministry (not Madame Pompadour) was concerned, and the stake was transoceanic domination. What appeared to be absurd for the centuries-old European domestic policy of equilibrium *made sense if viewed globally.*

Thus, chance was for Archenholtz not just a stylistic device for intensifying the drama in his account, but served to outline a specific perspective: that of contemporaries. His history was composed while he was a contemporary of and protagonist in this war. For the central European reader, chance was introduced quite properly in its full force as the unexplained (*des Unmotivierbaren*), only then to be motivated through the superior viewpoint of the historian. This motivation, how-

ever, arose out of causal relations which were not available through experience to the presumptive reader. The coincidence introduced by Archenholtz proved to be chance, but was also shown to be susceptible to explanation. Scientific historians of the following century (Ranke, for instance) dispensed with such alterations of prospective; but, like few others, the historians of the Enlightenment were trained to regard history not only as a science but also—and precisely as a science conveying knowledge—rhetorically, as a form of representation. The rupture in the coherence of the experiential space for the German reader is thus made visible (hence, the "pure chance" of the coalition) and is bridged, since the historian writing around 1790 already looked for world-historical causes wherever he could.

What happens with the second instance that we will consider, in which Archenholtz seeks an explanation for the first decisive battle of the Seven Years War? "An extremely commonplace accident," he wrote, "a stroll taken by a clever monk during the first days of the siege saved Prague and the (Austrian) monarchy. This man Setzling, not unknown to literary history, noticed a pillar of dust which was approaching the northern part of the city."[18] There follows a detailed description, in which our monk suspects the Prussians, hurried to the observatory, confirmed his suspicions by using a telescope, and was able to report in good time to the City Commander and suggest that he occupy a tactically advantageous height before the enemy could do so.

Archenholtz, prompted by previous discussion among historians about Pyrrhonism to weigh questions of historical certainty and probability against each other, thereby preventing a slide into the domain of the fabulous, hurried to relativize his coincidence. He took it seriously, as a fact, but only to immediately measure it against the military scale of the Seven Years War. Archenholtz continued: "The overrunning of a city occupied by an army of 50,000 experienced soldiers, and moreover in broad daylight, has never been heard of in the annals of warfare and is inconceivable for every soldier; it was barely regarded as plausible by generations then living and has since come to be viewed as fabrication."

This chance occurrence, which was decisive for the course of the Battle of Prague and involved a completely unmilitary world reaching into the war, was transposed by Archenholtz into the domain of military possibilities. Measured in these terms, the quality of the chance altered:

it became an anecdote, which did, nevertheless, throw an ironic light on the contrast of Catholic and Protestant in the struggle for Bohemia. In terms of a rationally calculable military technology and the kinds of weapons then available, however, the concidence was ruled out as of no significance. Not explicable as the cause of Prague's salvation, unless Archenholtz took the Prague legend to be the work of God, which, as an enlightened Prussian, he hardly would have been prepared to do, the coincidence moved, through its outcome, into a more plausible context. From the point of view of its result, the determining nature of the battle following our monk's stroll is stripped of its accidental character. Inserted into the rationalizable bases and consequences of warfare at that time, this external factor is registered by Archenholtz but indirectly devalued as an interchangeable event. The author gives us to understand that if this event had not saved Prague from being overrun, then without doubt another would. That this event, in particular the stroll of a cleric, *was* the event is itself singular and accidental; but viewed strategically, it is irrelevant.

Archenholtz makes use of two chains of thought in locating chance in this way and eliminating its effect: first, reference to the military structure of possibilities, and second, consideration of the comparison of history and fantasy (*Dichtung*). The old Ciceronian contrast of *res factae* and *res fictae*, passed on from generation to generation of historians since Isidor,[19] is cited to distinguish what is militarily probable—not actual—against the background of what is militarily improbable and hence "fantastic."[20] The absent chance could have led into the domains of the possible and the conceivable, but likewise into the improbable. Prague could just as well have fallen absurdly. Only then would chance be complete, and would the improbable become an event.

That such experiences were not unknown to contemporaries of that time is shown by the commemorative coin minted for the town of Kolberg in 1760, after it was freed at the last moment from 23,000 Russian besiegers. The inscription on the coin was taken from Ovid: *res similis fictae*, or, as Archenholtz translated it, "an occurrence as if fabricated."[21] Measured against the example of Kolberg, it becomes clear once more what concerned Archenholtz in the case of Prague. The meditatively perambulating monk was mediated through military history. Chance was *ex post* stripped of its accidental character. Fortuna thus remained in play. But she was demoted to second place in the

causal structure, however much she initially appeared to be the first and unique agent.

In his text on the magnificence and decline of the Romans, Montesquieu appeared to offer a simple and rational explanation of these features. All chance occurrences are subordinated to general causes,

> and if the chance of a battle, that is to say, a particular cause, ruins a state, then there is a general cause which dictates that this state should perish in a solitary battle. In a word, the principal turning point carries with it all particular accidents.[22]

Whoever becomes involved with causes will never be short of a causal element. It would certainly be irresponsible to dismiss the historian's business in this manner. Archenholtz's skill as a historian consisted in his ability to allow incommensurable entities to exist side by side and nevertheless provide a historically adequate response. He later described the siege of Breslau during 1760 in this fashion. Before the walls of the city were encamped 50,000 Austrians under their most capable general, Laudon. Within were 9,000 Austrian prisoners of war, ripe for an uprising, with many Austrophile citizens. The defenders numbered only 3,000, of whom only 1,000 were active soldiers. Archenholtz called the successful defense an incident "which is guaranteed to provide the philosopher with a problem and which the astute historian (*Geschichtsschreiber*) hardly dares to introduce, on account of its improbability." He continued, "Such a miracle could only be effected by the power of Prussian military upbringing."[23] One can argue about the reasons for this miracle, introduce other causes, and strip the miracle of its miraculous character; but the trend is clear: miracles, accidents, and the like are only referred to so that the ordinary reader, who most readily expects them, might be reeducated.

The final example is drawn arbitrarily from the history of the Seven Years War. How does our author proceed in the case of the defeat at Kolin? "It was not bravery and military skill which decided the result of this memorable day, but accidents." At Leuthen, later contrasted to Kolin, the victory was decided solely by "bravery and military skill."[24] Here, Prussian national pride appears to run off with the old soldier, and it is perfectly clear that reference to accidental occurrences, in the case of Kolin, is introduced for apologetic reasons. In the course of his account, Archenholtz enumerates the individual accidents of the battle: as is known, the battle was lost tactically because Frederick's

overextended battle line broke and he was unable, in the face of the Austrians' superiority, to throw reserves into the gaping holes. Exactly why this line of battle should break open is explained by Archenholtz in detail through the use of psychology. Against the orders of the king, troops who were being held in reserve attacked; soldiers were therefore scattered and absorbed along the line instead of moving up in sequence to support the attacking wings.

"Imprudence and belligerent hotheadedness" on the part of the subordinate commanders are made responsible for the accident. Here, our author has to ask himself whether these, too, are not martial qualities, whether faulty military skill and inappropriate bravery led to this defeat after all. "Alter Fritz" did not, in his later account, make use of chance as a way of glossing over his defeats. He identified specific mistakes which had undermined his plans, only occasionally suppressing his own errors. He attributed the defeat at Kolin to the tactical failure of his generals in going against his orders. The third example of chance that we have found in Archenholtz, when examined causally, thus fades to a greater degree than the previous examples, and does so in a way not unknown to the author, as is unconsciously acknowledged.

To summarize, in the first case, that of an alliance between France and Austria, chance involved a question of perspective. The continental European absurdity, the novelty and the unexpectedness of the Franco-Austrian alliance, was made comprehensible from a world-historical viewpoint. The second instance, that of the peripatetic monk, was derived from motivational spheres different from those of the course of the Battle of Prague. Viewed from different points, their coincidence was accidental; transposed to the level of strategic possibility, chance received a rationally calculable valency, and the accidental disappeared from general view. Not so with the third example. Here, chance was only a word patriotically inserted at the right time and designed to play down the superiority of the Austrians and the decisive attacks of the Saxons. The psychological categories that Archenholtz employed were substantially on the same level. To this extent, we have a dubious coincidence which is suited to the closing off of further explanation or self-reproach. As Gibbon said of the Greeks, "After their country had been reduced to a province, [they] imputed the triumphs of Rome not to the merit, but to the fortune, of the Republic."[25]

The advantage we have over Archenholtz in establishing that he construed two of his chance events properly, whereas in the third case he used chance simply as a means of concealing a misfortune which he felt personally, is attributable to and only conceivable since the theoretical destruction of chance in the eighteenth century. We have cited Montesquieu and Gibbon as primary witnesses; we can cite Frederick as well. Weighed down by the lost Battle of Kolin, in which he suspected he had experienced his Pultawa, he wrote to his friend Marshall Keith that "fortune" had deserted him. "Fortune on this day turned its back on me. I should have known that it was a woman, and I am not a chivalrous type. It declares itself for the women who wage war with me." In 1760 he wrote to the Marquis d'Argens that he was unable to direct fortune, and that he must increasingly allow for chance because he lacked the means to fulfill his plans by himself. This final, private statement does not depart from the system of political relations that he formulated in *Antimachiavelli* and which he, as in his missive to Keith, dismissed so ironically.

So far as I can tell, Frederick consistently dispenses in his military-historical memoirs with resort to a fortune which, one could say unhistorically, finally did serve him well. The memoirs address themselves to a rational and consistent listing of the mistakes and successes of the given antagonists in terms of their supposed plans. The axis of this calculation thus takes the form of action and its result. The result, however, almost never coincides with the original plan of an agent. Frederick thus gained from the consistency of his rational approach the insight that history always produces more, or less, than is contained in the sum of its given preconditions. Here, Frederick exceeded the pure form of causal explanation in the direction of what in the nineteenth century was called the *verstehende* Historical School.

II

Chance, or the accidental, was completely done away with by the Historical School during the nineteenth century, less through a systematic extension of the principle of causality than through theological, philosophical, and aesthetic implications contained within the modern concept of history. This will be demonstrated once more with reference to Archenholtz.

While it has previously been shown how far Archenholtz could rationalize chance into the concept of perspective employed for stylistic ends in creating space for causal relations, Fortuna enters the battlefield at a most prominent point, and in a historically matchless fashion, at that: the death of Czarina Elizabeth in 1762. This death is dramatically introduced as the work of fate. Frederick, in his history of the Seven Years War, merely noted that this death had upset all plans and agreements prepared by politicians; and Ranke later suggested that this death simply revealed the negligible "internal necessity" implicit within the previous "combination of circumstances."[26] Archenholtz, however, presented the death as the work of fate. He described the resulting turn of events as "Fortuna's greatest deed," saving Frederick and Prussia from defeat.[27] Archenholtz here made use of the older concept of Fortuna in such a way that the concept was not immanent to circumstances but superior to them. This is not a rationalistic, stylistic device, but rather denotes the penetration of natural possibilities into the course of a carefully planned war. Fortuna is here not a substitute for causality. Instead, the concept preexists all events. This conception ties Archenholtz to the older mode of experience which he shares with humanists and Christian historians: that *Historie* has a natural foundation, and that *Geschichten* are related via Fortuna to extrahistorical conditions.

The death of a ruler at that time was, of course, generally subject to probability calculations, but it could not be influenced by any rational design (apart from poison or the dagger); it eluded pragmatic *causae* even when possible consequences were calculated and planned, such as in the "Pragmatic Sanction" of 1713. War and diplomatic affairs usually acquired their justification from questions of succession among rulers, and the political horizon was bounded by the possible life span of given rulers.[28] Archenholtz's invocation of Fortuna in this natural historical space was no breach of style.

For all his modernity, Archenholtz lived in a continuum embracing all former *Geschichten*. His writings constantly referred to the events and deeds of antiquity, which he compared with those of the Seven Years War. The parallels he drew were not in furtherance of a historicophilosophical interpretation of all that had occurred, but rested, rather, on an implicit presupposition of the natural identity of all historical conditions. Hence, Fortuna remained a standard of comparison and judgment that permitted the treatment of Frederick, Han-

nibal, and Alexander as potential contemporaries, or the conception of Cannae and Leuthen as broadly similar.[29]

This ambivalence of Archenholtz's, whereby he rationally decomposes the accidental, on the one hand, while maintaining an allegiance to Fortuna, on the other, indicates the great distance separating him from the Historical School. Humboldt, who was the theoretical pioneer for this school, did not renounce the eighteenth-century conception according to which one could, as it were, causally assess "the entirety of world history of the past and future," but argued that the limits of such assessment lay only in the extent of our knowledge of effective causes. To this degree, chance was eliminated; but Humboldt suggested that it was precisely in this conception that one missed the specificity of history. History was distinguished by that which was eternally new and had never been experienced; such are the creative individualities and inner forces which, while they cohere in their superficial sequence, are never to "be deduced from their accompanying circumstances" in their given singularity and orientation.[30] The inner unity of history and its quality of uniqueness eluded causal deduction (the progressive aspect of the historical world view is embodied in this idea), and it is therefore open neither to Fortuna (who is symbolic of repetition) nor to chance, for the singularity of chance is absorbed by the singularity of "history in itself."

Humboldt lived within a new experience of history, and he conceptually formulated this in a manner which made possible the self-conception of historism. The singularity of history did away with the accidental. To express the same thing differently, if history in its singularity surpassed all *causae* that might be summoned up, then chance likewise lost its historical weight as an accidental cause.[31]

Leibniz, in defining two kinds of truth—that of reason tolerating no contradiction, and that of facts which, while adequately established, allowed the contrary to be conceived—defined with *verités de fait* that domain which was later to be named "history." The historical facts of the past, as well as those of the future, are possibilities that either have been or can be realized and which preclude compelling necessity. Facts remain contingent, however much they can be grounded; they arise in the space of human freedom. To this extent, the past and the coming future are always accidental; but for Leibniz, the chain of "coincidences" has a unique certainty in the course of the world, for it is laid down and preserved in the divine plan of the optimal world.

Subsumed by the dictates of theodicy, even contingent (historical) events show themselves to be necessary, not in the sense of geometric proof but "necessaire . . . ex hypothesi, pour ainsi dire par accident."[32]

Chance proves itself from a superior perspective, which can later be formulated to be historically necessary. Motivational remainder, since then, has not been covered by chance; rather, such motivational remainder is more or less excluded a priori from the new theory of history, on the basis of the slow developments of the eighteenth century. This is the theological principle of the singularity of all earthly affairs with respect to God, and the aesthetic category of the inner unity of history: both enter modern historical philosophy and make possible the modern concept of "history." Thus, in 1770, Wieland could talk of the "thousand unavoidable accidents" which forced mankind along the irreversible path of infinite fulfillment.[33] Likewise, Kant could outline the ruse of nature, which anticipates Hegel's "ruse of reason," through which all apparently chance occurrences gained their meaning.

Philosophical reflection has no other intention than the removal of the accidental. Chance is the same as external necessity, that is a necessity which relates to causes which are themselves merely superficial circumstances. We must seek a general purpose in history, the ultimate purpose of the world.

This passage from Hegel demonstrates the degree to which he had outstripped the rationalization of chance completed in the previous century, and how chance was excluded far more consistently by a teleological unity of world history than was ever possible for the Enlightenment. "We must bring to history the belief and conviction that the realm of the will is not at the mercy of contingency."[34]

It was not the theological heritage that excluded all chance within the idealist concept of history; apparently meaningless coincidence was excluded by the literary and aesthetic reflections which constituted, in terms of internal probability and hence a superior reality-content, the representational art of historiography. In 1799, Novalis summarized the current discussion: the heaping up of isolated dates and facts with which historians customarily busy themselves "allows the most important aspect to be forgotten, which is that which makes history into history, uniting the diversity of chance events into a pleasing and instructive whole. If I see aright, then it seems to me that a writer of history must necessarily also be a poet [*Dichter*]."[35]

The Historical School gained its impulse from both poetics and idealist philosophy, which combined the conception and scientific reflection of history as an immanently meaningful unity, anterior to all events. "Let them measure and estimate; our business is theodicy" (Droysen). If all events become unique, with "each epoch . . . directly [related] to God,"[36] then the miraculous is not eliminated, and the whole of history becomes a single miracle. "One learns to worship," as Droysen continued.[37] This robs chance of its freedom to be accidental.

It would be pointless to separate the theological, philosophical, or aesthetic implications that merge in the Historical School; it is sufficient here for us to establish that they all combined into a concept of history which did not permit the conditions of chance to emerge.

The aesthetic components of historism forestalled motivational remainder and chance far beyond their once-theological bases. Whether historical knowledge was thereby properly served, and done so better than in the period in which Fortuna played a part, is a question that must today be raised once more. Perhaps it could be shown that it was precisely the abolition of all chance that led to demands for consistency which were too high. Indeed, because of the abolition of the accidental, chance became absolute within the plane of historical uniqueness. The role Fortuna played in the space of a prehistoric conception of history has in modernity become that of ideology, impelled to ever more novel manipulation the more it assumes the guise of immovable lawfulness.

Perspective and Temporality: A Contribution to the Historiographical Exposure of the Historical World

The historian's pledge to seek and recount only that which is true is an old one. This pledge is still valid today and meets in general with undivided agreement. On the other hand, the claim that it is only possible to discover the truth by adopting a definite position or even through partisanship is a product of modernity.

If it was said today that every historical statement is bound to a particular standpoint, this would hardly provoke any objection. Who would wish to deny that history is viewed from different perspectives, and that change in history is accompanied by alterations in historical statements about this history? The ancient trinity of place, time, and person clearly enters the work of a historical author. If place, time, and person should alter, then new works would emerge, even if they dealt with the same object, or appeared to do so.

Whoever tries to clarify epistemologically this current historiographical position—more exactly, this shift of position—gets into difficulties soon enough, being confronted with accusations of subjectivism, relativism, or even historism. Whatever else the worn-out catchword "historism" might mean, it certainly is concerned with this change of perspective forced upon anyone involved with the course of history. New experiences are gained, old ones are superseded, and new expectations are formed; in addition, new questions are posed to our past, questions which demand that history be reconsidered, reviewed, and reinvestigated.

Contemporary historical science is thus subject to two mutually exclusive demands: to make true statements, while at the same time

to admit and take account of the relativity of these statements. In this dilemma, various arguments are deployed for defense. In the first place, the historian can point to the enormous success achieved by this science in its slow growth from early modernity, success that is owed to the methods used. In approximately two hundred years, we have come to know more about the past of mankind in general than mankind had in this past known about itself. There is much that we can no longer recover because of the state of the sources, but nevertheless we have learned much that escaped the knowledge of past contemporaries. In many respects, then, we know more than we once did, and such knowledge frequently is more soundly based than was earlier possible. A defense conducted by the historian in this way, invoking the empirical body of research presently existing, is in itself conclusive and is difficult to refute.

A second line of argument seeks to disarm accusations of subjectivism and relativism in a theoretical and methodological fashion. Historical science has also developed a methodology specific to itself which enables it to make objective statements. Source criticism is at any time communicable, verifiable, and subject to rational criteria. Here we have the doctrine of *Verstehen*, which gained entry into historical science through Schleiermacher and Dilthey. In the words of Dilthey:

> *Das Verstehen* and interpretation is the method which realizes *Geisteswissenschaft*. All functions are united in this method. All truths characteristic of *Geisteswissenschaft* are contained within it. At every point, *Verstehen* opens up a world.[1]

Thus, if the essence of the historical world is its transformation, so the medium of *Verstehen* allows every unique situation to be understood. Even the alien and distant past is susceptible to understanding, transmission, and hence recognition through self-involvement and empathy.

Such a theory of the *Geisteswissenschaften* is ultimately founded on an implicit and stable human nature which comprehends an infinite possibility for the human being. Through *Verstehen*, texts that are fundamentally susceptible to transmission are disclosed; the failure or success of actions and plans of the past can be assessed and past sufferings made comprehensible. Admittedly, the historian, like every person, must have a particular standpoint: the whole of the historical world is opened up to the historian by virtue of his source criticism conducted in the medium of *Verstehen*. Through participation in the

past or continuing objectification of historical persons, a historical individual of today can likewise objectify this form of history.

Thus we have an empirical and a theoretical argument which should disarm accusations that historism constantly supersedes itself. In both research and *Verstehen*, history is closed down, even if the historian experiences himself as and knows himself to be a changing part of this history.

We are, therefore, in a stalemate. All historical knowledge is locationally determined and hence relative. Aware of this, history allows itself to be assimilated critically-*verstehend*, leading in turn to true historical statements. To exaggerate somewhat, partisanship and objectivity are mutually exclusive, but in the course of historical work they relate to one another.

We will roll out this epistemological dilemma once more in hopes of showing, in the form of a historical exposition, how the emergence of historical relativism is identical with the discovery of the historical world. In concluding this essay, some theoretical remarks, which are perhaps capable of making this dilemma more bearable, if not altogether dispensable, will be attempted.

The Premodern Imagery of Suprapartisanship

Since Antiquity, it has been a part of the topology of history as art and as science that accounts of human acts and omissions, deeds and sorrows should be truthfully recounted by the historian. The pledge to proceed in this way continually appears in works of historical writing. Since Lucian, or Cicero, two rules have belonged to the methodological self-assurance of all historians who do not wish to wander into the realm of the fabulist: one may not lie, and one should tell the complete truth.[2]

What is striking about this position is not the appeal to truth as such, but rather the related demand that the truth be permitted to appear, pure and unmediated. Only by disregarding one's own person, without passion and ardor (*sine ira et studio*);[3] that is, nonpartisan or suprapartisan, is it possible to bring truth to speak.

Notwithstanding the polemical thrust that such ideas might have against adversaries or professional colleagues, there lurks behind them a form of naive realism, if one is looking for epistemological names within epochs when such labels were foreign.

An unfailing index of this naive realism, which aims to render the truth of histories in their entirety, is provided by the metaphor of the mirror. The image provided by the historian should be like a mirror, providing reflections "in no way displaced, dimmed, or distorted."[4] This metaphor was passed down from Lucian until at least the eighteenth century; it can be found in Voss's 1623 definition of *Historie* as the *speculum vitae humanae*,[5] as in the emphasis by the Enlighteners on the older, moralistic application demanding of historical representation that it give to men an "impartial mirror" of their duties and obligations.[6]

A variant of epistemological nonchalance, just as frequently encountered, can be found in the form of the "naked truth"[7] that a historian is supposed to depict. One must not underestimate the persisting impulse expressed in this metaphor, namely, that one should permit the truth of a history to speak for itself if it is to be experienced and have any effect. Taken at its word, however, this demand forces the author to withhold any judgment, and in this way the metaphor of the mirror is only strengthened.

Historie, wrote Fénélon in 1714, has a *nudité si noble et si majestueuse*,[8] requiring no poetic adornment. "Saying the naked truth; that is, recounting events that have occurred without varnish"—this was the task of the writer of history, according to Gottsched.[9] Even the young Ranke, in 1824, invoked "naked truth without adornment," betraying "Guiccardini's false stories" by use of this "concept of history."[10] Blumenberg rightly argues here that this almost involves an Enlightenment anachronism,[11] even if it was the Enlightenment itself that had undermined the stability of this metaphor of the naked truth. The older Ranke still maintained this idea, though with reservation, as he formulated, in 1860, his oft-cited confession: "I would like to efface myself entirely and allow only things to talk, simply allow the mighty forces to appear. . . ."[12]

A third topos, stemming like the others from antiquity, leads us to the heart of our problematic. It was Lucian who introduced into the conceptual apparatus of history the term "apolis." A writer of history must be "in his work a stranger, having no country, autonomous, the subject of no ruler." One could only hold to the truth in a space free of domination; one could here "report what had occurred" unreservedly.[13] The step to Ranke does not seem very far, given the way the latter defined his historical approach: he sought neither to judge

nor to teach; "he merely wishes to show how it really was" (*er will bloss zeigen, wie es eigentlich gewesen*).[14]

The scientific postulate of nonpartisanship, in the sense of nonadherence to party, abstinence, or neutrality, continues unbroken into the eighteenth century. Bayle, Gottfried Arnold, Voltaire, and Wieland committed themselves to this just as much as Niebuhr, who "sought the truth, without party and polemic."[15] Even a historian as politically involved as Gervinus assumed that belief, loyalty, and fatherland should not confuse the issue, if one was to be able to write in an "unrestrained and impartial" manner.[16] "Everything is related," wrote his distanced opponent Ranke, "critical study of the genuine sources, impartial outlook, objective presentation—the objective is the realization [*Vergegenwärtigung*] of the entire truth," even if it is not fully attainable.[17] According to Ranke, "The truth can only be one."[18]

So much for the topology, which could be illuminated further with countless examples. Notwithstanding the alterations of context, it remains an imperative for the course of research that suprapartisanship be aspired to, so that the contrary positions or views might be articulated. Whether it is to give them their due, or whether—and this is more modern—it is to relate all parties or forces in a historical process in such a way that the process itself is foregrounded. To the extent that this is done, the call to tolerate the dominance of no partisanship is today repeated with justice.

The historical world, however, was not constituted by a methodological research precept according to which suprapartisanship must be promoted. This was effected, rather, by the connection of history to its own conditions of action and knowledge, opening the way for modern history in the domains of the scientific and prescientific, the political and social. A new concept of "history" emerged.[19] Modern history is initially distinguished from earlier forms by its revelation of an objectless "history in and for itself" through the reflections of the Enlighteners. The conditions of historical processes and the conditions of action in this process (and knowledge of this process) have, since the Enlightenment, been related. But this relation is not to be had without a defined location vis-à-vis historical movement.

Naturally, earlier doctrines of historical artifice considered the influence of the narrating or writing subject on the form of presentation. The association of *Historie* with grammar, rhetoric, and ethics, in-

creasingly followed by poetics and aesthetics, dictated that the productive performance of the author be discussed.

The historian as artist or as moral judge played a productive role which had to be continually measured against the demands of an effective delivery. Lucian himself had relativized his metaphor of the mirror by his direct comparison of the historiographer with the sculptor whose material lies ready, but who must, as with Phidias, work it up in a manner as true to reality as possible. As the saying goes, the listener must be able to clearly "see," with his own ears, the events reported to him. The comparison with the productive sculptor in this way remained within the domains of sight, display, and reflection.

All metaphors that ultimately refer to a naked, unadorned, unequivocally reproducible truth refer us to a state of reality which constituted historical representation until well into the eighteenth century. Such metaphors involving a naive realism draw primarily on eyewitnesses (less on "earwitnesses") whose presence guarantees the truth of a history.[20] The methodological point of departure was the historical writing of the present or recent past. Everywhere they were capable, as in Herodotus, of reaching back three generations so that, with the aid of surviving earwitnesses, past events could be recovered and made plausible. The precedence of contemporary historical writing, reinforced by the growing body of memoir-literature in the early modern period, remained unbroken. It was likewise to be found preserved wherever recourse in the past was made. The signs of authenticity were centered on the eyewitness; whenever possible, the acting or participating agent, be it for the history of revelation, or for the continuing history of church or worldly events.

Historical experience therefore related itself to the present, a present which in its forward movement collected the past without, however, being able to significantly change itself. *Nil novum sub sole*: this was true both for classical antiquity and for Christians awaiting the Last Judgment. Related as it was to a given contemporary view, the metaphor of the mirror, of reflection or of the naked truth, was founded on a present state of experience whose historiographic apprehension corresponded to the recourse to an eyewitness. To establish the true nature of circumstances or of states of affairs, the historian must first question living eyewitnesses, and second, surviving earwitnesses. There is no great leap from this manner of disclosing reality to the demand for impartiality in the reproduction of an event in all its aspects, or

to the idea that judgment is to do justice to all participants. History as a continuing present exists through its eyewitnesses; the interrogation of such eyewitnesses requires distance and impartiality.

There is no doubt that this canon, whose metaphors imply a continuous and unbroken present space of experience, can still today lay claim to methodological validity. It has not, however, called a halt here.

The Discovery of Positional Commitment as a Precondition of Historical Knowledge

It seems to be a linguistic irony that, in the domain of sight and eyewitness, mirror-based metaphors and the undistorted truth, it is precisely the question of position or location which can assume the role of furthering understanding without straining these metaphors and the experience which they embody. If the historian is supposed to question all witnesses for the purpose of selecting the best and demoting the rest, why should the position adopted by the historian not have an influence on his presentation? This question arises quite naturally, not least under the influence of the doctrine of perspective, which originated during the Renaissance. Thus, Comenius, in 1623, compared the activity of historians with the view provided by telescopes which, like trombones, reached back over their shoulders. This prospect of the past was used to gain instruction for one's own present and for the future. Surprising, however, were the warped perspectives which cast everything in a varying light. Thus one could in no way "depend on it, that a thing really behaved in the way that it appeared to the observer."[21] Everyone trusted only in his own view, and from this there followed nothing but argument and bickering.

Cartesian doubt and Pyrrhonistic skepticism contributed to the formation of a guilty conscience among historians, who doubted that they could offer any representation adequate to reality. Thus, Zedler, still oriented to the realistic ideal for knowledge and transmitting the metaphors of Lucian, stated, full of reservation, that it would be very difficult, in fact practically impossible, "to be a complete writer of history. Whoever aspired to such, if possible, should have no allegiance to order, party, country, or religion."[22] The demonstration that precisely this is an impossibility is owed to Chladenius.[23]

Chladenius (1710–1759), at that time completely under the influence of the idea that authenticity resides in the testimony of the eyewitness, developed the domain of objects of *Historie* in terms of the contemporary *Geschichten* of living generations and hence made a distinction between future *Geschichten* and "ancient *Geschichten.*"[24] This division did not, however, arrange itself according to substantive or chronological givens, and it no longer involves epochs; it is, in fact, conceived epistemologically. "Author, originator, or spectator" are more reliable than "reporters [*Nachsager*]"; verbal tradition is superior to written. Ancient history thus begins at the point where no eyewitnesses exist and directly mediating earwitnesses can no longer be questioned. With the demise of generations, then, the boundary of ancient history is displaced, and it advances at the same rate that witnesses disappear. It is no longer a given temporal order—for instance, a God-given order—of all of history that arranges the material of history, but instead the history of the future and the history of the past ("ancient history") are determined by desires and plans, as well as the questions, which arise in the present. The experiential space of contemporaries is the epistemological kernel of all histories.

To this extent, the epistemology of premodern *Historie* was supplied by Chladenius and established in a fashion that is today still unsurpassed. At the same time, however, Chladenius is thereby rendered the harbinger of modernity. Since that time, the temporal arrangement of history depends on the position one occupies within history.

Chladenius assumed that history and conceptions about it usually coincide. The exposition and evaluation of a history required, however, a methodological separation: "History is one, but conceptions of it are various and many." A history as such is, in his view, conceivable without contradiction, but any account of such a conception involves a break in perspective. It quite simply is decisive whether a history is judged by an "interested" or an "alien party," by "friend" or "foe," "scholar" or "lay person," "courtier" or "*Bürger*" or "peasant," or, finally, "insurrectionary" or "loyal subject."[25]

Chladenius deduced two things from this: first, the relativity of all intuitive judgments and of all experience. Two contradictory accounts can exist, both of which have a claim to truth. For there is

> a reason why we see the thing in this way and no other: this is the viewpoint of the same thing. . . . It follows from the concept of points

of view that persons regarding one thing from different points of view must have different conceptions of the thing . . .; *quot capita, tot sensus.*[26]

Second, Chladenius deduces from his analysis of the eyewitness and of political and social attitudes the perspective of later investigation and representation. Certainly, through proper questioning of opposing witnesses and the preservation of evidence, one has to endeavor to recognize past history oneself—to this extent, even Chladenius renders homage to a moderately realistic epistemological ideal—but the coherence of past events is not reproducible in its entirety by any form of representation. The "archetype of history" is itself transformed during the creation of a narrative.[27] Restriction to a particular position not only limits the witnesses, it also affects the historian. A history, once it has passed, remains irrevocably the same; but the prospects enjoyed by historians are kaleidoscopic in their variety of standpoints. A good historian, in particular, wishing to recount "meaningful history," can do no more than reproduce it in "rejuvenated images."[28] He must select and condense, employ metaphors, and use general concepts; in this way, he inevitably gives rise to new ambiguities which require exposition in turn. For "a writer of history composing rejuvenated images always (has) something in mind,"[29] and readers must be able to deal with this if they are to evaluate the history at stake.

"History," from that which is experienced to that which is scientifically consumed and digested, is always realized within social and personal perspectives which both contain and create meaning. "Those who require that a writer of history assume the position of a person without religion, fatherland, or family are greatly in error; they have not considered the impossibility of that which they demand."[30] From the time of Chladenius on, historians have been more secure in their consideration of the probability of an individual, historical form of truth. Positional commitment since then has not been an objection, but rather a presupposition of historical knowledge.

To be sure, Chladenius draws a clear line against deliberate invention or falsification that does not adhere to the rationally verifiable canon of interrogation of witnesses and source exegesis. The inevitability of perspective does not lead to a "partisan account" in which events

against knowledge and conscience are intentionally contorted or obscured. . . . An impartial account cannot, therefore, mean relating a thing without any point of view, for this is not at all possible; and

relating in a partisan fashion cannot amount to relating a thing and history according to its points of view, for then all accounts would be partisan.[31]

In this appreciation of the lack of identity between a perspectivist mode of forming judgments, on the one hand, and partisanship, on the other, Chladenius established a theoretical framework which today has still to be superseded. For the sources of past events display a resistance and retain a weight that is not susceptible to displacement *ex post* through a partisan evaluation, whether positive or negative. Differing prospects can certainly result in differing results being drawn from the same sources. This point will be returned to in the conclusion.

Chladenius's epistemology was like an act of liberation. The extension of the witness's perspective (previously an object of historical interrogation) to that of the historian won for the historian a freedom previously unimagined. In terms of the poetic criteria which could at that time be adopted, the historian could henceforth be in a position to "produce" history by weighing causes, examining long-term relations, reorganizing the beginning and end of a history. He was able to design systems which appeared more appropriate to the complexity of histories than the simple addition of knowledge. In Klopstock's words, out of polyhistory arose polytheory.[32] Mindful of the discipline provided by the sources, the historian could ultimately construct hypothetical histories which drew more attention to the prerequisites of all histories than to these histories themselves. In short, the historian could become a philosopher of history, which had not before been possible.

Fénélon had forecast this breakthrough when he proposed, in 1714, that the true completeness of history rested in its ordering. To arrive at a good order, the historian must encompass the whole of his history with one glance and must turn it from side to side until he has found the true point of view (*son vrai point de vue*). He could then outline history as a unity and trace the most important events to their causes.[33]

Chladenius had provided this approach with a theoretical foundation, but in so doing he had relativized the question of what is the appropriate, true point of view for the historian, or, if you like, historicized it. He stumbled upon a plurality of points of view which necessarily belonged to historical knowledge without at the same time surrendering what they shared in common, historical truth. He had simply shifted the emphasis from truth itself to the epistemological conditions of truth.

From then on, the historian, inspired by the example of Chladenius, gained the courage to openly and consciously assume a "position" if he wished to reflect a point of view. This breakthrough was effected in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Temporalization of Historical Perspective

Chladenius's work had a dual impact. His epistemology drew on the precedence of the optical, evident in all his imagery and comparisons. The eyewitness as guarantor of the realization of an occurrence remained the primary witness of all history. The historical space of experience corresponding to this approach was a space of acting and suffering persons, a space of events whose verifiability increased with their adjacency to a given present, and decreased with their removal. Accordingly, his *Allgemeine Geschichtswissenschaft* dealt first with the conditions of historical knowledge of the present, and then, on the basis of this, with the sources of past histories and their exposition. Past histories external to the living community of memory were merely a supplement to contemporary historical experience. But future history also belonged to the organon of historical exposition, since, for Chladenius, plans, hopes, and wishes were just as constitutive of the coming histories as those of one's own recent past. The three temporal dimensions remained anthropologically founded and likewise related to each other in a static fashion. After Chladenius, this rapidly altered, not least under the influence of the other part of his theory, his modern doctrine of historical perspective.

Whereas, in terms of its metaphorical employment, it was related initially to the space of a given present, this perspective extended itself more and more into the temporal depths. It gained, in addition, a temporal significance which articulated an increasing difference between past histories, one's own history, and the history of the future. Indeed, modes of perception were themselves endowed with temporal coefficients of change corresponding to the rapidly spreading contemporary conception that history was accelerating. This can be briefly outlined through the medium of historiography.

The expressions "point of view," "position," and "standpoint" (*Sehepunkt*, *Standort*, and *Standpunkt*, respectively) rapidly gained acceptance. Schlözer, Wegelin, and Semler also made use of them, and to the degree that the perspectival approach was taken seriously, the

status of a once-and-for-all past history also altered. It lost its character of necessarily remaining identical with itself in order for it to possess verity.

Thus, Thomas Abbt wrote his *Geschichte des menschlichen Geschlechts*, "soweit selbige in Europa bekannt worden," and deduced from his "position" that "the history of a people in Asia is different from that of one in Europe."[34] There certainly was here the impact of a growing experience of overseas conquest, in which countless histories awaited integration into the world of European Christianity. But the idea that perspective should be spatially determined (i.e., must remain bound to one position) and that this would result in diverse but equally valid texts on the same substantial matter was before this point not accepted.

Temporal relativity now joined the spatial relativity of historical statement. It had not occurred to Chladenius that the course of time could also alter the quality of a history *ex post*. He had distinguished quite rigorously between an established and thenceforth consistent past, and the variety of accounts to which it gave rise. Gatterer had doubts here: "The truth of history remains fundamentally the same: I at least assume this here, although I know well that one may not assume even this everywhere." And he sought in an *Abhandlung vom Standort und Gesichtspunct des Geschichtschreibers* to demonstrate that it was ultimately selection that constituted a history. Selection, however, did not depend only on social or political circumstances, or on the supposed addressee, but also on temporal distance. Thus, Gatterer developed criteria which a German Livy (for example, a Protestant professor living under a mixed constitution) would today need in order to rewrite and write anew the Roman history of the authentic Livy, and accordingly improve this history by means of viewpoints newly attained.[35]

Historical time acquired a quality of generating experience, which, retrospectively applied, permitted the past to be seen anew. Büsch said in 1775: "Hereby can newly arising occurrences render important to us a history which had previously interested us little or not at all,"[36] referring to the history of Hindustan, which had first been introduced into a world-historical context by the English twenty years earlier. The factual effects of a history and its historical reflections thus mutually constituted each other. Opined Schlözer nine years later: "A fact can

today appear extremely insignificant, but in the long term or the short term become decisively important for history itself or for criticism."[37]

But it was not simply the alteration of contemporary experience that displaced the valency of past events and hence the historical quality of those events. The mutual relation of temporal dimensions was also shifted by methodological focus and proficiency. Slowly the practice of writing a continuous "current history" (*Zeitgeschichte*) lost its methodological dignity. Planck was one of the first to establish that the increase of temporal distance raised rather than reduced the prospects for knowledge. This led to the exclusion of the eyewitness from his privileged position, which had already been relativized by Chladenius. The past was henceforth no longer to be preserved in memory by an oral or a written tradition, but rather was to be reconstructed through the process of criticism. "Every great occurrence is, for the contemporaries upon which it directly acts, wrapped in a fog, and this fog clears away very gradually, often taking more than a few human generations." Once sufficient time has elapsed, the past can appear "in a completely different form," thanks to a "historical criticism" capable of making allowances for the polemical partiality of earlier contemporaries.[38]

The old space of experience which had covered at any one time three generations was methodologically opened up. It was no longer a former present which constituted the thematic of *Historie*, extrapolating and handing down *Geschichten*. Now the past was itself made an object of study and, in terms of a specificity which is only today apparent, "in a completely different form." From a narrative of former presents there develops a reflective re-presentation (*Vergegenwärtigung*) of the past. Historical science, mindful of its temporal location, becomes the study of the past. This temporalization of perspective was certainly advanced by the swift change of experience embodied in the French Revolution. The break in continuity appeared to uncouple a past whose growing foreignness could only be illuminated and recovered by means of historical investigation. But this in no way means that historical research would be *eo ipso* nostalgic or restorative. The statement that the later a past is expounded, the better, is rather a product of the prerevolutionary philosophy of progress.

This philosophy discovered in history that temporal quality distinguishing the Former from Today, and that Today needs to be regarded as basically distinct from Tomorrow. The thesis of the possible repetition

of events is discarded. If the whole of history is now unique, then to be consistent, the past must be distinct from the present and the present from the future. In brief, the historicizing of history and its progressive exposition were at first two sides of the same coin. History and Progress shared a common factor in the experience of a genuinely historical temporality. To recognize this, a particular viewpoint was needed which, in turn, had to perceive itself as historically conditioned.

In Germany, this is particularly apparent in the writing of the history of the Protestant Church which, as enlightened *Historie*, covertly became historical theology and sustained the new historical philosophy.

The anticipation of a genuinely historical temporality was outlined especially early by Bengel,[39] whose exposition of the Apocalypse of St. John implied the irreversible singularity of historical events. In doing so, Bengel proceeded in both empirical and reflective modes. Former interpretations of the Apocalypse were viewed not only as a collection of errors but as a progressive history of revelation. Each earlier exegesis was conceived as an act of obscurity foreseen by God, whose successive illumination was the task of later interpreters. From the collective misinterpretations and their correction, there finally emerged the ultimate, true insight. So much for the reflective aspect which was based upon belief.

According to Bengel, the events which had been biblically forecast occurred to the degree that the interpretation of such events increasingly proved accurate. The clearing away of past errors was at the same time made possible by the course of history. And in this way, the phenomenology of spirit is outlined. The interpretation of historical experience becomes the inherent moment of a history which leads to true knowledge.

Bengel proposed a model of progress, as was later demonstrated. Revelation disclosed itself in the forward movement of history or, more precisely, in the progressive coincidence of empirical events and salvational interpretation. Event and interpretation progressively converged, but only in the medium of a genuine historical temporality. The mode of interpretation remained the same, while its content altered.

This is apparent, for instance, in Semler, in the context of his rational historiography. The accent shifted from the divine economy of salvation to a historical economy of time, which permitted a progressive inter-

pretation not only of what was foretold biblically, but of all historical events.

From the epistemological point of view, Semler based himself entirely on Chladenius's doctrine, except that he consistently temporalized historical perspective. He did further separate "real history" from its reproduction, but the history of historical reproduction became for him a moment of real history. Historians did not merely report, they "created" histories.

> The influence of the will, intention, or objective, if it has just emerged and is not present in ancient times, gives the narrative a real direction which was not formerly present in the occurrence itself.

This retrospective structuration of the past was not traced by Semler to "evil or partisan intention," which occurred often enough. Instead, he said, "this distinction is quite unavoidable."[40] In the course of time, the conditions and circumstances according to which history is practiced are continually changing: "It is precisely this distinction of successive periods which brings about the fact that repeatedly new histories can and must arise."[41]

Semler concluded from this temporalized perspective that historical writing was only possible through the critical review of previous historiography. Stated more generally, historical knowledge always is simultaneously the history of historical science. The presuppositions according to which reports are made and processed must themselves be considered and critically reviewed. "I believe that one has previously paid too little attention to this former history composed by all previous historians." Here, Semler formulated a methodological principle which has since then been indispensable.

The doctrine of the temporal change of perspective was now preserved in a theology of progress which lent meaning to this change. God had intended it "for the further and ever new moral education of men." Because of his temporal approach, Semler was already forced into the position of a historical relativist for whom all histories were more of less partisan. He was only able to contain this dilemma by sketching in his own location in the course of a progressing knowledge and a rising morality. "The real stages of an ever unequal culture"[42] became for him the stages of growing knowledge which enabled those born later to see through and disclose the partisan interests of earlier generations and their historians. Semler intended to do exactly this

with the three early Christian centuries. It was, he wrote, a blessing of Providence that "our life and epoch is placed so far beyond those Christian centuries." For it was only now possible to undertake a "free revision" which disclosed "for us, with regard to us, the really true history of [the Church] of that time."[43] Truth and temporal perspective are no longer separable. Whoever today claimed in his account the "unchangeability of the church system" was the slave of prejudice and served hierarchical ruling interests. He obstructed the moral development of Christian religion, "and no greater sin against all historical truth can exist."[44]

After being plunged into the temporal perspective of its historical development, a superior truth emerged out of historically relative truth. The theoretical condition of this superior position was the perspectival and (following from this) actual otherness of the past when compared with one's experience of today and expectation of the morrow. Goethe, soon afterwards, wrote:

> There remains no doubt these days that world history has from time to time to be rewritten. This requirement does not arise, however, because many occurrences are rediscovered, but because new views emerge; because the contemporary of a progressive age is led to standpoints which provide new prospects of the past and permit it to be evaluated in a new manner.[45]

Goethe here articulates a historical experience which had slowly formed and whose theoretical construction in Germany has been followed in the above from Chladenius on: that relation to a particular location is constitutive for historical knowledge. This corresponded to a state of reality which increasingly allowed the dimensions of past, present, and future to break away from one another in the progress of time. The temporalization of this history endowed with an interrupted perspective made it necessary to consider one's position, for this altered with and in the historical movement. This modern experience, formerly more a revelation of theory, was now substantiated by the unrolling events of the French Revolution. This in particular provided a concrete constraint forcing the adoption of a partisan standpoint.

The Partisan Constraint and Its Historiographic Constitution

Whereas the concept of party within German historiography to the eighteenth century was based upon confessional division and the fronts

constituted around this, the concept assumed new force through the socially motivated constitutional conflict that broke out after the collapse of the system of estates in France and which soon afterward involved the whole of Europe. As Gentz noted in 1793, since the collapse,

> every democratic and antidemocratic party, in Germany as everywhere else, has split up into a great number of smaller parties [*Unterparteien*]. . . . Thus there exist today democrats until 5 October 1789, democrats until the formation of the Second Legislature, democrats until 10 August 1792, democrats until the murder of Louis XVI, and democrats until the expulsion of the Brissot faction in the month of June this year.[46]

Within this temporal perspective, still before the fall of Robespierre, Gentz quite concisely described the process of radicalization, hidden until then by the Revolution, which had generated the division of parties. The formation of political parties, while it may be a structural element of all history, in any case belongs since that time to the everyday experience of European modernity.

A sign of their modernity was that these parties did not simply mutually distinguish themselves socially or politically through substantial programs; these distinguishing features themselves involved a temporal factor of change. One placed oneself within the sequence of a continually changing history: toward the front (progressive), in the middle or toward the back (conserving). All titles to legitimacy are bound to a temporal scale if they seek any effect. As Rivarol noted, making metaphorical use of the parliamentary seating arrangements: "The Revolution limps. Rights move continually to the Left, but the Left never to the Right." Progress into an open future involved party perspectives, plans, and programs which dissolved in the absence of temporal criteria of movement or direction.

How, then, did *Historie* react to this new substantial reality? A few answers can be given. Gentz himself considered the temporal self-identification of the parties an error of perspective. "A writer who teaches the consideration of the Revolution as a whole" would come across the internal principles of movement compared with which the formation of parties is a superficial matter. Here he had discovered a response which ultimately implied a theory of revolution. Such theories, which seek to consider at once the plurality of all parties, developed in the succeeding period in great number and entered, for example, into the systems of German Idealism.

This led certainly only to a shift of the current demand to assume a party standpoint. This was openly expressed by Friedrich Schlegel, who had himself, in the course of time, decidedly changed camps. It was an illusion if one hoped "to find pure historical truth solely and alone in the so-called nonpartisan or neutral writers."[47] The formation of parties is a factor in history itself, and if parties, as, for example, in England, continuously reach into the present, one cannot avoid adopting a particular position. He thus demanded as a methodological principle that the historian openly state "views and opinions, without which no history can be written, at least no descriptive history." One could no longer complain of the "partisanship" of such a historian, even when one did not share his opinions.[48]

For Schlegel, the methodological condition for relief from partisanship lay in the separation of facts established independently of party positions from the formation of judgments on such facts. In this fashion, "factual exactness is itself not seldom promoted by dispute, since every party has the criticism of all others to fear, and thus they watch over each other and themselves."[49] Here, Schlegel has described—empirically, quite accurately—the reaction of political positions upon the practice of investigation, a practice which primarily seeks to preserve the separation of knowledge of the facts from the formation of judgment. This is the attempt to save objectivity without having to dispense with a partisan standpoint.

But even Schlegel found this approach inadequate. For it is impossible to answer in this way "which the right party" might be. As an investigator of empirical history, he found himself referred back to a theory of history in that he endeavored to raise himself to the "great standpoint of history," to use his words. Without "the general development of human fates and of human nature in view," the historian found himself caught up in mere political scribbling (*Schriftstellerei*).[50] Or, as he later stated in a more subdued fashion in the *Signatur des Zeitalters*: one could not "permit the party to count just as a party. . . . We should indeed be partisans of the food and the Divine . . . but we should never be partisan or even create a partisan position."[51]

Notwithstanding the religious position which Schlegel seeks to mediate through the historical movement, there is behind his ambivalent thoughts a historicotheoretical claim: history does not exhaust itself in the process of parties, for there plainly are long-term trends which, while promoted by disputes between parties, nevertheless do extend

through their positions. Such long-term "tendencies," "ideas," or "forces," as one then said, became central to the interpretive apparatus of the Historical School, making it possible to arrange the entire course of history into epochs. The validity or plausibility of such factors cannot be assessed by means of empirical statements bound to specific sources; here, the field of theory alone is decisive. For this reason, the Historical School remained, part consciously, part unconsciously, under the influence of idealist philosophy.

Hegel, in separating his philosophical world history from the subjectivity of the know-all, defined its "spiritual [*geistiges*] principle as the "sum total of all possible perspectives."[52] Therefore, the demand for impartiality was justifiable. It alone saw to it that "that which existed [facticity] prevail" against an interested one-sidedness. In this way, Hegel gave due recognition to the inherited canon of historical investigation. Theoretically, however, he demanded partisanship. To stretch impartiality so far that it forced the historian into the role of "spectator," recounting everything without purpose, would rob impartiality of purpose:

> Without judgment, history loses interest. Proper historical writing must, however, know the essential; it is a partisan of that which is essential and holds fast to that which has relation to it.[53]

It was plain to Hegel what the criterion of "the essential" (*das Wesentliche*) was: historical reason. But Hegel might here, without coincidence, have coined an empty formula, for it needs to be ever occupied anew within the temporal passage of history. Impartiality, indispensable in the methodical course of investigation, cannot, however, relieve the historian of the necessity of identifying the criteria for the essential. Since the French Revolution, however, this is no longer possible without possessing, consciously or not, a theory of historical time.

In conclusion, this will be demonstrated by two examples.

It was generally accepted around 1800 that an epochal turning point had arrived. After the fall of Napoleon, Perthes wrote:

> All comparisons of our time with turning points in the histories of individual peoples and individual centuries are far too petty; one will only be able to sense the immeasurable significance of these years if one recognizes that the whole of our part of the world is in a period

of transition, a transition in which the conflicts of a passing and of an approaching half-millennium collide."[54]

Earlier developments could have produced a change of direction only for several centuries, but today the relations of old and new were shifting with "unbelievable speed." By way of compensation, interest in history was increasing. Perthes, therefore, sought to launch his *Europäische Staatengeschichte* in what was clearly a favorable state of the market. But he had difficulties, stemming from the new historical experience of acceleration. This caused professional historians to hesitate to write modern histories, especially those which, as had previously been customary, led as far as "contemporary history."

The three dimensions of time seemed to have fallen apart. The present was too fast and provisional. Rist wrote Perthes that

We have no kind of secure, established viewpoint from which we can observe, judge, and trace phenomena in their course toward us; [one lives] in a time of decline that has just begun.

This was confirmed by Poel:

Is not the condition everywhere—in bourgeois, political, religious, and financial life—a provisional one? But the aim of history is not that which is emerging, but that which has emerged. [Thus the planned *Staatengeschichte* has] a twin defect in seeking to relate to the transitory and to that which is imperfectly understood.

The future is likewise not knowable: where is the man who can see it even dawning? If he sought to write a history, he would have to

anticipate the birth of a functioning time together with its hopes and conjectures. His history would, as would everything which emerges with spirit from stirring times, increase the ferment, arouse passions, create conflict, and be an eloquent monument to the present, but not a history of the past. Such a history must not be written, and a different history cannot be written.

The past might now still be recognized, for "it should outline earlier history in relation to its present condition"; but this was impossible in the current "process of transformation." In a sentence, "From a history that is to be written now, nothing lasting, no real history, can be expected."[55]

Both of the academics who were approached thus based their refusal on a historicotheoretical argument. In other words, the acceleration of history obstructed the historian in his profession. Confronted with this, Perthes asked, "When will the time come when history comes to a halt?" As a result of this, there emerged that tendency dedicated to the reconstruction of a lost past in a methodologically rigorous investigation. This is the historical tendency about which Hegel had already made some ironical remarks; of which Dahlmann sarcastically said it was "a history far too respectable to approach the present day";[56] and which Nietzsche finally described as "antiquarian."

Pure investigation of the past was not, however, the sole response that was found for the acceleration of history. In this second camp, which, like the first, permits of no clear-cut political classification, Lorenz von Stein can be found. In 1843, Stein had clearly formulated the idea that temporal perspective was involved in a continually changing and accelerating movement and was itself driven by this movement. For fifty years, life had been accelerating in pace.[57] "It is as if the writing of history is no longer capable of keeping up with history." Thus was established the importance of the position from which one could apprehend the singularity of the modern movement in a single glance and which permitted one to form a judgment.

Perhaps without knowing it, Stein seized on arguments of Enlightenment theory. These gained ground steadily for those wishing to become involved with "contemporary history," for, if the periodic rhythm of history was undergoing change, an appropriate perspective was needed. Therefore, Stein searched for the laws of motion of modern history so that he could deduce from them a future that he wished at the same time to influence. The more he had before his eyes the advancing course of the French and English examples, out of which he endeavored to derive directions for political conduct in Germany, the more he was able to risk a prognosis on the basis of his diagnosis. A prerequisite of this was a history whose long-term effective factors remained susceptible to influence, but which initially were constant conditions of continual change. In this fashion, the historical perspective shifted completely from a pure condition of knowledge into a temporal determinant of all experience and expectation that derived from "history itself." In Feuerbach's words, "History has only that which is itself the principle of its changes."[58]

Both responses outlined here repeatedly appear in various guises. They react to a history which, in its change, demands that the relation of past and future be defined anew. Neither position is radically reducible to an alternative: here partisanship, there objectivity. The scale is a sliding one, as can be seen from what separates and what is shared by Ranke and Gervinus. Thus, Gervinus, as the propagator of a liberal politics, also entered a plea for a methodologically required impartiality: [The historian] must be a partisan of fate, a natural proponent of progress," for the representation of the cause of freedom is indispensable.[59] Opposing this move toward partisanship, Ranke deliberately assumed the contrary position, that of the timeless nature of historical research produced through the proper method. Writing an obituary, Ranke noted:

Gervinus frequently repeated the view that science must intervene in life. Very true, but to be effective it must above all be science; for it is not possible for one to adopt a position in life and transfer this into science: then life affects science, and not science life. . . . We can then only exercise a real influence on the present if we first disregard it, and fix our thoughts on a free objective science.

He strictly rejected any view "which considers all that has occurred from the standpoint of the present day, especially since the latter changes itself continually."[60] For Ranke, historical specificity remained an objection against historical knowledge. Not that Ranke could have done without the effectivity (even party-political) of historical knowledge. Rather, he wished to mediate it through a science distanced from the everyday so that past history might itself be initially recognized. He scented behind questions guided by interest the danger that they would obstruct precisely the historical knowledge that might today be needed.

Thus we stand in the middle of the previous century before the same dilemma that still dominates our discussion today. The historical doctrine of perspective has indeed helped us disclose the historicity of the modern world, but in the dispute between objectivists and representatives of partisanships the camps are divided. They have separated, notwithstanding the great historiographical attainments that have issued from both camps.

Theoretical Prospect

The foregoing historical outline lays no claim to establish in a hard-and-fast way the chronological succession of the positions presented. Rather, these were ordered with respect to a systematic viewpoint which may need to be altered or supplemented in the light of material from different countries and periods. Nevertheless, the problem of a modern historical relativism and its scientific assimilation will not substantially alter. It is, therefore, possible to draw some conclusions here from the arguments which, in Germany, first posed the questions of locational determination and formulated the various responses to these questions.

Since the ancient doctrines of historical artifice, there has been a dispute about the degree to which an interpreter can himself present a history, or whether history can be brought to life only in a rhetorical performance. Chladenius drew a distinction between true histories that were in themselves unchanging and exposition that was determined by a particular position. The temporalization of perspective made the issue more complex, since henceforth the history of influence and of reception of past events became part of the experiential substance of "history in general," entering into the individual histories. Likewise, the new positions gave past "facts" a continuing validity independent of the judgments made upon them later. The separation of fact and judgment was even accepted by Hegel, to the extent that he associated the methodological establishment of facts with impartiality, demanding partisanship only for the formation of historical judgment—partisanship of reason, hence partisanship for the suprapartisan.

Past facts and contemporary judgment are, within the practice of investigation, the terminological poles which correspond to objectivity and partiality in epistemology. From the viewpoint of investigative practice, however, the problem becomes less critical. There is probably only an apparent problem concealed behind the epistemological antithesis. In the historiographic context, facts are also conditioned by judgment. In Gentz's words, whether Louis XVI was murdered, executed, or even punished is a historical question; but the "fact" that a guillotine of a given weight separated his head from his body is not.

Methodologically, so-called pure establishment of the facts is indispensable, but it involves the principles of general verifiability. Historical method has its own rationality. Questions regarding original

source authenticity, document dating, statistical figures, reading methods, and text variations and derivations can all be answered with an exactitude similar to that of the natural sciences, such that results are universally communicable and verifiable independent of the position of a historian. This canon of methodical accuracy, developed through the centuries, offers a solid barrier against arbitrary claims made by those convinced by their own certainty. But the real dispute over the "objectivity" of the "facts" to be established from remnants does not primarily take place within the domain of scientific technique. There are degrees of correctness for historical observations that can be definitively determined. The dispute over "objectivity" becomes explosive when a "fact" moves into the context of the formation of historical judgment. Thus the suggestion being made here is to shift the problematic.

The real tension, indeed a productive tension, which a historian should see himself confronting, is that between a theory of history and the given sources. Here, we are falling back on experience and results assembled before the establishment of historism, drawing on knowledge developed by Enlightenment and Idealism thinkers that has been outlined here.

There is always more at stake in historical knowlege than what is contained in the sources. A source can exist or be discovered, but it can also be missing. This, then, makes it necessary here to take the risk of making statements which are perhaps not completely founded. But it is not only the patchiness of all sources—or their excess, in the case of recent history—which hinders the historian in establishing, on the basis of sources alone, either past or contemporary history. Every source—more exactly, every remnant that we transform into a source through our questions—refers us to a history which is either more, less, or in any case something other than the remnant itself. History is never identical with the source that provides evidence for this history. If this were so, then every cleanly flowing source would be the history we sought.

This might be true for the history of art, whose sources are, at the same time, its objects. This might be true for biblical exegesis, in which the statements of the Bible are the object. It might also work for the analysis of laws, to the extent that they claim a normative validity. Historical science is, however, required from the first to interrogate sources in order to encounter patterns of events that lie

beyond these sources. This requirement also contains the boundary of any doctrine of *Verstehen*, which remains primarily oriented to persons, and their testimony or works, and which forms the objects for interpretation. Even explanatory models employed, for instance, in the interpretation of long-term economic change, escape the method of *Verstehen*, which functions only at the level of the source. As historians, then, we have to go a step further when we consciously make history or wish to recall a past.

The step beyond immanent exegesis of the sources is made all the more necessary when a historian turns away from the so-called history of events and directs his gaze at long-term processes and structures. In written records, events might still lie directly to hand; but processes, enduring structures, do not. And if a historian has to assume that the conditions of possible events are just as interesting as the events themselves, then it becomes necessary to transcend the unique testimony of the past. Every testimonial, whether in writing or as an image, is bound to a particular situation, and the surplus information that it can contain is never sufficient to grasp the historical reality that flows through and across all testimony of the past.

Thus we need a theory: a theory of possible history. Such a theory is implicit in all the works of historiography; it is only a matter of making it explicit. There is a wide variety of statements on history in its entirety or individual histories which cannot be directly related to the sources, at least in the second phase of study.

On the basis of everyday experience, it cannot be denied that an economic crisis or the outbreak of war is perceived by those affected as divine punishment. Theological science can essay an interpretation, in the form, for instance, of a theodicy that lends meaning to affliction. Whether this kind of explanation will be accepted by historians, or whether they would rather find other reasons (for instance, the catastrophe as the outcome of erroneous calculations of power) or look for psychological, economic, or other kinds of explanations, cannot be decided at the level of the sources. The sources certainly might provide an impulse toward a religious interpretation. The decision of which factors count and which do not rests primarily at the level of theory, and this establishes the conditions of possible history. The question of whether a history should be read economically or theologically is initially one that has nothing to do with the state of the sources, but is a theoretical decision that has to be settled in advance. Once this

decision is made, the sources begin to speak for themselves. On the other hand, they can remain silent because, for instance, there is no evidence suited to a question formulated economically, and the question is not thereby a false one. Therefore, the primacy of theory brings with it the compulsion of having the courage to form hypotheses. Historical work cannot do without this. This does not mean that research is given a free hand. Source criticism retains its irreplaceable function. The function of the sources, their criticism, and their exposition must be defined more closely than was previously customary under the doctrine of *Verstehen.*

In principle, a source can never tell us what we ought to say. It does prevent us from making statements that we should not make. The sources have the power of veto. They forbid us to venture or admit interpretations that can be shown on the basis of a source to be false or unreliable. False data, false statistics, false explanation of motives, false analyses of consciousness: all this and much more can be revealed by source criticism. Sources protect us from error, but they never tell us what we should say.

That which makes a history into the historical cannot be derived from the sources alone: a theory of possible history is required so that the sources might be brought to speak at all.

Partisanship and objectivity cross one another in a new fashion within the force field between theory formation and source exegesis. One without the other is worthless for research.[61]

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III

Semantic Remarks on the Mutation of Historical Experience