

***THE FORKING PATHWAYS***  
***BORGES (ET CETERI) ON TIME (ET CETERA)***

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*TIME*  
*is the substance*  
*of which I am made.*  
*Time is a river,*  
*which bears me*  
*- but I myself am the river.*  
*It is a tiger,*  
*which rips me apart*  
*- but I myself am the tiger.*  
*It is a fire,*  
*burning me up.*  
*- but I myself am the fire.*  
*The world unfortunately is real*  
*and I am unfortunately BORGES.*  
*J. L. Borges, 1946*

Borges was not only a respected poet, he was also a profound thinker. His literary production is a true cornucopia of subtle refinements and intellectual sophistication. He was not a philosopher in the academic sense, but he was well informed of the entire philosophical tradition, a fact witnessed by his works which are often inspired by funny metaphysical and theological ideas. His thinking often veers in unexpected directions: old caprices are elucidated in new and interesting ways, or trite conceptions are given a surprising twist. His artistry manifests itself in his unique ability to wrench the reader out of the commonplace and lead him upwards to soaring heights so dizzying that an eagle's eye is needed to recognize the familiar traits of existence.

In what follows, I will direct attention to Borges' ideas about time. Speculations about the concept of time, as well as its being and characteristics, figure prominently in his many short stories and essays. This philosophizing poet ascribes to the temporal dimension of reality a fundamental significance for human existence. At the same time, he is fascinated by the ephemeral nature of time which hides it entirely from our senses.

The Borges anthology '*The Jackal*', published 1983, includes two texts which treat time. These texts antithetically shed light on each other; the first apparently refutes that which the second apparently accepts: the reality of time. A common denominator is found in the recognition of the problem of time as the foremost philosophical question, the point being that, basically, the question of time is identical to the question of the human soul. Understood thus, the problem of time constitutes the true point of contact between two central philosophical disciplines: metaphysics and psychology.

*Gnothi seauthón*: "Know thyself!", admonished the oracle in Delphi, an exhortation which Socrates, the great existential thinker of antiquity, made a mission of for himself. *In te, anime meus, tempora metior*: "In thee, my soul, I measure time", was the answer given by St. Augustine, *Confessiones, liber xi*, who ended up by endorsing the Socratic *docta ignorantia*, confessing himself to the ultimate mystery. The best man can hope for is to come to know his own ignorance. Only God can solve the Sphinx's riddle.

Like Socrates and Augustine, Borges too was consumed by the desire to behold the truth about his own being, but somehow his inflammation is less zealous than theirs. Always knowing the answer beforehand, he had abandoned his belief in it. His reader admittedly feels the whirring of spiritual wings, but it is difficult to determine in which direction his wings are carrying him: what is his starting point, where is his destination? It is as if his poetic light is more like darkness. Borges the poet is indefatigable in his efforts to lead us toward the loftiest heights, but before we arrive, he disappears from the stage, his voice leaving only a frustrating echo. Most of all, he seems reminiscent of "a god who creates first the cosmos and then chaos", in the manner of Homer, his main figure in the tale of "The Immortal", from the collection of stories named *Aleph*.

In other words, one should not expect Borges to provide final solutions or, rather, one should be aware of the fact that the solutions he does provide are *legio*, but that none of them are final in any sense other than *fictiones*. Let us consider, e.g., his lecture "El tiempo" from 1980 in which it is provisionally maintained that time, unlike space, cannot be thought away. The justification for this is a double one: human consciousness unfolds itself in time, not in space, and as a thinking consciousness it is unable to imagine itself away, due to the *cogito* principle. As already pointed out by Descartes, cogitation and extension are so altogether different that they can have only one feature in common, viz. pure existence, i.e. temporal continuance, or duration - in a word: *time*. As an illustration of the possibility of a purely temporal, i.e. non-spatial, world, Borges emphasized music. In this context it is natural to recall the deaf composer Beethoven: what inner life, what a world of silent tones! Considered thus, time is primarily a mental concomitant, a reality co-existing with the self, superior to space.

Although Borges did not anticipate that an answer to the problem of time will ever be found, he regarded it as worthwhile to ponder the philosophical attempts which have been made in quest of a solution. Plato's proposal, the oldest of its kind, which was later taken up and developed by Plotin and Augustine, is also the most beautiful. According to Plato, time should be conceived as "a moving image of eternity". Eternity, "this wondrous invention", wished to see itself reflected in the infinite multiplicity of existence. This could not happen all at once, but only from one moment to the next, i.e. in time, and thus time and world were created concurrently. Time is "a gift of eternity" (Blake) because it enables us to live one day at a time. Piece by piece we can participate in everything; but eternity in its entirety is too engulfing, an unbearable burden to man. One who beholds God himself, face to face, is overwhelmed, grief-stricken, annihilated. Borges the mystic declines, however, to be interpreted religiously.

What, then, is eternity? Being time-bound creatures, we are compelled to imagine time as being pieced together of all of the past, all of the present and all of the future. But, in fact, these three conjugations are all present as manifestations of the immediate, Borges insists. The future being the impending present, and the past being the retiring present, only the now is the actual present. However, as duration, the present is never totally present, since every duration has both a beginning and an end; for, while the end is already approaching, the beginning is already receding. But if the present is thought of as non-durational suddenness, it does not participate in time, of course.

These arguments have been adapted from antiquity's sceptic, Sextus Empiricus. In this way the reality of time is transformed to illusion, as Borges insisted in his story "Nueva refutacion del tiempo" from 1952. However, he held his decisive victory to be an argument invented by himself, based on a consistent rethinking of the idealism of the empiricist philosophers Berkeley and Hume. To the idealist, reality consists of a flow of sensory impressions connected only by their temporal order. Why, and with what right, do we then maintain that time constitutes a linear continuum?

Borges, maybe unwittingly, reached the same conclusions and the same results as did Russell. Russell referred to his thinking as "neutral monism" or "logical atomism". According to this philosophy, the world is a labyrinth of neutral experiences or sensory data which, neither subjective nor objective, possess no substantiality whatsoever, and are totally devoid of immanent spatial or temporal structure. The most crucial difference between Russell and Borges is that Russell seemed to be committed to modern physics (more precisely, the Minkowskian dogma of a four-dimensional space-time amalgam) whereas Borges was far less impressed by science's presumed conquests and therefore without any hesitation gave himself over to his poetic imagination and fancies.

Thus Borges transcended both the Newtonian and the Einsteinian idea of time.

With idealistic arguments, he was able to refute idealism's infinite temporal succession. If time is a mental process, how is it shared by thousands of human beings, or just two? Every perceived moment is real, existing on its own. The totality of time is a phantasm. Does not the repetition of a single moment suffice to destroy time as a linear series? Every now in which something occurs is in itself an entire temporal succession.

Time simply does not exist beyond the present moment. The very moment when Chuang Tzu is dreaming that he is a butterfly flying freely in the air, knowing nothing of Chuang Tzu - that very moment is his whole reality. "I have heard that the present, i.e., the 'specious present' of the psychologists, lasts between some few seconds and a tiny fraction of a second. But so long does also the entire history of the universe last". To Bishop Berkeley God was the omnipresent spectator whose decision it was to make the universe cohere as a unified totality. Borges seems to prefer Buddhism which allows the world to be annihilated and restored 6,500,000,000 times a day.

*Panta rhei*, everything flows. This statement could easily be ascribed to Borges who, just like Heraclitus, held that to bathe twice in the same river is an impossibility. Not only the river, but also the bather, has changed. To put it otherwise, not only time, but also the human soul, can be likened to an incessant flux. Borges was extremely fond of referring to the metaphor of the flowing river, and he relished immersing himself in the paradoxes of interpretation. But, applied to time, the metaphor is ambiguous since the flow seems to have two possible directions. We are free to choose whether we prefer to say that what happens is passing from the future *via* the present towards the past, or whether we prefer to say that our consciousness is passing from the past *via* the present towards the future: both choices are equally possible interpretations.

We may recall Huckleberry Finn, who in an evanescent dreamlike moment rocks on his raft in the hazy dusk embracing Mississippi, every directional indication seeming to disappear. His disorientation is total, his resignation correspondingly phlegmatic. But one does not dare to believe in the transitory, never-to-be-repeated quality of this event, since "a single bath in the river of immortality" will suffice to refute Heraclitus. Disposing of infinite aeons of time, a human being might experience everything more than once, even an infinity of times, and time would be transformed to a mill whose grinding would destroy every difference between good and bad: all values would lose their significance in "infinity's hall of mirrors". Only the troglodytes would survive.

Borges eagerly cultivated the strange humour of horror as evidenced, e.g., in the phantastic account of "Tlön, Ukbar and Orbis Tertius" from the collection '*Ficciones*' where he relates the history of an unknown planet. Its population are born idealists, and the tale can be comprehended as a parody of that very interpretation of reality which so fascinated Borges and which, apparently, it was so hard for him to renounce.

The idealism of the planet's natives extends so far as to express itself in their language, whose proto-form is ignorant of nouns, admitting only verbs and their modifications. As material objects in this universe are not inherent and primitive, but derived, Borges can pretend that they multiply themselves as so-called "hrönir". Because the identity of these objects is so very precarious, it is possible for especially inventive individuals to revise the past, which thereby assumes the same flexible character as the future. The reader's patience is rewarded by a sinister creepy sensation when it is revealed that the industrious midgets of conspiracy continue to work, that reality is about to collapse, and that the present world is slowly but inevitably being transformed to Tlön ...

Borges' secret society for the dissemination of fictions about strange alien worlds would include among its members both the alchemist Johann Valentin Andreae and the metaphysician George Berkeley but, surprisingly, not the mystic Emanuel Swedenborg. The tale of Ts'ui Pen's labyrinth, "The garden with the forked paths", which like the previous story appeared in the *Ficciones*, seems at first glance to be even more sinister: "I envisage that for each passing day humanity will embark upon ever more frightening endeavors until at last only soldiers and bandits will remain". I will for now disregard the framing story of the spy, Yu Tsun. The crux of the matter is the tale of his learned great-grandfather, Ts'ui Pen, who intended to build a labyrinth, but who instead wrote a demented novel, rampant with bizarre contradictions manifesting themselves by the fact that the novel feigns a world in which literally everything happens because all possibilities are realized concurrently. The labyrinth is thus an imaginary "multiverse", and the paths of the odd garden represent a network of mutually antagonistic courses of events whereby it becomes an image of world time branching out in all infinity.

Some acquaintance with *Leibniz's ideas about possible worlds* is advantageous in understanding Borges' message in this incredible fiction. Leibniz, as we know, defended himself against the nightmare of determinism by introducing a modal distinction based on the idea of a total world process, a universe defined as a maximum set of mutually consistent statements (statements about the monads participating in the world process). He distinguished among the infinity of possible worlds which make up the contents of divine omniscience and the one and only actual world, understood as the manifestation of divine omnipotence. The compatibility of providence and freedom he then attempted to explain by the invocation of divine benevolence as its primary and original impulse. What makes the tale of "the garden with the forked paths" so intriguing is its illustration of the concept of possibility as being embodied by the set of all imaginable worlds, and this even at a time when "possible worlds" semantics had not yet ripened historically. The notion of possible worlds, described as maximally consistent sets of propositions, has today gained a firm stand within logic, first in modal, later in temporal, logic.

But let us consider the concept of possible worlds a little closer. According to Leibniz's metaphysics, the so-called monadology, each monad (e.g., a human soul) is a microcosmos which in agreement with its inherent idea reflects the entire macrocosmos. Hence it mirrors the universal totality in order to disclose it in an individual perspective. Understood thus, a possible world is identical to the totality of perspectival centers and equal to the sum of contained particles (monads). From this it follows, firstly, that each single perspective includes all other perspectives incorporated in the very same totality, i.e., the universe, secondly, that this universe can never be conceived as it is in itself, independently of all perspectives, since it exists exclusively in, or for, a perspective.

So the monadology of Leibniz is *consistent perspectivism*. Inasmuch as the soul unconsciously, in an incorporeal way, senses everything which happens in the world, its inner time is not an abstract process but a concrete - although hazy and obscure - representation of the course of the entire universe. In this way the monad is identical with the series of events constituting its content. Any monad can be identified by its logical program or its idea. The concept of a monad, its idea, is logically the same as the history of its existence conceived - by God - *sub specie aeternitatis*. For this reason, the notion of the human soul can be elucidated as the concept of a definite life story.

Let us, e.g., consider Caesar when he uttered the famous phrase: *Iacta est alea*. According to his own explicit admission, what in all probability was the most fateful decision of his life was just as accidental as a throw of the dice. Assuming that the truth about all that which occurs is immutable and timeless, it seems determined of eternity, or at least from the dawn of time, that he was the one who would cross the Rubicon. How do we know? Because if not, he would evidently not be the Caesar we know but, rather, an entirely different Caesar. It is constitutive to a person's identity that he would do what he actually did. But our acquiescence to this conclusion is clearly *ex post facto*. In the event that the reader has misgivings about projecting this concept of destiny into the direction of the future, with all that this involves, one can superpose restrictions which make the concept of personal identity appear more provisional.

In accordance with such reservations, it seems more natural to define a person's identity at a given moment by reference to all events and acts that have occurred to, or been effectuated, by this person during the span of time up to the moment in question. But as these events do in principle involve the person's surroundings, the definition will be dependent on a universal concept of simultaneity. Meanwhile, the validity of the classical concept of simultaneity has been suspended by the special theory of relativity. Therefore a definitive solution to the problem of personal identity seems to fade away unless one makes short work of the dilemma and unequivocally embraces monadology.

As a solace to those who find this prospect unappealing, I shall confer the reader to the so-called egocentric logic, constructed by Arthur Prior (Prior and Fine, 1977).

But how does freedom come into all this? Following Leibniz, there is a principle that states the inevitability of what is factual: *Unumquodque, quando est, oportet esse* - to everything it applies that, when it first is given, then it has to be so. The reservation *quando est* expresses a definitive presence which, on the strength of its completeness, is in fact already past. When read in this way, the principle is equivalent to the famous Diodorean maxim. In antiquity, the logician Diodoros Kronos formulated the postulate: "The past is necessary". In order to prove that the future is exactly as irrevocable as the past, he constructed his master argument. Diodoros was a determinist, as was Spinoza. Leibniz, the indeterminist, tried to refute Spinoza by developing the medieval scholastic solution to the problem of the relation of Divine providence and human freedom. Although many philosophers have criticized Leibniz in the course of time, he has been effectively rehabilitated by modern tempo-modal logic (cf. Øhrstrøm, 1984).

According to Leibniz's system, the future is open, and every moment proffers new possibilities of choice, the consequences of which reach out towards infinity. Making a choice obliterates all the possibilities but one, viz. that one which is thereby realized. Each of the rejected or wasted possibilities represents, in the form of a counterfactual assumption, an imaginary alternative to the actual world with its series of events, i.e., another world time or a possible universe. The set of possible worlds at a given moment can thus be described as a bundle of lines, converging in the direction of the past but diverging toward the future. From this it follows that the total set of possible worlds, considered timelessly, must comprise a kind of double infinity, a transfinite set squared, which the mathematician Cantor termed  $\aleph_0$  (*aleph zero*); thus:  $\aleph_0 \cdot \aleph_0 = \aleph_0$ .

Each individual world time is an independent linear sequence, or a continuum. These worlds all resemble the real world in that they share, in one way or another, a mutual past and are subject to the laws of the real world (abandoning this condition would lead directly to science fiction). It is thus possible to speak metaphorically of a spectrum of possibilities by letting the angle formed between an individual branch and the trunk of the bunch express the degree of determination in the universe in question. Only if the angles to all future directions are zero is the universe wholly determined. But is determinism at all probable? Is it, after all, possible to predict a person's actions so precisely that actually informing him of the prediction will not change the conditions for the fulfillment of the prediction? How can a universe be judged 'deterministic', if it is impossible to communicate a prediction to the person involved without interfering with the prediction in an unpredictable way? By closer inspection determinism appears to be so thoroughly irrational that the burden of proof must befall its proponents.

The final theme which I will discuss in this review of Borges' concept of time is the problem of history itself as it is raised in the strange tale of "The Other Death", from the collection *Aleph*. Inspired by Dante's *Divine Comedy*, *canto xxi* - one of his most humorous - Borges had studied a theological treatise, *De Divina Omnipotentia*, by Pier Damiani (whom Dante locates on Uranus, the place reserved for holy hermits), and, in all probability, Borges must have amused himself very much by this reading: Pier, by defending the idea that, if only a fallen woman repents, God in His mercy, by exerting his omnipotence, is able to restore her lost virginity regardless of how often she has sinned, shows himself to be a true devotee of holy simplicity, *sancta simplicitas*.

The basic principle in this story involves omnipotence's ability to modify the past. Borges, in his tale of "The Other Death", portrays a mestiz named Pedro Damian who, on his deathbed, after having repented his cowardly behavior during a certain battle, is granted the possibility of reliving the battle so vividly that he, after having performed heroically, is shot in the chest and dies. Thus Pedro Damian died in 1946 during a battle which took place in 1904, every trace of his previous shame henceforth obliterated. We are accustomed to saying: "What is done is done and cannot be altered". But maybe this is not worthy of credence? Is it conceivable that God is able to tamper with the irrevocable character of the past? Is it after all possible to revise the work of creation so radically that that which has happened can be undone, not merely "as if" or pretendedly, but truly, that is, in fact, undone? This question has many ramifications.

Kierkegaard, in fact, posed the same question in his *Philosophical Fragments*: "Is the past more necessary than that which is impending?", or: "In becoming real, does the possible become more necessary than it was?" - to which his reply was a clear: No! The immediate impetus to these considerations was provided by Hegel who, in his philosophy of history, had proposed the controversial idea of an inherent necessity which, due to the "cunning of reason", intervenes dominantly in the course of history. Kierkegaard, in his attack on Hegel, seems to agree with Damianus, and therefore to disagree with the previously mentioned Diodorian-Leibnizian principle.

Concerning Damianus, who is seen to be as devious as he is meek, the question is ultimately revealed to pertain to history; his example is the establishment of Rome. The Romans, as we know, calculated the calendar *ab urbe condita*, and thus the entire historical chronology is at stake. As for God, Damianus maintains that he is coeternal with his own omnipotence and that his infinite wisdom incorporates all times. He can neither experience anything new, nor can he lose his knowledge through forgetfulness. From the acknowledged fact that God created a world in which he effectuated the establishment of Rome, we conclude (presupposing his free will) that he could just as easily have created a world without Rome. But Damianus, referring to the fact that

omnipotence is eternal, claims further that "could", when interpreted in omnipotence's own language, as manifested in the divine work of creation, is synonymous with "can". So this statement is true: God can effectuate that Rome, established, as we well know, in antiquity, was not established in antiquity after all.

In order to debunk this "hocus pocus" (originally a vulgarization of the Catholic Eucharistic: *Hoc est corpus*) it is mandatory to consider that every imagined alteration of the actual course of events, i.e. every contrafactual assumption, implies antecedents and consequences which extend towards infinity, or at least as far as time itself extends. Thus the assumption supposes an alternative world time, i.e., another possible universe. And the assertion that God can create a new world which is different from this one is, logically, not quite as sensational as the assertion that he can undo what has happened. Therefore I think we must conclude that there are viable grounds for acknowledging the Diodorian-Leibnizian principle as a crucial constituent of the concept of world.

If my assumption is valid, it makes no sense to utilize a possible-world semantics to explain a logical system unless this system is able to legitimize a thesis which is semantically equivalent to the principle in question, for example, the following thesis: "The past is inevitable" or, more precisely, "Everything which is true about the past is inevitably true, i.e., true for all future". This thesis is plausible since, if the concept of a world lacks this, it is wholly incoherent, and more a concept of chaos than of cosmos. The only circumstance which can possibly invalidate the thesis would be an event which could make the past future and the future past, an event which, in other words, could reverse the direction of time, causing time to move "backwards" as compared to the "earlier" direction of time. The idea of such an event occurring is, to put it mildly, fantastical and would presumably best be diagnosed as "psychic anomalia".

In any event, Borges' hypothesis in the novel in question appears to be deficient, because its status seems neither ontological nor chronological but, rather, psychological. I am well aware of the fact that the notion of "backwards time" has been presented by such illustrious thinkers as Plato and the mathematician Gödel. But, firstly, I believe that Plato meant this myth to be interpreted humorously and, secondly, I think that Gödel's world should be seen as a *reductio ad absurdum* of an uncritical application of general-relativistic methods. To this can be added that Gödel clearly could not predict the developments which have taken place within temporal logic in recent decades.

In summary, the concept of "backwards time" should be entrusted to psychology. This conclusion (and here I abandon Borges) can be used to shed new light on one of the basic problems of the philosophy of history and historical theory. In this connection I want to quote P. Gardiner (1961, p.35): "Past events have caused philosophers worry, although the remedies they have proposed as cures for this worry have, as so often,

proved worse than the disease. For they have ended by producing theories of the past which amount to a denial of the legitimacy of speaking of past events .. at all, and which destroy the validity of the assumptions they set out to justify. How did this come about? ... When we discuss events in the past, it is true by definition that we are not directly acquainted with them. But, it is argued, I can only correctly be said to know an event when I am actually observing it, true knowledge (being) knowledge by acquaintance. In what sense, then, can I be said to know an event which is in principle unobservable, having vanished behind the mysterious frontier which divided the present from the past? And how can we be sure that anything ever really happened in the past at all, that the whole story is not an elaborate fabrication, as unthrifty as a dream or a work of fiction?" The philosophical problem is that scientific truth is traditionally defined by correspondence between an object and our subjective perception of it, between the thing and the thought, in agreement with the scholastic formula: *adaequatio intellectus et rei*. But how can the perception of historians correspond to something that no longer is, i.e., a non-existent reality? How does such reality differ from a pure illusion?

As Gardiner says, philosophers have often proposed the most strange solutions to this problem. The most extreme of these is perhaps that formulated by M. Oakeshott (cf. Collingwood 1946, p.155): "History, because it is experience, is present ... ; but because it is history, the formulation of experience as a whole *sub specie praeteritorum*, it is the continuous assertion of a past which is not past and of a present which is not present". But in his brighter moments Oakeshott expresses himself somewhat more moderately: The past is only open for perception in so far as it makes itself known in our present experience; hence the classical expression "wie es eigentlich gewesen" (Ranke) should be replaced by the formula "what the evidence obliges us to believe". Similar views have been expressed by B. Croce and R.G. Collingwood. According to Croce, history is "simultaneous to us" in the sense that it "represents consciousness of our present acts"; and to Collingwood, history is synonymous with "the re-enactment of past experience". Collingwood locates the criterion for its truth in the Idea of History itself, viz., in the "idea of an imaginary picture of the past" which is termed "innate", or *a priori*.

Gardiner feels that, in these authoritative declarations, he can detect an irrational hostility towards the past, based on the grounds that the past is not the present, and he argues against the use of spatial metaphors such as, e.g., "the past was spread before our eyes", since they beguile us into committing what he calls "the time machine fallacy". This error arises when we believe that past actions and events, although non-existent, nevertheless "subsist" as independent "realities" in some imaginary, or virtual, world. Thus historians are deluded to believe that, if only they could be informed of this world, everything would be all right. Unfortunately, such revelations are comparatively rare.

None of these thinkers were fools. But there are indications that, in the course of their grappling with the difficult questions of existence, they have produced arguments which are all too easily misleading. How do we best avoid such pitfalls and errors?

A.O. Lovejoy, America's grand old man of the history of ideas, has a reasoned proposal that seems to counter these difficulties. He writes (Meyerhoff 1959, p.186f.): "I conclude that the consequences sometimes drawn with respect to historiography from the 'presentcentric predicament' are inadmissible. The predicament, indeed, is a fact, but it is a predicament of *all* knowing at every instant at which a knowing can occur ... The primary objects of the historian's inquiry are "a set of events irrevocably there in the past", having their own properties and relations in their own times, which it is his first business to endeavor to ascertain. In so far as philosophers say things (suggesting) that this is not his first business, they (just) tend to undermine his morals as a historian".

This suggestion, in all its simplicity, is alluringly trustworthy; but does it resolve our difficulties after all? Rather than referring us to the present, it acknowledges the past in its own right, and this is acceptable - but only up to a point. The disadvantage is that it bestows too much glory upon the past. The postulate of the reality of past events is inevitably misinterpreted ontologically in the direction of an illegitimate hypostasis. We are still thwarted by the pitfalls of language. Lovejoy has merely perpetrated the "time machine fallacy" in a new variant. So, is it impossible to avoid scepticism?

To me, the solution is so close at hand that we only avoid seeing it because we are constantly stumbling over it. We cannot avoid confronting the question of truth; but we have perhaps stated our question erroneously. Difficulties arise because we try to derive truth from reality, which is why we constantly search for some form of correspondence between two simultaneously existing entities: our thought and its object. When applied to history, we must accustom ourselves to the fact that our thought will never become simultaneous to its object, simply because what we think of is a past or departed reality. Our perception can both be, and persist to be, simultaneous - not with the reality of the past but, on the contrary - with *the truth about the past*. What is characteristic about this truth is to be found in the correspondence of what we think about the past with concurrent sources, i.e., the traces which the past has left behind in the present.

In this way, reality (meaning: past reality) becomes something that first emerges by virtue of the acquisition of truth by human reason. For reality is variable, whereas only truth perseveres. *Thus it comes to light that **the concept of truth** is more profound, and more comprehensive, than **the concept of reality***. And so today's much acclaimed "realism", whether naïve or reflected, is unveiled to be nothing but - fiction!

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