

THE QUEST FOR MEANING THROUGHOUT TIME

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“Ve alleme âdeme’l-esmâe küllehâ”

Quran, Bakara/31

*“per speculum videmus in aenigmate;
et ex parte cognoscimus,
et ex parte prophetamus.”*

St. Jerome

*“Since we cannot change the reality,
let us change the eyes which see it”*

A Byzantine Mystic

*“What is necessarily determined in Space,
is contingent, in Time.”(mekânda vâcib olan zamânda mümkün olur)*

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Abstract. “The Quest for Meaning Throughout Time” is an essay about an exploration of a meaning or a pattern in history. It is a discussion of the nature of historical events and tries to show the fragility of the historical understanding of historians and the problems of historiography. Those difficulties are exemplified from the perspectives of both methodological individualism and holism. It also clarifies the nature of the craft of history and its different aspects: first of all, “history in itself”, as “all of its events which happened in the past times and lost in time” is an unimaginable and unknown subject. Secondly our knowledge about historical remnants, relics and all other documents which can be studied with scientific methods is the science about historical materials and the scientific aspects of history. Classical or modern, all historical narratives that is the craft of historiography as imagined and described by a historian is the art of history. Trying to find a pattern, and a meaning in history is the philosophical aspect of history; the methodological discussions of historical knowledge and historiography is critical philosophy of history, that is, epistemology of history.

Keywords: *Rashomon effect, event, historical events, uniqueness of historical events, methodological holism and individualism, identification, individuum est ineffabile, history in itself, universal/particular, the craft of history, historiography, imagined conjecture, historia est terra incognita, naming.*

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‘Speculum mentis’: the mirror of the mind...

In order to expound my ‘speculum mentis’, the mirror of my mind, I will initiate by drawing a guiding map of the territory, at first for the quest of meaning in history, but later on for the mind itself. But “the map is not the territory (Korzybski, 1958) as stated by the semanticist Korzybski; so the words cannot define and explain the whole reality: that is why my judgments are going to be in the style of very short, jurisdictional statements, to clarify the means, ends and justifications of the craft of history.

Even to draw a map is not possible at once; a rough guide map might work for the present, but later on, I have to retell this quest of meaning at large, while explaining my '*speculum mentis*'. The philosophy of history is also a *quest* of exploring historical territory for the hidden treasures of meaning; yet I have to add that, *historia est terra incognita* (Ucar, 2002).

History is an unexplored territory in which we are forced to travel without a map and an orientation: One sees strange and unfamiliar spectacles in every step and cannot decide which direction is a better way to go. So the mind's eye conceives the territory at first glance, and instantly getting familiar with the spectacles, marks some guiding lines such as rivers and hills; but the mind can merely make a provisional map to foreshow solely the beginning of this mysterious voyage. To see the landscape in a wider angle, one needs to find a proper standpoint; so it is better if one tries to find a hilltop. It is much better, if possible, to climb upwards to choose the best standpoint at the highest summit. Since one needs a larger perspective to see the unknown landscape in large scope, the standpoint should be much higher than the land. Thenceforth comes orientation – which way seems more appropriate? Without a provisional map, and an orientation towards a terminal point, one might get lost in the very beginning of this journey.

America was also a 'terra incognita' before the daring maritime voyage of Columbus. But the difficulty and risk of seafaring is that it involves time. Orientation is much harder in the ocean due to the critical importance of measuring time accurately, and the absence of guidelines. Precise time-keeping is very important for navigating in the ocean. The position of a ship at an ocean should be determined with reasonable accuracy, and this was the reason that the British Government had offered a large prize of 20,000 pounds to a clock which didn't contain a pendulum since pendulums were useless on a rocking ship. It is amusing to imagine how, Odysseus could get lost even in the Mediterranean sea, before the invention of such navigation technologies. This quest of meaning in history resembles the voyage of discovery by the daring seafarer; *water water everywhere* – what can he see from the board of his oceangoing ship but the never-ending waves and the boundless surface of the ocean? There is no distinction, far and beyond ever the same all around; not a guide-line nor a sign to be seen. The daring mariner always stands on board without the knowledge of how much distance is traveled by the ship but he can measure the traveled distance only by the passage of time; as if he travels merely in time. This metaphor of seafaring with its constant consciousness of time seems very appropriate for a Quest of Meaning throughout time. Seemingly the human reason is more used to grasp the meaning of spatial metaphors such as the land-marking signs like rivers and hills. Visible things seem more comprehensible than the invisible time.

I think, to decide for the real orientation of this quest will be much more difficult from these metaphorical descriptions of landscape pertaining to space, since this would be a quest for meaning throughout Time-itself. I have employed some spatial metaphors related with vision, but we need temporal metaphors pertaining to the ceaseless change of time. The eyes may see what is spatial, but the ears should listen and recognize the sounds and fury of the events of turbulent times – the ears can conceive the sound in a temporal process, just like hearing the rustles of fallen leaves as they drift away by the winds and slowly get lost in time. The eyes conceive existence synchronically at first glance, but the ears conceive and understand diachronically—one sound after another in time just like historical events. In the same manner we should try to comprehend the meaning of historical events in a time continuum. Philosophy of history is a quest for meaning, and its aim is to analyze the means and ends off events to find the purpose: the

significance of history ‘in toto’. It is better to name it solely as ‘the quest for meaning’; an imagined voyage in history, just like a time travel. But how can we imagine and make this quest throughout Time? Throughout all history? “*Tempora mutantur, nos et mutamur in illis.*” Times change and we change within them. If only we could change the arrow of time...

Narration of an event differs from actual history...

I will illustrate what I mean by this example: Have you ever seen Akira Kurosawa’s movie, ‘*Rashomon*’? A bandit attacks and kills a man, and rapes his wife while they are passing through a forest in Japan. Meanwhile, a villager witnesses this event and when it is over, he steals the precious dagger of the dead man. The bandit gets caught and confesses what he has done. However, the account of the bandit, the account that the woman gives upon being summoned to the court and asked to retell what she has been through, and the account of the villager, and even the account of the dead man’s soul which is spirited through a shaman are all different than each other as each one tells the story from their own perspectives. They tell a similar plot of this story but contradict each other, because the motivations and the story of actual killing differs for each other though they all experienced it as eyewitness and also lived through this story. There is an interesting note about *Rashomon* effect on internet; they say: “*The title of the film has recently been added to the Oxford English Dictionary as describing ‘...resembling or suggestive of the film Rashomon, especially in being characterized by multiple conflicting differing ... interpretations.*” I have intentionally summarized this movie thus, in order to point out that humanity’s knowledge of history is just like this story. I will give you another example, this time from Woody Allen: The journalists were interviewing him and they asked about speed reading. He said: “*I took a speed-reading course and read ‘War and Peace’ in twenty minutes. It involves Russia.*”

I have summarized ‘*Rashomon*’, but you haven’t actually seen it; did you? Historians’ narration of the past is just like my brief summary. Historical event is like the entire movie, and my summary of the movie is similar to the account of historical narratives. Sometimes what is left to us from history is just like what Woody Allen’s account of *War and Peace*: only one short sentence about a large epical story of history.

A simple historical event as a meeting...

Suppose you attend to a meeting organized by a party or an ‘*institution*’. It is remarkable that any institution can organize a meeting, since, according to holism any institution could be considered as a holistic representation of a “complex whole” What were the motivations of all these people who have chosen to come there exactly at that moment? However, any meeting has another distinctive meaning; this social event, also called a ‘*societal fact*’, transcends the motivations and personalities of individual participants and gains a new attribute according to the holistic perspective.

That is, any social event has some ‘emergent property’ as a whole and thus, it is not only a conglomeration of individuals; but also the sum total of their conscious awareness of the meeting. Hence, the meeting in turn, is going to be experienced altogether by everyone: as though, it happens concurrently in the dreamlike quality of the consciousnesses of its attendants. As quoth John Lennon “A dream you dream alone is only a dream. A dream you dream together is reality.” Hence, both the feelings of

attendants and the meaning of the event constantly changes within many different frames of reference and seen from the different perspectives of each participant; Yet there is still something more to be told... I could use this introduction itself as a demonstration of the idea of holism: As stated in a metaphor by Wilhelm Dilthey “*while the whole of this work (i.e., this article) must be understood from individual words and their combination, any full understanding of an individual word presupposes understanding the whole.*”

There are two different approaches to perceive an event, namely, methodological individualism versus methodological holism...

Individualism is the method of science, while holism is the method of humanities and philosophy. *Science tends to analyze*, whereas *philosophy tends to synthesize* to understand a subject. If you wish to see this event from the perspective of individual actions instead of adhering to the organizing and synthetic principles of the holistic approach, you would try to reduce this event to a gathering of individual participants. Obviously, a meeting comes into existence from participating individuals: Indeed, this could be interpreted as the so called ‘reductionism’ which is the methodological principle of science. But it is impossible to reduce an event to its parts or represent the whole event simply as the result of individual motivations and decisions. Suppose that later, you try to make a historical research about that meeting; you would see that your first-hand knowledge is insufficient and fragmentary. First of all, you could not possibly know everyone present there in person, or their motivations, intentions and actions. Suppose that you decide to investigate that specific event and make all the effort to interrogate each person who was there, and even then you shall see that the story is endless and leads nowhere.

You can either imagine this, or attempt to remember afterwards a simple gathering with your friends. “*One must learn by doing the thing, for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try,*” quoth Aristotle. If you follow his advice, you could learn a historiography lesson by experience. Even a simple historical event could be considered as the sum of participating individuals and processes which coincide in the same temporal continuum. The idea of ‘event’ is very fundamental in history. This is why I began with the example of an insignificant event. Thus, although it may seem to be a simple event at the first sight, it may be in fact not an individual event but rather, it consists of different processes in time which has coincided then and there, therefore it is very hard to grasp at once.

Though, it might be an event so simple in fact that it could be labeled even with a single word, as ‘the meeting’; this is just how events are usually reported in history or in newspapers. But in fact, every seemingly simple event of history is a ‘mixtum compositum’ of many smaller events, as elements of a ‘Set’ of multitudinous events. A historical event is comprised of multitudinous and arcane details of many other events and facts which should be deciphered one by one from historical sources.

Historical remnants are the footprints of a past event as if stamped in one place, recorded, and preserved in time by chance, as a source of information, waiting for would-be historians. But they are incomprehensible if taken one by one. Historians’ consciousness constructs and assigns a holistic meaning at each step while building a historical event from those information bits and facts; Just like how our consciousness builds colors or even extra spectral colors like pink from light waves. This SET of historical events share the same problem of Continuum Hypothesis as it is also the case with mathematical Set theory. Draw a circle! Every circle includes infinite reference points; but what if, you draw a bigger circle which covers the first one. According to the

set theory, there are bigger infinities than any infinity and this idea is proved mathematically, though it is self-contradictory. To resolve this paradox, the continuum hypothesis comes into play, which is neither provable nor disprovable. I am only mentioning the resemblance of continuum hypothesis to proceedings of historical events here and setting the problem aside here for a while; because it requires large, difficult and sophisticated technical explanations about the intermingled relations of mathematics, semantics and logic. That means, if you want the full comprehension of a happening, you shall see that it is impossible, because that event of history will defy every effort of description. This is in the nature of historical events: and indeed this is the defining characteristic of every human action: very complex behaviors may spontaneously emerge out of simple interactions.

Because, according to the ‘holistic perspective’, a ‘societal fact’ has a higher dimension of meaning; as an “emergent property” which is added unto it. From a holistic perspective, “*a whole is more than the sum of its parts*”. Suppose you were there due to the organization of that meeting by an institution and that organization has its own mission which is differentiated from the intentions of the individual participants of that meeting; and in this case, you would have been experienced the atmosphere of that meeting, and the more you look, the more emergent properties you shall find.

If you wish, you can make extended digressions e.g. that institute represents the establishment which uses institutions as tools, for the precepts of its means; and so on. How far will it go? Do not laugh because it often happens in historiography; the famous mistake of ‘*ignoratio elenchi*’.

Another reason why a historical event is incomprehensible is that it always happens as a ‘unique’ event. And suppose, recalling again, we decided to investigate that meeting as a historian; as ‘one particular/individual event’ of history: It happens only once in one place; in a particular space and within a specific time. In this case, it is a place, appointed and attached to one special time, on that day. But how are we going to narrate it? Or say, how are you going to report it, as if you happen to be a newsman? Only minute details of an event, or in other words, facts can be described, but one cannot retell the story of a whole event because making a representation of any temporal process through language is not an easy art. A sceptical philosopher of history would even say that it is impossible.

I deliberately began aforementioned description of holism, because there is a lot of debate and disagreement among social scientists about this problem of perspective, namely, “*methodological individualism against methodological holism*”. That means there are two different and contrasted approaches to the methodology of historiography. Is it sufficient, or even necessary, to mention the beliefs, behaviors, decisions or actions of individual people when we attempt to describe and explain a “*societal fact*” or a politic phenomenon? Should we mention the beliefs, attitudes, decisions, or actions of each individual in attempting to describe and explain a social gathering, a meeting, an institution or economic phenomena? Is it necessary to speak about the existence of social *wholes* which have some emergent properties, missions or functions? What is the cause of an event? How do events come to occur? Can we judge or guess the causes from the results? I remember here what Will Durant said: “*History is mostly guessing and the rest is prejudice*” (Durant, 1961, p.8).

Labeling the historical events...

Universals, names or wholes like 'media' or 'church' or 'nation' are all habitual references which comes from the need of giving labels to events, instead of such diffused and confused and long descriptions of endless partial knowledge. Are they really abbreviated references to the individual persons in the society concerned? Can a nation or church be said to have a mind of its own; decide or behave like a person? If not, why do we label them and make personifications of them? I will quote Arnold J. Toynbee here: "*The inclination to introduce such analogies is merely an example of that myth-making or fictional infirmity of historical minds to which we have already referred: the tendency to personify and label groups or institutions – 'Britain', 'France', 'the Church', 'the Press', 'the Turf' and so on- and to treat these abstractions as persons. It is sufficiently evident that the representation of a society as a personality or organism offers us no adequate expression of the society's relation to its individual members*" (Toynbee, 1962)

How are we going to understand the society? I will define it here at least for the present as '*the network of individual interactions which happens on the virtual ground provided by society*'. Is it true that the study of an assemblage or a society necessarily should be based on the study of its members? We speak as if social structures or social procedures influence the attitudes, beliefs, decisions of individuals; but why not to explain such influences simply in terms of person-to-person collaborations? Since *philosophy of historiography* is the philosophical discussion and estimation of historical literature; then we have to criticize every aspect of narration techniques. We have to discuss them at length as methodological problems. Shall we search for some different perspectives or means of observing or measuring social entities, such as the "*will of the nation*"? Also, how are we going to interpret and study long time-periods of large-scale historical processes?

Thus far, methodological *individualism* tends to answer aforementioned questions by neglecting the importance or 'scientific status' of social wholes, whereas *methodological holism* discounts and questions the influence of individuals on social phenomena. But clearly both are important, and should be used complementarily: both are necessary; all details about the individual characters and the panoramic image of a meeting site, as if you zoom in on a Google map.

Facts and events of history: holism, individualism, uniqueness...

Obviously, there are countless and confusing methodological problems in historiography. As I have given the example of this very meeting, any description, or any report of a historical event, cannot be a full account of the subject. If you consider this historical event from a holistic perspective, you would be compelled to describe it within universal terms. It is a never-ending story. If you prefer methodological individualism, you will begin with individuals; but it is necessary here, to remember that "*individuum est ineffabile*". Goethe had once remarked, that "*a whole world lies in that sentence.*" That is, '*individuum*' is '*beyond utterance*'. That means, you cannot utter a meaningful explanation for any unique individual. At the moment you try to describe the *individuum*, it loses its essence because of the high abstraction level in which it is sought to be described. We think, we already know what an event is, but it is not that simple. Remember that Individuality has been largely discussed, even treated as the sacred, by German romantic writers and historians of the 19th century.

According to St. Thomas ‘individuum’ (singularity) should be conceived as perceivable things e.g. what we see. St Thomas says: “*Omne individuum est incommunicabile*” (Harper, 1879, p.209). His opinion is that “*the human intellect (and language) cannot completely know and express the individual thing as such. We understand by way of abstracting universal forms from matter (the principle of individuality), and, hence, have only general terms as predicates of subject terms*”. Individuum is the lowest level of abstraction, which means it is related to sensible things; but not to understandable things, since understanding requires a higher level of abstraction which results from a generalization. Thinking requires classifications and generalizations. And now I remember how nominalist philosophers would express it: “*I see the horse in front of me, but I cannot see the idea of a horse*”. I suppose, this was the reason of Immanuel Kant’s judgment that “*the thing in itself*” cannot be known.

General the Right Hon Jan Smuts wrote *Holism and Evolution* in 1926 and was an ardent proponent of the idea of holism. He was also an influential pioneer in establishing both the League of Nations and the United Nations, because according to him establishment of United Nations was what he considered to be the natural outcomes of his ideas. In *Holism and Evolution*, General Smuts quotes a meaningful description of holism by St Thomas; “*Forma substantialis totius non superadditur partibus, sed est totum complectans materiam et formam cum praecisione aliorum*”: “Nothing is added to the whole of the substantial form by the parts that constitute it, but it is the whole that embraces both content and form while maintaining the precision of the different parts that constitute the whole” (Smuts, 1926, p.102).

Nowadays we speak about ‘singularity’ theories. To be sure, that theory is something else, it is a futuristic subject about the contingently implied results of artificial intelligence. I think the prediction of singularity is that everybody will become a holistic singularity at last, becoming vice versa to ‘individuum’ which means singular. That reduces every individual into a generality and makes it equal to zero. An event can change in reverse order and become different from itself in time.., I once wrote in *The Meaning of Existence*, ‘*What is necessarily determined in space, is contingent in time*’. But I will speak more about it later on.

I have to add that any process of *becoming* or any *event of history* cannot be described in full length; one cannot grasp it at once since it happens in time. Remember, how it is expressed in the Old Testament, in a prophetic language, by King Solomon: “*A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever...*” *All things toil continuously; no one can ever finish describing this,*” (and here is another translation from King James Version) “*all the sayings are worn out phrases; man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*”. It is phrased in latin as “*cunctae res difficiles non potest eas homo explicare sermone non saturatur oculus visu nec auris impletur auditu.*” and translated as: “*All things are hard: man cannot explain them by word. The eye is not saturated with seeing, neither is the ear filled with hearing*” (Bible, Ecclesiastes).

This is explained by St Jerome, as, “*per speculum videmus in aenigmate; et ex parte cognoscimus, et ex parte prophetamus*”; that is, *we see in an enigma through the looking glass in the dark: we comprehend in part, and in part we prophetize, to foreshow events.*” This is a difficulty of discerning which individual seems more significant in the whole. There is another difficulty of comprehension, as it is expressed in the aforementioned verse of Old Testament: That is, it is the ‘*becoming aspect*’ of the event, since every event happens in the realm of time, the time itself is the constituent which is not comprehensible here,

because it never ceases to change. Reasoning is a proper tool pertaining to space; it is not useful for time: “*man cannot utter it*”.

Jorge Luis Borges also translates a wonderful metaphor from Leon Bloy in his essay about Corinthians, “The Mirrors of Enigma”: “*History is an immense liturgical text where the iotas and the dots are worth no less than the entire verses or chapters, but the importance of one or the other is indeterminable and profoundly hidden.*” (Stephens, 2021). Imagine *each* dot of an iota “., i” as an individuum, and the whole verse as the event, then the relationship between the individual and the whole event becomes indeterminable and incomprehensible.

“*Perhaps the truth can never be told. Perhaps what is said can never be adequate; perhaps there can never be adequacy between intellectus and rei, intellect and thing, between you the thinker and what you are thinking about.*” quoth Douglas Templeton.

So, it is not just, ‘*the event in itself*’, but the perception ability of the five senses which is also limited pertaining to time; and so it is with the comprehension ability of the mind. In fact ‘*the mind in itself*’ should be considered as the central standpoint of the perspective in any discussion of epistemology.

But this judgment needs a semantical analysis and for now I will set aside the matter for a while to discuss at large later on.

First things first, we should begin from ‘*the mind itself*’, from our own consciousness, to discuss comprehension problems of the epistemology. The most decisive element in any historical research is the historian’s standpoint. This was the reason of that famous saying: “*Know the historian before history*”. Because his mind defines beforehand what event or meaning is worth to notice, to see and to tell, or to neglect forever? Historian’s mind is the most decisive factor here – the inner self, the personality, the worldview of historian. This is why I use this metaphor that the mind itself should be taken as the “standpoint of the perspective”. Because that standpoint defines how large could be the angle of any perspective, since ‘*all meaning is an Angle*’. Perspective stands here for understanding, and our understanding depends on the perspective we take. We should also be careful about the ‘*intensional orientation*’. Why do we speak about orientation? Because we have many orientation problems both personally and as the whole of humanity. This is why we search for a meaning in history. Therefore we are forced to make philosophy of history whether we like it or not. It is a quest for the meaning of our lives, our apprehension of the ever-changing spectacles and events which happen in Time.

Human soul is created to search for the meaning of its existence. So great is the natural outcome of the human mind that it is capable not only to perceive and feel the ceaseless change of events, but also to think and assign a meaning to its ever-changing perceptions. We need guiding principles for an orientation which should be the outcome of a special perspective. Hence, the standpoint is the most decisive factor in any historical research. If the standpoint is accepted as the personality of the man; then, the results he gets from his historical search are the natural outcomes of his choices. I can add that if you employ an ‘*intensional logic*’ to evaluate the predicates of propositions, your mind might be restricted by your value-added language too. But you have to see yourself from outside and go beyond your limitations; “*in culpa est animus qui se non effugit unquam.*”: *The guilty party is the mind which never escapes itself.*

But, as St. Jerome states, we see *per speculum*: our mind also is perceiving in the dark through the looking-glass, in accordance with the impulses which comes from the eyes ceaselessly. The eyes in turn have a limited capacity to see only white light: i.e. the

eye cannot see ultraviolet, ultra-red or other frequencies of light waves, and also what the eyes see as spectacles never ceases to change. And we cognize *ex parte*, from 'individual events'. We cannot know for sure but only guess what is happening around us. Then, to repeat the statement of King Solomon: "*the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing.*"

We can also interpret St Jerome's statement of dissatisfaction '*ex parte cognoscimus*' that we comprehend (the events) through the (fragmentary) parts, this could be accepted as a good *description of methodological individualism*. It tends beforehand to see the individual participants of the event to comprehend the whole. It could be interpreted as the so called 'reductionism' which is the methodological principle of analysis preferred by scientists. Science wishes to reduce the whole into parts, the organism into organs, presumably expecting that the complex obscurity of the whole can be reduced to the simpler parts which have been known already, or more easily grasped than the whole. Science analyses and tries to grasp particulars, or individual events; it is analytical in description, throws light to the present actuality; but philosophy tries to make a synthetic interpretation.

Spengler compares this scientific approach with history as: "*the essential concepts of natural sciences are the concepts of causal uniformity and measurability, and "the natural world", the structure of which is stable, presents the appropriate field for the application of these.*"": "*the subject matter of history, on the other hand, comprehends the 'becoming' as contrasted with 'become'; all is flux, development, variety, particularity, life; to imagine that it can be interpreted in terms of quantitative formulae or construed as a quasi – mechanical system is consequently absurd*"¹ (Gardiner, 1959, p.189).

Thus the meaning of an event changes according to which perspective we choose, the chosen perspective of holism or individualism. And also, same event is differently treated and viewed from different aspects by science, philosophy, history or philosophy of history. Historians insist about the *uniqueness* of historical events. However, it is not easy to decide, describe or understand what is an 'individual event' or personality. Here is a funny story about individual identity by Johannes Zachhuber told in his article, "*Individuality and the Theological Debate about 'Hypostasis'*" (Zachhuber, 2016, p.3).

"*The sixth-century comedian Epicharmus of Kos offered a famous example which subsequently became popular with philosophers: a man refuses to pay his debt with the argument that the person who took the loan was not he but someone different. At issue here is the diachronic identification of an individual. At the same time, however, we must be able to tell apart similar but distinct particulars (identical twins are a notorious example). In extremis, the outcome of a court case may well depend on establishing the truth in a case of mistaken identity. Apparently, we need conceptual tools protecting the identity of one and the same thing through its extended temporal and spatial existence while allowing it to be distinguished from other, potentially similar items*" (Ibid, p.4).

Holism and Reductionism, are two different approaches of perception directed towards events, but they need a broader discussion as they could be related to the ages-old problems of philosophy about *Universal versus Particular*. Following the publication of the famous book, *Holism and Evolution*, large-scale discussion of these ideas of holism and individuality became the subjects of hot discussions about general epistemology. Of course, I will refrain myself to delve deeper into the details, I will not go any further to make a full-scope discussion of the idea of 'holism'. I only mention that book as further

reading for those who wish to gain a fuller understanding of holism, and leave this discussion of individualism and holism here. This incomprehensible discussion of the two viewpoints about the events, “*things in themselves*” brings us now, to the problematic aspects of historiography.

I cannot help but remember how Faguet makes a funny parody of Plato in *The Story of Philosophy*: –“*The whole is greater than the part? –Surely. –And the part is less than the whole? –Yes. ... –Therefore, clearly, philosophers should rule the state? –What is that? –It is evident; let us go over it again.*” (Durant, 1961, p.19).

Since all events occur in history (i.e. in time), and all the processes are hard to grasp, the issue becomes a problem of historical epistemology which requires a larger metaphysical framework. Since an event happens ‘in Time’, it is a question of the epistemology of historiography. In the same manner, you can say that this ‘*critical philosophy of history*’ signifies the philosophy of this craft, and could be described as ‘*the epistemology of history*’ in short.

As it is well known, Historians insist about the ‘uniqueness’ of ‘the event’, despite the fact that, “*the individual is ineffable*”. Then, any theory, any philosophy of history about ‘the event in itself’ is not possible at all. I agree with Aristotle and with my historian colleagues in this regard; I also do not accept former ‘*speculative philosophies of history*’ and their interpretations of the past time.

Aforesaid discussion was merely an example of the quest for the meaning of historical events: they have so intricate details and such intrinsic character of singularity/‘*individuum*’ - that they defy any theory of history.

And this was only one sample of the many problematic aspects of historical craftsmanship, there are of course many more: From this path, we have come to discuss the nature of historiography. I tried to illustrate the complex nature of historical events: we have to understand that history is inherently blended with two kinds of philosophy of history in the same time; though it seems a simple job at first sight, it cannot be taken merely as the narration of the past events.

Historiography is the ‘craft of history’...

We habitually use the word history both for the historical literature, historical craftsmanship and history itself as the past time. Historiography tries to describe, explain and theorize the different traditions of historical craftsmanship: It is all about the study of methods and practices of historians.

Historians naturally use written histories of the former historians and other historical remnants as the sources of information. They infer propositions about past events from these present evidences; id est, history depends on the evidential character of historical relics which could reach them only by chance, if they have been preserved in times of turbulence and reserved by history. But how can we be sure that the inferences they draw really does get us close to the true meaning of the past?

But Historical knowledge is lacking...

I shall not speak about forgeries or historifications; but sometimes, there remains really small amounts of historical evidence about great historical events and processes. For instance, I have made a historical research and wrote a book about “Arab Invasions to Anatolia, A.D. 640-750”, and you can see in that book, here and there, that there are

very short statements about important events of war and peace. This fault was not mine either that sometimes I have been obliged to write only one sentence about an invasion of a whole Arab army to Anatolia, because there remained no more knowledge about that event except merely a sentence; nothing more. I could not find any more detailed knowledge except solely one sentence about this or that event in the Chronicles of Taberi or Theophanes. E.g. you can see in my book how an event is narrated only by one sentence: “*According to the Chronicle of Theophanes, though Muaviye wished to conquer ‘Aradus’ after the invasion of Cyprus, he could not, but he conquered it only one year later in 650* (Ucar, 2007, p.85). It is just like the saying of Woody Allen about War and Peace. A whole epic narrated by one sentence!

After a long search I have decided at last that the aforementioned ‘*Aradus*’ could only be ‘*Ervad*’ Island; namely ‘*Ruad*’ town in contemporary Palestine. See, what happens? Time well-nigh ruins everything and does not care or spare knowledge for would-be historians.

Imagined conjecture as belief...

To be sure, all the events which happened in ‘the past’, could not be known, they are lost like forgotten dreams for ever. But it is also susceptible that historians could truly decipher and understand all the meanings implied in a historical writing. In *The Classical Foundations of Modern Historiography*, Arnaldo Momigliano cites an Antiquarian’s view of history, “*sans aultre preuve que de simples conjectures dece qui pouvoit avoir este*”: “*it is only a guess, simply a conjectured belief without proof, since we can conceive that it was possible to occur (as implied by our imagination); then, presumably in any case, it really had happened so*” (Momigliano, 1990, p.55). I must insist to speak about the problematic aspects of historiography, only to show that there is a *potential philosophy of history* which could transcend *historiography*. Without a doubt, we need historiography as the source of our knowledge: historiography attempts to uncover past events and formulate an intelligible account of them. Historians were always concerned to collect and record facts about the human past and to discover new facts. Obviously any historical information is always incomplete, partly incorrect, or biased and requires careful investigation. But, whenever a Historian tries to discover patterns of meaning in the facts -to address the enduring questions of human life- he speculates in a philosophical manner. It is not pure history but *philosophy of history*. If a historian tries to discern the meaning of events and begins to interpret them related to the patterns of a whole and tries to show its relevance to our life, then his narration is a kind of philosophy of history.

Epistemology (philosophy) of Historiography means ‘Philosophy of the Craft of History’...

It is all about epistemological discussions of the methodological issues of the history craft. Therefore, we speak about two types of philosophies of history. One philosophy is concerned with the epistemological discussions of historical research and writing, attention directed here not towards ‘history as the past time’, but towards the craft itself which is the produced works and art of historians: Correspondingly, this is called by some historians as ‘the critical philosophy of history’. I would rather describe it, for the sake of a more clear expression, as ‘philosophy of the craft of history’, or epistemology of history.

A historian may record such events that he himself have witnessed. In the same way, *Historiography* may include testimony from living eye witnesses; or narratives such as previous histories, memoirs, letters, and fiction; the legal records of courts, documents of archives, and the unwritten information derived from the physical relics of past civilizations such as architecture, arts and crafts, burial grounds, etc. All of these remnants of history, and every other sources of information provide the evidence -as footprints of historical actors who are presented there- from which the historian deciphers historical facts about what actually happened in the past. It is a guesswork like detective story. But the evidence may be biased or incorrect, fragmentary, or unintelligible: The relation of evidence and fact is rarely direct.

To discern a historical fact from an evidence is not a simple job, therefore, it should be evaluated with a critical eye in a certain epistemological frame of reference. This is the '*philosophy of the craftsmanship and craft of history itself*': this is why we call it '*philosophy of historiography*'. Those are the means of '*historical craftsmanship*', sometimes of a ridiculously high level of craftsmanship. But nearly all of the results of this craft, as written presentations of history books, seems to me highly susceptible: Since the argumentations used in this craft are not strong enough to prove anything, not reasonable at all from the viewpoint of epistemology. I will remind here again King Solomon's saying: "*all the sayings are worn-out phrases; the man cannot utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing*".

Nature of history-craft as art science and epistemological philosophy...

On the other hand, we are forced to make philosophical interpretations, even though sometimes unconsciously, about the events of human life or history. That kind of '*Speculative Philosophy of History*' would be a general interpretation of history, a speculative thought on the meaning of the adventure of humankind on earth. But then, we have to remember the question stated by Will Durant: "*To begin with, do we really know what the past was, what actually happened, or is history "a fable" not quite "agreed upon"*"? (Durant & Durant, 2012, p.9). It is a '*fable*' only. And it could not be provable like mathematics or testable like science. If we cannot accept the results of historical craftsmanship as truly reliable knowledge of historical events, how are we going to philosophize about whole history, the whole adventure of mankind on the earth? Nevertheless, I have to reiterate that, we use the word '*history*' in a second sense, as the products of the writing practice and craft of historians; as what historians write and produce about past events. In this second sense, a philosophy and even a science of history is possible. This second kind of philosophy of history is an epistemological discussion of historical method, namely, '*philosophy of the craft of history*', (see, *A Companion to the Philosophy of History and Historiography*, by Aviezer Tucker (Tucker, A. (Ed.), 2011, p.4).

As Aviezer Tucker has expressed, "*the philosophy of historiography, unlike the philosophy of history, is a branch of epistemology that examines our knowledge of the past. As much as the philosophy of science asks how do scientists gain knowledge of nature by examining the relations between scientific theories and the evidence, the philosophy of historiography examines our knowledge of the past by examining the relations between historiography and historiographic evidence*" (Tucker, 2004, p.2). According to my judgment, these studies about the epistemology of historiography has been quite superficial so far.

Those problematic aspects of historical research and epistemology of history are very suitable for rhetorical discussions, but very futile and often impossible to solve them. How can history be known if there is no objective and adequate method of inquiry for understanding historical records, documents and other sources? Epistemological problems of the historiography, has recently been the subject of hot debates; thus, '*philosophy of historiography*', was beginning to emerge as a new discipline of the 20th century, but has not yet been developed at full length. However, historians do not like these fruitless and futile discussions of epistemology. Usually they prefer to ignore these problematic aspects of historiography: Because, these problems are mainly related to more general -even metaphysical- questions of epistemology which could not be solved at all.

The subject-matter of historical study...

I suspect that historians, for the most part, are even not aware of the problems of the philosophy of historiography and the scope of historical knowledge... Since, one needs to be a '*philosopher of history*' to be aware of such and such and closely intermingled philosophical difficulties of historiography. I suspect, one may be a historian, in the traditional sense, in the same manner of 'the good old days', without taking into account these epistemological aspects of historiography.

If you wish to understand what happened in History, surely you want to decipher all of the facts from reliable historical sources; and you are forced to analyze every bit of historical information before going to imagine '*what happened actually in the past*'. But there are many more damned discussions and problems of all unresolved sorts, both in the speculative and critical philosophies of history: First one, how can you make a 'speculative' interpretation of the past events, since they are -supposedly known- but dubious in nature? Actually all of these facts or past events are merely the results of inferred propositions from the relics of history. They are all *guessing*, as evidences of events, all of these judgments as indicated by some historical relics or documents. And that being so, it is merely a *second-hand guess*: Historian himself made an inference from the evidence of a written document that it signifies a real event: surely, if he accepts that this evidence is a reliable testimony and can give a true picture of the indicated event that it had really happened so and so in the past as described by the document. That is, a historical document is a *first-hand guess* of an eyewitness writer; since one cannot know for sure but only guess what is happening around him.

Historians are forced to accept beforehand, what is left or handed over them by chance or by their choice (*such as the relics of history*) is a reliable information source: then they begin to conclude that this information evidently testifies about what happened. And then, they try to imagine and built a story about 'how actually that event could be happened', though they can not know the intricate details of that event. "*The belief in a hard core of historical facts existing objectively and independently of the interpretation of the historian is a preposterous fallacy, but one which it is very hard to eradicate.*" quoth E.H.Car, from his book "What is History") They judge, as if the historical document is a written testament of a reliable eye witness. Their conclusions also could be reliable sometimes, but for the most part, it is only "*guessing*" and "*the rest is prejudice*", as stated by Will Durant.

Suppose you make a research about some historical events if they were not '*had been narrated already*' by the written chronicles; you can decipher numerous information

bits from historical documents meanwhile making so many inferences about what they signified as the facts of historical knowledge, and then, starting from your conclusions you can built a new story of a historical event. *Then, you have created history*, as if you have made an exploration of discovery in a strange historical territory which had been get lost since a distant, long time ago. Not "history in itself", but all historiography really created by historians. Though Cicero says; *Historia magistra vitae est*: *history is life's teacher*"; I would rather say, *Historia est terra incognita* "History is unknown territory.

Let us pay attention more closely again on this critical studies of *Historiography* itself; this time we ask anew, what historiography is but a *written story of history*. It is about the process of historical research and the craft of storytelling. And also, it is about literature of history: i.e. what remained by chance such as the *footprints of the travellers which may remain some time*. Is this subject really proper for theory making? To where shall we look and what we have as the remnants of history? How to evaluate these footprints as evidences of that historical knowledge?

But historical writings and documents and other relics of history do not speak themselves, "*they are deaf and dumb and blind*". Nay, it is the historian who use them – and speak for them. Or else, can we truly imagine and represent how an event had happened in the past times either as individual events or '*longue duree*', "*the long term events*" of history? How do we criticize and use eligible historical documents -or other material remnants of past times- as evidences of historical happenings? What about logical fallacies of historical reasoning? How to make epistemologically valid inferences about the past events by using and comparing historical material as witnesses of the past events? And so on, countless problems of historiography...

And I have to remind that even though, there were a lot of discussions about the epistemology of historiography in this 21st century also; there was not much consensus nor fruitful results. What happened in fact, according to my judgment, this old discipline of history has come to be discussed seriously only after the World War I, particularly with those discussions of historicism and holism, and began to emerge as a new *critical philosophy of history*, or say, *epistemology of history*. This is why, '*philosophy of historiography*' seems to me as a new-born baby; full of life, but helpless and ignorant, a dirty little thing. It may start crawling soon, but I am not sure when will it be grown enough to climb the Himalayan Mountains of History.

Hence, I have chosen a road less travelled by, to construct a different perspective both for the philosophy of historiography and philosophy of the history itself, as the story of the past time.

Here again, I must reiterate that I am not satisfied with any of the so called '*critical*' philosophy of the craft or '*speculative*' philosophy of the history. I share the feelings of discontent of so many practicing-historian colleagues of mine towards those older philosophies of history.

Thus, for the moment in this 21st century and as a result of these discussions, we are far from the naïve historical perspectives of the former historians who were unconsciously depicting unreliable sources of historical information: in such a superficial way, that they never paid any attention to the implied philosophical problems which were arising from the nature of historical materials. As though they were measuring some spatial relationships on a flat surface. But can I ignore what I know? This new discipline is also under construction, went on to fulfill her early promise of greatness, and yet, it is an unfulfilled goal to the '*promised land*'. As if, historiography also waits for the Second Advent of a Messiah who could breathe life into this dead subject. Therefore, if you are

going to make a new interpretation about past events, you have to create your own epistemology of history too. Toynbee writes that, “*Historia (from Greek ἱστορία, istorein in Ionian dialect) means “inquiry; knowledge acquired by investigation”*”. Suppose we could arrive at some proven conclusions; demonstratively true facts through historical inquiry, but how are we supposed to make a *theoria* or philosophy of the past time, from these singular facts and unique events?

I had been influenced by Ibn Khaldun’s philosophy of history while I was a very young student of history. Later on, I had given many lectures on philosophy of history throughout my career. Nevertheless, like many historians, I always had a critical eye towards both speculative and critical theories of history; discerning easy generalizations here and there, the ignored facts, the affects of ideology or the historians’ world view on the whole narration, subjectivity, wishful thinking, intensional orientation, and many more. Remember the famous genetic fallacy “*post hoc, ergo propter hoc*”, *after this, therefore, because of this*: a simple diachronical recording of events, simply because this comes before this, but the confused reasoning is that there is a cause-effect relationship between them. To begin with, I perceive the historical subject, and even the very word ‘*history*’ in a different perspective from those traditional historians and philosophers of history. Despite the fact that history is merely known as the events of the last five thousand years, I perceive this ‘*naming*’ of History means literally all about the past events; I use it as the synonym of past-time.

Means, ends and justifications of historiography...

I think, I have already made enough statements about what is history as a craft and and as events of past, or what is the nature of historiography or epistemological philosophy of historiography and other distinctive aspects of these studies which differs in their approaches and their chosen subjects. I tried to define clearly the different approaches to these historical studies describing each one with some abstract and concise statements; without giving explanatory examples, since I could not go deeper into the details. But now, I have to make some jurisdictional judgments about the *means, ends and justifications* about these studies, despite the fact that this kind of abstract descriptions would be more boring, *since I will be forced to remind and repeat some of the aforesaid judgments or descriptions*. I have to state my judgments on the *means and ends* of these studies at this very moment; because, afterwards, I will try to explain the reasons of my dissatisfaction with the former philosophies of history. And again, I have to criticize and re-evaluate the results of those speculative interpretations of historical events. I have to explore and open a new way to the frontiers of history, if possible, for *a new quest*. I knew beforehand that, if I wish to *change and renew this subject of study*, then I am forced to make many more repeated adjustments here and there in the process of evaluating the subject, nevertheless *while re-evaluating again the means, ends and justifications of historiography*. I may be repeating myself little bit more. As if, “*thought advances by the correction of corrections by correction.*”

But to be sure, when I begin to speak about philosophy of history later on, and thenceforth I have to leave this descriptive style instantly, since then, we will make a very enchanting voyage – this quest would begin not as a space exploration as used to be but a captivating travel in time itself.

Inference, facts and evidences from relics...

As it is clear, historians are not able to observe or experience any particular event of past time, *since they cannot make time-travel*. They can observe and study only some evidences of the past events: they are historical relics which remained by chance in spite of the turbulent events of times. All their attested judgments based on the testimony of these silent and dumb witnesses as the relics of past events. They try to extract and construct a historical knowledge deducing their propositions from these sources of information. They cannot experience, but only deduce propositions making some inferences from the supposedly reliable and evidential character of these historical dumb witnesses. Then they articulate their judgment as a proposition that this evidence can signify to a real event of past time: Apparently, one cannot know for sure, what was the reason for this event. Historical remnants resembles merely to the *footprints of a traveller* which is left behind.

But historical remnants are material objects and exist in present time. It might be a subject of scientific investigation since it stands before our eyes at the present moment, it is not only observable, but also testable and can be analyzed objectively befitting for every scientific means; but what does it signifies to as to be related to the past events is something else. To be sure it has a reason of its existence, but what? This aspect of historiography could be regarded as a science since historical documents and other relics can be studied by scientific means. They are real, solid materials which exist in present time and belongs to it, though they remained from the past. Then historical documentation and to study these historiographic materials in themselves is a science by definition.

And the philosophy of historiography means to interpret and understand what they mean and what meaning they can convey from the past: and it is Philosophy since it involves epistemology: i.e., we have to discuss the reliability of these evidences or epistemological validity of the inferences we have deduced from them. And I suppose, semantically, this could be accepted as "truly signifying a meaning" which it conveys about a real thing, concerning past-time. But is it reliable? What meanings we can decipher from this document, as if we are reading some news reported by a newspaper?

And to narrate and retell the reached conclusions of this study is an art. Therefore historiography is also an art as a craft of narration: then, *it is an art, a science and a philosophy at the same time*. I have no reason to object to these aspects of history; though I can discern some defects in each three aspects of historiography too, though this not of our concern yet. But be aware of confusion, historians occasionally say that history is an art or a science: one might get confused and mixed up the subjects. You should understand that what they mean is some aspect of historiography not history itself: This is the nature of historiography, that is, the craft about history, not history itself. They are distinct subjects as much as the actor and the video of an actor, although, unfortunately, a historical narration cannot enliven the history as much as the fidelity of a video; since we cannot have a sufficient knowledge of it.

***Linguistical, semantical and conceptual problems of language and history:
History as naming, historiography and history...***

That is, our knowledge of history as investigated, imagined and written by a historian, is named habitually history, but this might be a bit confusing; since, in this case, you would be using the word history in this second sense of the word and mean only what

is known about history as far as possible to be written by humanity. Then one influential historian says history is a science, e.g. Collingwood, and another one says, it could be only an art as a narrated story of the past. This is why I am forced to repeat what is already known and only natural about the nature of History-craft, but History in its first sense is something else. What is more, though the beginnings of this distinction seems small and easily understandable; the result is a real confusion which has been a subject of discussion even among professional historians. We get confused naturally since one name should not be used to signify two different things at the same time. I have to remind that “The Naming” is an interesting subject much debated in semantics (e.g. Naming and Necessity by Saul Kripke). I remember here an interesting verse from Old Testament about ‘*what is signified by a naming*’, when Moses asks ‘*what name should he give to God when he go to the people to tell his orders*’: “Dixit Deus ad Mosen: ‘ego sum qui sum.’ Ait, “sic dices filiis Israhel: ‘qui est’ misit me ad vos.” (Old Testament, Exodus: 3/14). God said to Moses Exodus: 3/14. Thus speak to the Sons of Israel that the one who sent me to you (when inquired about the name) says “*I am that I am.*” I will name history in this fashion: “*it is what it is*”, History-itself, means past time as events of past time.

Naming historical events...

As aforesaid, Immanuel Kant states that we cannot know the “*thing in itself*”. We cannot know neither names (nomina) nor ‘*noumenon*’. We know only *phenomena* (which means in one sense events). As Lao Tzu stated, “*the name that can be named is not the eternal name.*” This is why I love the saying, “*ego sum qui sum: I am that I am*” as the best naming of God. We think by the usage of “names” (nomina) “*Ve alleme ademe’l-esmâe küllehâ*”: *And He imparted unto Adam all the names of all things* (Quran, Bakara: 31). And here is the commentary made to tis verse by Muhammed Esed: “*The term ism (‘name’) implies, according to all philologists, an expression ‘conveying the knowledge [of a thing] ... applied to denote a substance or an accident or an attribute, for the purpose of distinction’ (Lane IV, 1435): in philosophical terminology, a ‘concept’. From this it may legitimately be inferred that the ‘knowledge of all the names’ ” The Holy Quran. Still, a name/‘*nomen*’ is just like a ‘*noumenon*’ (which means what is thought of, and comes not from Latin nomen but from the Greek Nous, it is like “idea”) and it cannot be known “in itself”. We should pay more attention when we name something. Remember that according to the Old Testament, God did not make any naming, as the name of God to Moses, but only said “*ego sum qui sum*”/ *I am that I am*. A metaphor in which lies a hidden meaning (we call it “mazmun” in Turkish literature) could be very useful to explain how we think. We name things and think they are not only signified but also defined by that name. “*Structure can be considered as a complex of relations, and ultimately as multi-dimensional order. From this point of view, all language can be considered as names for unspeakable entities on the objective level, be it things or feelings, or as names of relations.*” quoth Korzybski (Korzybski, 1958, p.20).*

But if you remember that the names (nomina) could be regarded as universals then you have to remember those discussions of Nominalism against universals, and that phrase as “*I cannot see the idea of horse*” together with the aforementioned *Universal versus Particular* arguments; then, you will excuse the statement I am going to make: “*I cannot see the history,*” but *I can conceive the individual historical events even though I cannot explain them too*. What we can see is the ‘historiographical materials’ which lies before our eyes in present time. In fact, no one can see or experience history: it has passed away. If we remember and paraphrase St. Jerome’s statement; “*videmus per speculum*”

thenceforth, *'we have a partial and enigmatic awareness of events, so we cannot know for sure what is happening around us even in this very present moment too'*.

Of course historiography may speak about past time; but I have to repeat myself here again that, *'what it says only an evidential guess*. At first, the propositions of historical writings are all inferred and deduced from historical relics; then imagined and reconstructed in a consciousness of a historian according to *his standpoint and perspective*; and at last told within a historical narrative according to the chosen principles and rules of a narration. All historiographical materials exist in the present-time, so they are testable as the objects of a scientific inquiry; *in short, history is a science in this regard*. Those historical remnants and materials are positively exists in the present time. they are not historical events of the past times but their relics/footprints which exist in present time. The second step of this craft is the epistemological discussions of the deduced propositions from these relics of history. Depending on these results the historian constructs his historical narration. Discussions about the reliability of this historical narration as "imaginatively reconstructed knowledge of the past events" is also called history, but in fact it is an epistemology, an unqualified philosophy of historiography: *History is surely an epistemological philosophy in this second sense of the name*. And the third step of narrating historical events is surely an art of storytelling. This is why some historians say, it is an art. *To be sure history is an art in this third sense of the naming*.

Post modernists go further and say that this historical narration might not be so different from pure fiction (like historical novels) as much as we imagined. You can articulate all three judgments about history: i.e.. history is an art; history is a science, or history is a philosophy; if you mean by this naming "history" as it is used *in the second sense for historiography*, since it uses all these three methods of inquiry and encompasses all of them as different aspects of this craft. But what is 'named' could be very different from the 'designated name' or the "naming" of the reality. These are the so named history as "res gestae": things done by historians or accomplishments of historian's as historiography. It is a "*mixtum compositum*", dubious at best.

But what this name "*history*" signifies and denotes as '*History in itself*' means *Past-Time*; it means what actually happened in Time. *History* in this real sense of the '*naming*' does not mean what historians think and write about history, but rather it is the events of time itself: past, perfect, completed and unchangeable in time. Every historian can imagine those past events according to his own standpoint and narrate a different story of it, corresponding to his perspective and his taste. To be sure it is not "history in itself". But it is a historian's story of his own imagination, history in this second sense is necessarily told conforming to historian's own standpoint, according to his personal judgment and vision, or let me say, history as it is seen from the historian's windows, perspective, whatsoever. That story may be a good telltale about the historian's limited knowledge of history and his worldview, but it definitely is not history-in-itself by definition. There is not and cannot be any un-debatably indubitable real story of the past time. At most, there can be a story about past time events as far as it is conceived by a historian; it is his fragmentary story of the some past events and cannot be the whole and actual story of the past time. His story is necessarily molded to be a fragmentary and mostly unqualified, unconvincing and incomprehensible story of some individual and unique also dubious events.

I will reiterate that story is not history, again, by definition. If you speak about the story of the time and what actually happened in history, then I say, it is unfathomable - we cannot even imagine that we are able to imagine history as it is. Most of these past

events are lost forever like forgotten dreams of Nebucadnezzar which are not remembered at all. And yet, all of the historical relics even all of this world and everything else are only remnants of that past time. Though unimaginably rich in content, these remnants are nearly nothing, if you compare them with the past time and its infinite number of events. It is beyond the power of human imagination. And yet, a historian's knowledge cannot even encompass the heritage of all historiography; it is also impossible to learn all that knowledge of historiography which is very large literature, millions of books to be read. And historical stories also are incomprehensible since they conceived like "individuum"/unique, individual events. Then, in both sense of the naming, history is beyond the knowledge and imagination of any human being.

Hic iacet istoria: here lies the history; passed away long time ago and dead forever.

Recorded history as footprints of the venturers of the past times...

So what? What is the conclusion of this definition of history? History in itself, that is, the actual events of past time, though they have left some footprints for the present, unknowable by definition. One can never know "History in Itself", nor even imagine to know. What can be known exactly and scientifically is only those infinitesimally small and fragmentary relics of the past events, as countless footprints has remained till this moment from the innumerable travelers of the past times. We had no idea who had left these footprints, how they had lived, what they had thought, what had been their motivations and what had happened actually. I remember here the famous lamentations of Imru' al-Kays: He saw in the desert the footprints of a passed clan and guessed from the left relics that possibly his beloved who belongs to that clan was also there, and articulated his feelings in the first Muallaqat as such: "*Kifâ nebki min zikrâ habibin ve menzili*": *Stop, oh my friends, let us pause to weep over the remembrance of my beloved. Here was her abode on the edge of the sandy desert between Dakhool and Howmal, The traces of her encampment are not wholly obliterated even now...*"

So we have a very small amount of some fragmentary knowledge of the past owing to these footprints which stand for the historiographic materials. These footprints would be deciphered and interpreted by a historian, which reminds me Imru' el Kays; the position and lamentations of a desert poet. It was clear that a caravan of his beloved girl's clan had passed from that dune. Imru' al Kays could infer this knowledge from the footprints with the use of his expertise of dune and imagination. Thus far; but what else? What else he could decipher from the left footprints about what actually happened while his beloved was traveling in the desert? How on earth and why? And I have to repeat that no one is able to learn and master all of these historiographical footprints either, since it also amounts to countless mountains of books and relics that beyond the power of any human ability. *Ex nihilo nihil fit*: nothing comes from nothing!

If so, then no one can ever handle to master all of the historiographic knowledge, despite the fact that this enormously large knowledge also should be regarded as an infinitesimally small knowledge comparing to what happened in the real history. Real and full knowledge of the History itself is naturally impossible to imagine, but even to encompass the knowledge of its relics and enormous literature of historiography about them is also unimaginable to be covered and mastered in one's life-time. Then, no one is able to know either history or historiography; what I wished to clarify is that only a very small, special part of historiography is possible to be learned and only by a specialist historian. "All that remained was the *scientific specialist who knew 'more and more about*

less and less' and the philosophical speculator who knew 'less and less about more and more' quoth Will Durant" (Durant, 1961, p.XIV).

I have spoken enough in the style of high level abstractions; to clarify the nature of this craft: It might be illuminative to make use of some metaphorical examples.

A traffic accident as recorded history...

A traffic accident happens. People call for traffic police. If there is no personal injury and if drivers can make an agreement between themselves about the insurance and who pays for repairs of cars, etc. then, the problem would be resolved on the scene of accident and it would be a forgotten accident. But if somebody died or injured seriously, then the police must write a report and tell the story -in short statements- preparing the evidences as a police report for the later jurisdiction of lawyers, describing how and why the accident occurred. He will draw a graphic to illustrate the accident, recording the driver's velocity, angle and position of the cars at the moment of accident. I am not going to tell all the details of a traffic accident since we all have some experience with traffic accidents. Suppose a historian of next centuries will find out the police graph of a traffic accident – be aware, no cars will be used anymore in the next century– that report of traffic accident which is found by the next century historian could be treated as a very valuable historical relic and a source of information about that historical car accident - though this accident was so insignificant that the drivers who experienced it wished to forget it instantly.

Compare that report of the accident to the narratives of medieval chronicles. It really is a historiographical material as a remnant of a past time event: the report would not be destroyed but remained by chance until it is found by a future historian, by chance again. The report of the policeman is a simile for the narration of a historian which is about a past event. Remember every event is an accident; event literally means accident since every event happens contingently and accidentally in time. Judges and lawyers who investigate the accident stands for the historian. The proceedings of the court, and the related documents which could be overbearingly increased, all resemble the historiographical literature. The judgment of the public prosecutor stands for the philosophy of historiography and the final jurisdiction of the judge stands for the philosophy of history.

I have to add that if a court decides that it does not have enough evidence to judge for the crime, the final judgment is suspended and the accused person is relieved of the punishment. If there is not strong evidence then no judgment is possible, and consequently no punishment. I remember a recent sample of the legal court documents about the prosecution of *Ergenekon and Balyoz* which amounted millions of pages. You may accept it as a simile for the literature of historiography. They could be treated as historiographical materials though an infinitesimally small part of it. This example stands for the impossibility of studying the whole bulk of historiographical literature. That means, it is not possible to know the history as it happens in its own actuality. It is also not possible to imagine that this kind of knowledge could be known by any human being. Only God knows what actually happened in the past. What have remained, studied and narrated by historians amount to countless books which can easily fill all the libraries of this world. No one can study the historiographic literature as a whole. Only a partial knowledge of history is possible and only for a specialist historian. No historian can judge about what he tells except he happens to be specialized on that very fragment of history. A historian

can judge about the historiographical value of a work written by another historian, but only from some standards of the craft and by the telltale signals of the craftsmanship which is evident by its style and perfectness of the produced work. That means nearly, no one is able and allowed to speak about history. Those are the means of historiography.

An antiquarians view of history...

Thus summarized the means of historiography; to make a historical research, to find evidences of the past events and to evaluate them. Later on, historian has to imagine the flow of events in history, that is, how could it be possible that the river of events have been formed and taken a special river-bearing for the course of events which might have been flowed. It is so hard to describe this awakened dream of consciousness – this self-deceptive imagination of historian – that I cannot help but repeat that strong statement of the Antiquarian's view of history, “sans aultre preuve que de simples conjectures dece qui pouvoit avoir este”: “*it is only a guess, simply a conjectured belief without proof, since we can conceive that it was possible to occur (as implied by our imagination); then, presumably in any case, it really had happened so*” (Momigliano, 1990, p.56).

But be aware of this fact also: Momigliani did not give the translation of this French sentence. The translation is mine despite the fact that I do not know French, but I wanted to quote that statement to be used here, in this context. Right now, I cite this example because I think it stands for another meaningful metaphor for the position of a historian: in this case it is me, because I actually do not know and cannot understand what is said in French language but I tried to imagine what he could said about the nature of historical study; *and I simply made a conjectured belief without proof that he could say so actually; and since it is conceivable that he could say so as I have imagined, then presumably he said so in fact in French.* I translated that sentence believing that it really meant this. Because I knew what is the nature of history by experience, and by the same token, I will not deny the help of my very superficial knowledge of Latin language here, but nevertheless it was a conjectured belief of me, that he should say so. ‘*Ex parte prophetamus*’ and in part we prophesied, to foreshow events, from my partial and very superficial knowledge of Latin. I also believe strongly that my translation might be a little awkwardly stated one in English; awkward in style but very faithful indeed to the implied meaning of that French sentence; otherwise I would not quote that sentence. It is possible for you to compare the translation to the original if you know French. *This translation was a guesswork just like history indeed. The real historical event happened centuries ago, as an Antiquarian said so in French and my translation happens to be like the written historiographical imagination about what in fact was the implied meaning of that sentence.*

That is, a historical event could be, at most, an ‘*imaginatively constructed and believed*’ explanation of a historian. There remains only this ‘*ratio credentis*’: we might believe a historian on the basis of his professional authority.

If so, what are the ends aimed by historiography? And what could be the justifications of. Historiography? It is to narrate illustratively in a proper form what might have been discovered about history by the research and imagination of historians as meaningfully stated by the aforesaid Antiquarian. *And historians always try to write history as they imagine: that is, they try to change the past according to their wishful thinking and ideology. This is also a ridiculous and whimsical wish: they try to convince some people that according to their imagined version of the story of the past is definitely*

true. A historical evidence cannot give any sufficient and necessary reason to prove that the indicated event is true, merely for the reason of being reported and described by it: although it might seem a strong evidence, there could be no ‘*ratio veritatis*’, not any proven justification that ‘*the event*’ had actually occurred ‘*definitely as it has been told*’ by that official document, witness, historian or whatsoever. We can always suspect and deny its reliability.

The following metaphor of an African reader resembles history. And what could imagine a historian about historical events while trying to decipher some partial information from those fragmentary documents? This resembles the aforementioned situation: why one should try to read a text, if he does not know the language in which it is written? Remember mine reading of the antiquarian’s sentence, without knowing french language. Here is a beautiful metaphor told by Coleridge in the same manner:

“Imagine the unlettered African, or rude yet musing Indian, poring over an illumined manuscript of the inspired volume, with the vague yet deep impression that his fates and fortunes are in one unknown manner connected with its contents. Every tint, every group of characters has its several dream. Say that after long and dissatisfying toils, he begins to sort, first the paragraphs that appear to resemble each other, then the lines, the words—nay, that he has at length discovered that the whole is formed by the recurrence and interchanges of a limited number of cyphers, letters, marks, and points, which, however, in the very height and utmost perfection of his attainment, he makes twenty fold more numerous than they are, by classing every different form of the same character, intentional or accidental, as a separate element. And the whole is without soul or substance, a talisman of superstition, a mockery of science: or employed perhaps at last to feather the arrows of death, or to shine and flutter amid the plumes of savage vanity—The poor Indian too truly represents the state of learned and systematic ignorance—arrangement guided by the light of no leading idea, mere orderliness without Method” quoth Coleridge (Ucar, 2020, p.143).

Then, what is the justification of this human endeavor? What for? For what reason we try to learn these past events if we cannot know for sure that they are true? Why we should learn it, if historical event is only a guess, a fable agreed upon by historians at best? What is the use of historiographic knowledge? How could it be useful? History is used to form a historical and social identity. It is because, cultural heritage is accepted one of the society’s core values. It also prepares and gives material to be used for the political and ideological disputations and orientations. It also gives a value-added intensional orientation which might be useful sometimes as a guide for personal orientation and illumination. Historical narrations are used to manipulate knowledge and to form an intensional orientation, and to make people oriented for political and social ends, which might be useful sometimes but for the most part it is very harmful. Our whole knowledge is historiographical in nature, we cannot avoid to use it; but we have to be very careful for the numerous and manipulative uses of it. I will not use the term ‘*philosophy of historiography*’ anymore, since I consider it is already implied in the name of Historiography. Any epistemology of a study essentially belongs to that study, though it is neglected a bit by practicing historians. But there might be no real and distinct separation in the whole subject. Historians make, science, art, and philosophy of history, without being aware of what they are telling is not history in itself, but an artistic imagination and a craft of storytelling. To be sure this craft could be a scientific study, if it involves only a documentation about historical relics; or it could be a philosophical/epistemological discussion of the craft itself. But, if a historian attempts to

interpret all of these written stories of historical events as they have been searched, documented and narrated by historians, for the interpretation of all human endeavors of the past times, in that case, it becomes a philosophy of history: Then and thenceforth the quest for meaning throughout history begins; a retrospective but visionary quest, an imaginary time traveling.

I believe that traveling, the travel and the traveler can become one in this mythical quest for meaning throughout Time: The real quest might be returning home with some knowledge and understanding.

Conclusion

Shall we discuss the nature of time? We say history is the story of past time. But is there a past time really? According to science, our common-sense about time is not true at all. For instance, there can be no synchronically events in accord with the theory of relativity. If there is no synchronically events, then there is no present moment; and in conformity with this judgment, there cannot be a future time either; and accordingly no past-time remains. This scientific idea resembles to the statement of the first scientific analyzer Aristotle who argues that; ‘past time has passed away, so there is no more past time; future time has not arrived to the present moment, so it does not exist yet. If there can be no past and no future, then not even this present time can be actually exists: there remains no time. This means time is not real, there is no time at all. Is it true that time does not exist?

Some people say so, though scientists are also disagree about it. But I think, time is beyond the comprehension ability of humanity though it is more fundamental than space for the existence. From the beginning till this moment, I tried to show the inability of human mind to comprehend events which happens around us ceaselessly in time. This was the admonishment of King Solomon in Ecclesiastes when he said; “*All things toil continuously; no one can ever finish describing this, man cannot utter it,*” I also tried to interpret it with the use of St. Jerome’s saying that ‘what we see ‘per speculum’ through the looking glass is enigmatic and particular individual events which could not be comprehensible fully since they happen as a process in Time. Thus, to repeat the aforesaid judgments of mine ‘*it is the time constituent which makes events unique and singular’ or individuum since they belong to their time of happening.* You cannot speak about events without interpreting the time at the same time, since the very word ‘event’ means what happens in space in a specific time. “*Everything has its own time, and there is a specific time for every activity under heaven*”. (Old Testament, Ecclesiastes) quoth King Solomon. History also means time in the first sense of the word. So what? If you say time is not real according to some scientists, and since science is more justifiable than common-sense reasoning; then, there cannot be a history either. That means, if we are serious about this endeavor as to investigate and make *a philosophical interpretation of history*, or as I re-phrased it, *in this ‘quest for meaning throughout time’*, then, we are forced to evaluate this enigmatic riddle which is the most puzzling question of the Sphinx: What is time? Without solving this problem, we cannot make this mythical quest for meaning throughout time, which is necessarily a voyage in time, like an imaginative time travel?

That means the real subject of history will become the time itself and all everything else that happens in time. *The Philosophy of History* is ‘a Quest which is made in Time’;

since history means the whole proceedings of the past events; then history is the time itself, and to repeat the beautiful saying of Pythagoras, '*Time is the soul of this world*'...

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