

Peter Osborne

The Politics of Time

Modernity and Avant-Garde



PETER OSBORNE



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3. The totalization of historical time as the narrative temporality of an 'imperfect mediation' of 1 and 2 – Ricoeur.

It is to this third level that the problem regresses insofar as 1 and 2 are dependent upon each other; neither can be constructed independently. What this suggests, however, is that historical time is just as 'real' as both cosmological and phenomenological time, since it is only through its mediation of the one with the other that either can be constructed at all. Indeed, might not each of these two other 'times' be merely abstractions of the individual and ideally collective elements, respectively, of a single 'historical' time, in the way that Husserl saw the Aristotelian instant as a reified abstraction from the experience of a point-like retentive source?

To put the matter methodologically: is Ricoeur's narrative construction of historical time as the imperfect mediation of an open-ended narrative totalization (a tale of three times) not *itself* a form of conceptual mediation? Only thus does it make sense to give narrative the centrality to time that Ricoeur does when he writes in conclusion: 'no thought about time without narrated time'.⁹¹ This raises the question of the status of the totalization 'history' in a new, hermeneutical-ontological form. It also allows us to connect up Ricoeur's 'cosmological' critique of Heidegger's purely existential temporality (which we shall address shortly) to his account of historical temporality as narrative mediation. In the process, we are offered the prospect of both a new hermeneutics of historical existence and a re-entry into the conceptualization of modernity, thus reconstrued, via the question of tradition. Let us begin, however, following through the three levels at which the problem of totality now appears, with Heidegger's existential analysis of death.

Being-towards-death, being-towards-history

Heidegger's *Being and Time* marks a turning point in the history of modern philosophy which has led in two quite different directions: the ontologization of hermeneutics in Gadamer (and the restitution and reinterpretation of the category of tradition); and the rejection of all ontological thought, however fundamental, in the allegedly post-metaphysical thinking of the 'event of appropriation' (*Ereignis*) – determining both Time and Being – in Heidegger's later work and, more recently, in Derrida, albeit in a different theoretical register.⁹² It is in the direction of Gadamer's thought that we will set out, although

we shall ultimately have to double back to Derrida before we can make further headway with our project. We shall thus examine Heidegger's analysis of death at the beginning of Division Two of *Being and Time*, not from the standpoint of the (dubious) question of 'the meaning of Being in general' – to which it is ultimately subordinated by Heidegger – but from that for which the existential structure of *Dasein* appears as the structure of interpretation in general.

The procedure of separating out the existential analytic of *Dasein* from the question of the meaning of Being in general is, of course, fraught with dangers: most notably, the supposed humanist 'mis-reading' of Heidegger with which the early Sartre is associated.⁹³ However, insofar as it aims to draw out the repressed social and historical dimensions to Heidegger's concept of *Dasein*, rather than to individualize it further, the reading that follows works in the opposite direction from Sartre's. In this respect, it has more in common with the aspiration to a Heideggerian Marxism of Marcuse's early project for a 'concrete philosophy', sketched in a series of works between 1928 and 1932.⁹⁴ However, Marcuse's attempted synthesis, which preceded both the publication of Marx's *Paris Manuscripts* of 1844 and Heidegger's political involvement with National Socialism, was an acknowledged failure; not least because of its flattening of Heidegger's threefold temporal schema into the single dimension of an ontologically indifferent 'historicality'. In contrast, the procedure adopted here will be the methodical extension of the structure of ecstatic-horizonal temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) to the problem of historical time.

Heidegger's analysis of death sets out from what he describes as 'the inadequacy of the hermeneutical situation' from which the preceding analysis of *Dasein*, in Division One of *Being and Time*, has taken place: namely, *Dasein*'s 'lack of totality', or failure to assure itself that 'the whole of the entity which it has taken as its theme' has been brought into what Heidegger calls the 'fore-having': that provisional understanding of the whole which is the ground of all interpretation. For while the previous analysis had considered *Dasein* as a structural whole (and defined the being of this whole as 'care', *Sorge*), it failed to consider 'the primordial unity of this structural whole'.⁹⁵ This is no mere oversight, rectifiable by a return to the previous analysis in more detail. Rather, it marks a fundamental problem, the resolution of which will take the analysis onto a new plane. For if, as Heidegger has argued earlier in the book, against all philosophies of essence, *Dasein* is 'potentiality-for-Being', it would

seem that it cannot be grasped as a whole without negating its existential structure: 'As long as *Dasein* is as an entity, it has never reached its wholeness. . . . [but] When *Dasein* reaches its wholeness in death, it simultaneously loses the Being of its "there".'⁹⁶ How are we to negotiate this impasse?

Characteristically, Heidegger's response is to seek a resolution of the dilemma in a deepening of the understanding of the question as a reflection of the existential structure of *Dasein* itself, rather than in some merely 'methodological' innovation. For:

That which makes up the 'lack of totality' in *Dasein*, the constant 'ahead-of-itself', is neither something still outstanding in a summative togetherness, nor something which has not yet become accessible. It is a 'not-yet' which any *Dasein*, as the entity which it is, *has to be*.⁹⁷

The incompleteness of the analysis reflects the existential structure of *Dasein*'s 'potentiality-for-Being-a-whole', the fact that it is always 'ahead-of-itself'. Its development thus lies in the further explication of this structure: the structure of a being for which its end, death, 'is' only in what Heidegger calls an 'existentiell' manner – that is, as a feature of its self-understanding.⁹⁸ This is a being whose 'potentiality-for-Being-a-whole' takes the form of being-towards-death, since death alone is the end which, projected ahead, represents the possibility of closure. Death 'exists' as that towards which human existence is oriented as the horizon of its being. Conversely, *Dasein* 'exists' as a finite and hence *temporal* being only through the anticipation of death.

Much of Heidegger's analysis is taken up with demonstrating that 'mineness and existence are ontologically constitutive for death', that death is consequently 'a way to be, which *Dasein* takes over as soon as it is', and with the 'existentiell', or ethical, problem of authenticity.⁹⁹ What concerns us here, however, is less the detail of these matters than their consequences for the phenomenological unity of time as a process of temporalization, and its relations to history and nature. For what is distinctive about Heidegger's analysis is the way in which it moves beyond the subjectivism of Husserl's phenomenology, through the existential problematic of *Dasein*, without leaving its phenomenological core behind, thereby transforming ontology in the direction of a hermeneutics of historical existence. The outcome in *Being and Time* itself is without doubt fractured and ambiguous. It is vitiated, ultimately, by what Adorno describes as the 'ambivalence' of the doctrine of Being, whereby ontology 'cashiers the resistance to idealism

which the concept of existence used to offer'.¹⁰⁰ In the process, history is frozen, ontologically, by the very act that would theorize its ground, existentially, as 'historicality' (*Geschichtlichkeit*). It is into the interpretive vacuum opened up by this underdetermination of history as historicality that Heidegger's subsequent political judgements would flow, unimpeded by the discipline of mediation by social or historical theory. In this respect, the link between Heidegger's existential ontology and his personal commitment to National Socialism during the 1930s has as much to do with the theoretical arbitrariness associated with his philosophical disdain for the field of actual world history, as it does with the orientation of the terms of his ontology towards the ideology of a particular political party. Although such arbitrariness might itself be understood as emblematic of a particular kind of politics: fascism as the ontologization of nihilism.¹⁰¹ In other respects, the matter is considerably more complicated.¹⁰² What we are concerned with here, though, is whether something more productive for the understanding of history might not be teased out of the existential analysis of death, once we refuse the ontological reduction of *Dasein* to the question of the meaning of Being.

There are three main aspects of Heidegger's analysis. The first is an argument to the effect that the anticipation of death as 'the possibility of the measureless impossibility of existence'¹⁰³ constitutes *Dasein* as a totality and thereby 'temporalizes temporality' by constituting *Dasein* as a finite being or Being-towards-the-end. Without the anticipation of death as a standpoint for *Dasein*'s unification of itself as a structural whole, there would be no 'temporalization of temporality', and hence no 'experience' of time. The circularity whereby the premise of this argument appears already to contain a temporal concept (anticipation) is hermeneutical, rather than logically vicious, since the anticipation in question is existential rather than psychological. Temporality may appear as a condition of the possibility of the anticipation of death, but such anticipation is at once the very structure of the 'temporalization of temporality' for *Dasein* – the only entity to which, according to Heidegger, time 'belongs'. For Heidegger, *Dasein* is an entity 'whose *kind of Being* is anticipation itself'.¹⁰⁴

Secondly, there is the character of the unity of *Dasein*, thus temporalized: namely, the manner in which, by registering the finitude of human existence, the anticipation of death simultaneously opens it up to the future as possibility, and structures that possibility through an active taking up of the past within the present into which, as a finite being, *Dasein* is 'thrown'. That is to say, for Heidegger, whilst human existence is 'essentially *futural*' (insofar as it is its freedom for death

that 'temporalizes temporality' through the anticipation of its end), it is nonetheless 'equiprimordially' both *making-present* and *having-been*, since such futurity 'exists' only as the projected horizon of a present defined by the mode of its taking up of a specific past. Temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) 'has the unity of a future which makes itself present in the process of having been'.¹⁰⁵ Heidegger calls this temporal unity the unity of the 'ecstases'. It is the difference, the constant differentiation, at its heart which defines temporality as something that is 'outside-of-itself'. This regulates the possible unity of all *Dasein*'s existential structures, since the 'fundamental structures of *Dasein* . . . are all to be conceived . . . as modes of the temporalizing of temporality'.¹⁰⁶ *Dasein* itself is thus, essentially, something 'outside-of-itself'. It is this 'being-outside-of-itself' through the unity of the temporal ecstases that opens the individual out into history.

This is the third and most ambiguous aspect of Heidegger's analysis: the dual exposition of temporality as 'historicality' and of historicality as the existential ground of history. It is the ontologization of historicality as a mode of Being (*Sein*) which, Adorno insists, 'immobilises history in the unhistorical realm, heedless of the historical conditions that govern the inner composition and constellation of subject and object'.¹⁰⁷ Yet it is far from clear that such ontologization (in the bad, ahistorical sense) is a necessary consequence of the analysis. The ambiguity resides in a tension between the individualism inherent in the existential analysis of death (as 'the non-relational possibility', Heidegger argues, 'death individualises'), and the Being-with-others which is a central feature of *Dasein*'s historicality insofar as it involves the bequest and repetition of a heritage ('what is historical is the entity that exists as Being-in-the-world'). This tension is concealed in *Being and Time* by Heidegger's failure to pursue what he calls 'the problem of the ontological structure of world-historical historizing', since, he claims, it would 'transgress the limits' of his theme (the question of Being). He chooses instead to focus on 'the ontological enigma of the movement of historizing in general' – an enigma that appears at the level of the individual *Dasein*. But is such a restriction of focus legitimate, in Heidegger's own terms? For if all 'historizing' is a historizing of history, just as all temporalizing is a temporalizing of temporality – and the former is 'just a more concrete working out' of the latter – how can 'the movement of historizing in general' be separated from 'the ontological structure of world-historical historizing'?¹⁰⁸ Indeed, is it not just such an artificial separation that *produces* the ontology of historicality as an 'enigma'? On the other hand, if we stick with the exposition of temporality as historicality through to its

end as the 'historizing of history', we run up against the problem of totality at a new level: historical time.

On Ricoeur's analysis, it is the totalization of lived time in the phenomenological unity of the process of temporalization that provides the structure of totality on the basis of which 'history' is produced through the inscription of phenomenological onto cosmological time. Yet as we have seen, this totality (produced, on Heidegger's account, by the narrative closure of the anticipation of death) is always at the same time, and equally fundamentally, an opening onto the future. It is this openness that is captured by Ricoeur in the idea of a de-totalizing 'time of initiative'. And it is this openness, projected onto history as a whole, which renders all historical totalization not just aporetic, but antinomic. The only actual, sutured closure comes with the death *Dasein* anticipates. But this is not an event; it is a pure limit, outside of the existential structure it encloses. It is also, of course, as singular in its absolutism (the absolutism of its annihilation of the world) as the individual who is individualized by its anticipation. Yet its prospect – ceasing to be – immanent in the openness of each instant, must be sufficiently 'real', existentially, for its anticipation to carry the weight necessary to determine the structure of *Dasein* as Being-towards-death. So what does Heidegger's existential analysis of death have to offer the attempt to rethink the terms of historical totalization, ontologically, beyond the aporia of totality?

For Ricoeur, very little. For him, to pursue the ontological dimension of Heidegger's account to the level of historical narrative would be to overburden an analysis which works at the level of literary form precisely because it remains purely descriptive – descriptive of narrative as the space for the presentation of an aporia (the aporia of totality) which has no theoretical resolution. This is the paradoxical point of Ricoeur's book: it immerses us in the history of the philosophy of time in order to free us from the impulse to continue that history as theory, in order to free us from 'philosophy' for 'narrative' – albeit a highly theoretical (one might almost say, 'philosophical') version of the hermeneutics of narrative form. For all his appreciation of Heidegger, Ricoeur's phenomenological sympathies ultimately dictate agnosticism, ontologically, on matters of history. The aporia of totality is irresolvable. Time remains a mystery.¹⁰⁹

It would seem that Heidegger himself has even less to offer, given the arbitrary termination of his analysis before the question of the ontological status of world history. Yet his account does perform the critical function of insisting on an ontological dimension to the problem, even if it never addresses it. And it is here that the homology

of temporal form implicit in Ricoeur's procedure of narrative inscription can be exploited. For if there can be no 'temporalization of temporality' without the anticipation of death as index of the finitude of existence, so, by extension, there can be no temporalization of historical time, no historical temporality, without the anticipation of an equivalent kind of 'end' to history: *no 'history' without the anticipation of an 'end to history'*. If *Dasein* is being-towards-death, and history is the product of inscriptions of phenomenological time onto cosmological time, then we can define historical beings as *beings-toward-the-end-of-history*. This is the hidden logic of Ricoeur's reading of Heidegger.

Furthermore, just as the death which is anticipated and must always come will never be an event in *Dasein*'s life, but exists solely in anticipation, as the productive limit of its being, so the 'end of history' upon which historical temporality depends, cannot be conceived as a possible historical event, within historical time. Rather, as the productive limit of historical beings, posited (like death) in exteriority, it too must be given solely in anticipation. This is its fundamental difference from the idea of the end of history as fulfilment or reconciliation (the realization of reason) inherent in Hegelianism, its fundamental difference from all teleology. This end of history is not, fundamentally, a historical horizon at all, however ultimate, but the condition of all such horizons. *Posited* as absolutely exterior, its otherness is thereby reduced (in the phenomenological sense of Husserl's reduction) to a constitutive moment in the intentional structure of historical beings. It is a part of the 'horizontal schema' of historical beings, constituting us, in Merleau-Ponty's words, as 'a process of transcendence towards the world'.¹¹⁰ As Derrida puts it in his dialectical critique of Levinas, in a rare moment of constructive metaphysics: 'History is not the totality transcended by eschatology, metaphysics, or speech. It is transcendence itself. . . . history is impossible, meaningless, in the finite totality, and . . . it is impossible, meaningless, in the positive and actual infinity . . . history *keeps to the difference* between totality and infinity.' Indeed, one might say that history *is* the very movement of this difference.¹¹¹ Alternatively, with Nancy, one might thereby rethink the category of totality, such that: 'totality is not the fastening, the completion without remainder; it is the "having there" (*y avoir*), the taking place (*avoir lieu*), the unlimited "coming there" (*y venir*) of the delimited thing: which also means that totality is all, except totalitarian, and it is obviously here a question of freedom.'¹¹²

But what kind of account of history is this? What kind of time is at

stake in the extension of Heidegger's analysis of death to the domain of 'historicality'? What mediations are required to make sense of the transition? To address these questions, we need to consider further the relationship of what we are calling 'historical time' to the cosmological time onto which Ricoeur takes it to be inscribed, and the existential temporality out of which he takes it to be constituted. In particular, we need to explore the relations *within* the structure of historical time between these two apparently different 'times' which compose it. This requires both a broadening and a deepening of our understanding of the main feature of Heidegger's analysis: the anticipation of death.

Ordinary time or cosmological time? Nature and the social

Heidegger's treatment of what he calls the 'ordinary' conception of time provides a convenient place to begin. For it is in the opposition of the authenticity of the time-consciousness of anticipatory resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*) in the face of death, to the inauthenticity of this ordinary conception, that Ricoeur detects within Heidegger's work a recurrence, at the level of the ethical, of the opposition of subjective to objective approaches to time, which constitutes the aporia of the dual perspective – an opposition that Heidegger explicitly tries to avoid. Furthermore, in defending the independence of an aspect of the ordinary conception of time against its reduction by Heidegger to a fallen form of the existential modality of 'within-time-ness', Ricoeur uncovers a dimension of time outside the scope of Heidegger's existential analysis, wrecking its attempt to replace the problematic of subject and object with a newly integral approach. This independent outside (cosmological time) provides both the ontological backdrop to Ricoeur's narrative inscriptions and the explanation of why they must always finally fail to live up to the requirements of the Hegelian idea of history as total self-mediation: the existence of a moment of *absolute exteriority* in nature. It is this moment of exteriority which is registered existentially in the anticipation of death.

However, while Ricoeur successfully establishes a connection between the ordinary conception of time and an independent 'cosmological' time of nature – signalled by Heidegger's reading of Aristotle in the 1927 lectures¹¹³ – he fails to consider the social dimension of the relation. He thus passes over the opportunity to re-establish the ontological integrity of Heidegger's analysis of time in a newly

mediated form, using his critique, instead, to reassert the ineluctability of the aporia of the dual perspective. Yet it is precisely this ineluctability which is challenged by a reading of the ordinary conception as a social mediation of an independent time of nature, and hence as a mediating term in the inscription of phenomenological time onto it, at the level of history as a whole. This approach receives further support once we trace back the origin of existential temporality in the anticipation of death to being-with-others, via Hegel's concept of recognition, in the next chapter.

The argument that follows is thus characterized by a dual movement: affirmation of Ricoeur's critique of Heidegger's treatment of the ordinary conception of time for, like Husserl, 'forgetting nature';¹¹⁴ and then the augmentation of this critique with a social dimension based on the mediating role of history in Ricoeur's own analysis – a role which may be translated into Heideggerian terms as an assertion of the constitutive significance for *Dasein*, *ontologically*, of being-with-others. For it is not only 'the interaction of the psychic and the physical' which appears in mortality in primordial form,¹¹⁵ but the interaction – and mediation – of the *psychic*, the *physical* and the *social*.

Ricoeur's objections to Heidegger's downgrading of the ordinary conception of time to an 'inauthentic' form stem from his alternative reading of Aristotle. This reading has two main themes: the dependence of all time on movement, and the 'immemorial wisdom' which perceives 'a hidden collusion between change that destroys – forgetting, aging, death – and time that simply passes'.¹¹⁶ This connection between cosmological time and death allows Ricoeur to suggest that Heidegger's analysis of death is the product of a 'recoil-effect' of cosmological and historical time back upon the phenomenology of individual time-consciousness. In locating different, but equally authentic, temporal registers of death at all three levels of Heidegger's hierarchy of modes of temporalization, Ricoeur thereby provides the basis for just that conceptual unification of time the possibility of which he denies.

Heidegger expounds the ordinary conception of time as a 'leveling off' and 'covering up' of primordial temporality, which has its source in the temporality of 'within-time-ness': the lowest of his three hierarchical forms of temporalization. Within-time-ness is the temporality of preoccupation or 'concern' (*Besorgen*): 'the kind of time "in which" the ready-to-hand and the present-to-hand within-the-world are encountered'.¹¹⁷ It is the temporality of an 'elemental kind of behaviour', in which *Dasein* "reckons with time" and regulates

itself *according to it*'.¹¹⁸ Its main features are what Heidegger calls 'publicness' and 'averageness': 'In so far . . . as everyday concern understands itself in terms of the "world" of its concern and its "time", it does *not* know "this" time *as its own*, but concernfully *utilizes* the time which "there is" [*es gibt*] – the time with which "they" reckon.'¹¹⁹ Within-time-ness is the time of reckoning, of 'dateability' and measurement (calendars and clocks), through which 'entities which are not of the character of *Dasein*' appear to *Dasein* in the public time of 'the they'.¹²⁰ As such, it derives from a fundamental feature of human existence: its 'thrownness' into a world alongside entities, with-others. In this sense, it is as primordial as *Dasein*'s other two temporal-existential modes (historicality and ecstatic-horizonal temporality), despite Heidegger's presentation of it, alongside historicality, as a derived form. However, whilst it may thus be existentially 'equiprimordial', its association with the everyday renders it problematic as what Heidegger calls an 'existentiell' – that is, a feature of *Dasein*'s self-understanding. It is this 'existentiell' problematicity which is at issue in the ordinary conception of time.

The ordinary conception of time is taken by Heidegger to 'cover up' the character of temporality as a mode of *Dasein*'s existence, by reducing it to 'a sequence of "nows" which are constantly "present-at-hand", simultaneously passing away and coming along' in an uninterrupted flow, as if they existed externally to one another and independently of *Dasein*. As such, the ordinary conception of time is described by Heidegger as 'now-time' (*Jetztzeit*) – a usage which must be rigorously distinguished from Benjamin's subsequent and quite different use of the term, which is discussed in chapter 4. For Heidegger, it is essentially an everyday version of Aristotle's conception of time as an endless and irreversible succession of instants.¹²¹ In presenting time as continuous (as opposed to ecstatic), and independent of *Dasein*, the ordinary conception marks itself off as the product of a 'fallen' *Dasein*, an 'inauthentic' mode of time-consciousness. What it covers up, in particular, is *Dasein*'s finitude, and hence everything that flows existentially and temporally from the recognition of that finitude. The ordinary conception of time involves a 'fleeing *in the face of death*'. It is a 'self-forgetful "representation"' through which time appears as infinite, since it is defined by the standpoint of 'the they'. For "the they" never dies.' Indeed, 'the they' cannot die since, as we have seen, on Heidegger's analysis, 'death is in each case mine.'¹²²

Ricoeur's critique links up a defence of the independence of cosmological time from phenomenological time with criticism of the

'intimism' of Heidegger's analysis of death, by reversing the direction of his reading of Aristotle. Thus, rather than reading Aristotle's conception of time as an idealization of the existential temporality of 'circumspective concern', mirroring the 'leveling' and 'forgetting' involved in the ordinary conception of time at the level of philosophical thought, Ricoeur reads the ordinary conception as an authentic apprehension of the independent infinity of cosmological time. (That cosmological time is infinite, as well as independent of human temporality, follows from the cyclical character of the astronomical motion from which it is derived by Aristotle.)

One might think that an awareness of the independent aspect of cosmological time is implicit in Heidegger's account of within-time-ness, in the concept of 'thrownness', but it is never thematized there, for methodological reasons: namely, the restriction of Heidegger's interest in time to its role as the horizon for the understanding of Being in general. Indeed, it cannot be thematized without disrupting the whole problematic of *Being and Time*. For the transformation of Husserlian phenomenology into hermeneutical ontology, from which the book sets out, ontologizes what was for Husserl the strictly epistemological method of 'reduction'. There is thus no place in *Being and Time* for the temporality of an independent nature. Indeed, in the 1927 lectures, Heidegger goes so far as to insist: 'There is no nature-time, since all time belongs essentially to *Dasein*.'¹²³ In ontologizing phenomenology, Heidegger thus reverts to that very neo-Kantian idealism about nature which Husserl had sought to avoid by the development of the phenomenological method. 'Object-domains' may become 'regional ontologies', but despite the realism of the language, they remain reducible, ontologically, to aspects of *Dasein*'s various modes of being-in-the-world. Heidegger's concept of existence (*Existenz*) is in this respect the legitimate heir to the neo-Kantian concept of facticity (*Faktizität*).¹²⁴ Despite the recognition of 'within-time-ness' as a primordial temporality (the temporality of concern), Heidegger refuses the idea of a time within which *Dasein* is when it exhibits it.

The connection of cosmological time to death is established by the fact that since the time of succession (with its basis in movement) is the time to which we must submit as natural beings, a time that 'surrounds us, envelops us, and overpowers us with its awesome strength',¹²⁵ it is the time we suffer and *because of which* we die. Existential temporality must involve some kind of relationship to this time. Indeed, what is 'the possibility of the impossibility of existence', if not a sense of the exteriority of a time to which, ultimately, we must

submit? What is cosmological time, if not that which, reduced (in Husserl's sense), 'reveals' phenomenological time?¹²⁶ If, as Merleau-Ponty argued, the most important lesson which Husserl's reduction teaches is 'the impossibility of a complete reduction',¹²⁷ then the most important lesson of a phenomenological analysis of time will be the confirmation of its ultimate, irreducible exteriority.

Furthermore, since what we might call 'being-in-nature' necessarily involves being-with-others – as human beings must collectively produce their means of subsistence to ensure their biological reproduction – the relationship between cosmological time and existential temporality will always be socially mediated. Heidegger demonstrates an awareness of this in his discussion of 'everyday Being-with' (*Mitsein*).¹²⁸ However, while being-with-others thus forms part of his account of *Dasein*'s existential structure, relations to others are not integrated into the concept of *Dasein* at the most fundamental, ontological level, where it is the reflexive characterization of *Dasein* as an inquiring being ('a being for whom Being is in question') which takes priority. There is thus a twofold ontological deficit in the concept of *Dasein*, deriving from the constitutive exteriorities of 'nature' and 'the social', respectively.

However, there is a similar lacuna concerning the social in Ricoeur's own analysis, despite his criticism of the intimism of Heidegger's analysis of death. For he fails to make it sufficiently clear that the *form* of what he calls cosmological time – chronology as an infinite succession of identical instants – is the product of a mediation of the independent time of nature by the regulatory practices of a common social life. What we have been calling 'nature' is the *intersubjective form* of exteriority. As Husserl put it; 'the commonness of nature [is] the first thing constituted in the form of community, and the foundation for all other intersubjectively common things.'¹²⁹ This is the advantage of Heidegger's use of the expression 'the ordinary conception of time'. To the extent to which we live 'in' cosmological time, we can only ever know it in a form mediated by the temporality of lived experience; hence Ricoeur's account of the indispensability of the phenomenology of 'the now' to the cosmology of measurable movement, in his reading of Aristotle. Cosmological time is epistemologically dependent on the historical sphere of narrative inscription – action – for which it provides the temporal-ontological ground: originally, the practices of ancient Greek astronomy. This is clear from Ricoeur's own discussion of what he calls 'calendar time' or (following Benveniste) 'chronicle time', although this is not how he interprets it himself.

Three features are taken to be common to all calendars, and hence constitutive of chronicle time: (1) a founding event, axial moment, or zero-point in relation to which every other event can be dated; (2) a temporal direction defined with reference to this zero-point; and (3) a unit of measurement, derived by astronomy from the observation of cosmic intervals: most fundamentally, the day, the month, the year. Calendar time provides historical time with 'the framework of an institution based on astronomy'. As such, according to Ricoeur, it is 'the first bridge constructed by historical practice between lived time and universal time'.¹³⁰ But is it really so different in the principles of its construction from the 'universal' time of nature itself? The difference appears to hinge on the designation of a founding event. Yet this is structurally analogous to the above-mentioned dependence of cosmological time on the 'zero-point' provided by the phenomenology of the now. In this respect, calendars are socially specific versions of cosmological time. Ontologically speaking, there is no distinct 'calendar time' as such, only the *calendarization* of cosmological time. The difference is internal to social practice, not ontological as such.¹³¹

In fact, the very idea of cosmological time is ambiguous, insofar as it contains condensed into its construction (although not its self-understanding) *both* sides of the 'dual perspective' which produces the aporia of philosophical thinking about time. The same applies to the idea of phenomenological time, as Ricoeur's critique of Husserl demonstrated. What Heidegger calls the ordinary conception of time may thus be understood as an *existential interpretation of the social standardization of cosmological time*. We have already noted that chronological time is a relative historical novelty as the dominant form of social time-consciousness. We shall further see, in chapter 4, that it corresponds at the level of history to what Benjamin describes as the 'vulgar naturalism' of the 'empty, homogeneous time' of historicism: the bad modernity of a historiography which trades the specificity of a living remembrance for the re-establishment of continuity with an ossified past.¹³²

Once we acknowledge the irreducibly social character of human life, its relations to the requirements of biological reproduction, and hence its status as a kind of 'inorganic nature' (Marx), it becomes clear that what Heidegger calls 'primordial temporalization' must have its ontological ground not only in an external nature, but also in some kind of *primal socialization* – some emergence of the human being as a social being out of its natural being. Temporalization is a product of the differentiated unity of nature and society within every

human being – hence the temporal significance of death as the vanishing point of their metabolic interaction. The question thus becomes: how do cosmological time and the Other come together in the anticipation of death?