

To escape historicism, it is enough to suppose that everything is historical; if this is pushed to the limit, historicism becomes harmless. It limits itself to stating what is evident—it arrives continually at events of every kind, and our world is one of becoming; it is vain to think that some of those events would be of a particular nature, would be “historical,” and would constitute History. The initial question put by historicism was this: What distinguishes a historical event from another that is not? As it quickly became apparent that that distinction was not easy to make, that one could not rely on naive or national conscience to discriminate, but that one could not do better and that the object of the debate was escaping, historicism concluded that History was subjective, that it was the projection of our values and the answer to the questions we are ready to ask it.

The merit of historicism will have been to bring to light the difficulties of the idea of History and the limits of historical objectivity; it is even simpler not to begin to propose the idea of History and to admit right away that the sublunary is the realm of the probable. All that is said about the analysis of the historical object, about the crisis of history, about facts “that do not exist”—all that is at the heart of the present question of history (at least in Germany and in France: in England that heart is, rather, the human problem of historical causality) is only the consequence of the initial question: What is historic, what is not? Now it is enough to admit that everything is historic, in order for that question to become both evident and harmless. Yes, history is only the reply to our questions, because it is impossible to ask all the questions, to describe all the becoming, and because the progress of the historical questionnaire is situated in time and is as slow as the progress of any science. Yes, history is subjective, for it is undeniable that the subject of a history book is chosen freely.¹⁴

Plots, Not Facts or Geometrical Figures

If everything that has happened is equally worthy of history, does not history become chaos? How could one fact in it be more important than another? Why is it not all reduced to a grisaille of singular events? The life of a Nivernais peasant would be as good as that of Louis XIV; that beeping of horns rising from the avenue would be as good as a world war. Can one escape the historian questioning? There must be a choice in history, in order to escape a dispersion into singularities and an indifference in which everything is of equal worth.

The reply is twofold. First, history is not interested in the singularity of individual events, but in their specificity (as we shall see in the next chapter); second, facts, as we shall see, do not exist like so many grains of sand. History is not an atomic determinism; it takes place in our world, where a world war is more important than a concert of car horns unless—everything is possible—that concert itself sets a world war in motion. For “facts” do not exist in isolation; the historian *finds* them organized in wholes in which they act as causes, objectives, opportunities, risks, pretexts, and so on. Our own existence, after all, does not appear to us as a grisaille of atomic incidents; it immediately has a meaning, and we understand it. Why should the position of the historian be more Kafka-like? History is made of the same substance as the lives of each of us.

Facts thus have a natural organization that the historian finds ready-made, once he has chosen his subject and it is unchangeable—The effort of historical work consists precisely in discovering that organization—causes of the 1914 War, the goals of the belligerents, the Sarajevo incident; the limits of the objectivity of historical explanations partly return to the fact that each historian succeeds in pushing the explanation more or less far. Within each subject chosen, this organization of facts confers

on them a relative importance; in a military history of the 1914 War, a surprise attack on forward posts is of less importance than an offensive that filled the newspaper headlines; in the same military history Verdun counts more than Spanish flu. Of course, in a demographic history the reverse will be true. The difficulties would begin only if one took it into one's head to ask whether Verdun or flu is absolutely more important from the point of view of History. Thus, facts do not exist in isolation, but have objective connections; the choice of a subject in history is free but, within the chosen subject, the facts and their connections are what they are and nothing can change that; historical truth is neither relative nor inaccessible, as something ineffable beyond all points of view, like a "geometrical figure."

The Notion of a Plot

Facts do not exist in isolation, in the sense that the fabric of history is what we shall call a plot, a very human and not very "scientific" mixture of material causes, aims, and chances—a slice of life, in short, that the historian cuts as he wills and in which facts have their objective connections and their relative importance: the beginnings of feudal society, the Mediterranean policy of Philip II or only one episode of that policy, the revolution of Galileo.¹ The word "plot" has the advantage of reminding us that what the historian studies is as human as a play or a novel, *War and Peace* or *Anthony and Cleopatra*. That plot is not necessarily arranged in chronological order; like an interior drama, it can unfold from one plane to another. The plot of Galileo's revolution will place Galileo against the framework of thought about physics at the beginning of the seventeenth century, against the aspirations he vaguely felt within himself, against the current problems and references, Platonism and Aristotelianism, and so on. The plot may thus be a transversal cut of different temporal rhythms, a spectral analysis. It will always be a plot because it is human, sublunary; because it will not be a bit of determinism.

A plot is not a determinism in which atoms called the Prussian army would overthrow atoms called the Austrian army; its details then assume a relative importance called for by the development of the plot. If plots were little determinisms, then, when Bismarck sends the Ems dispatch, the working of telegraphy would be given in detail with the

same objectivity as the decision of the chancellor, and the historian would have begun by explaining to us what biological processes had brought about the coming into the world of that same Bismarck. If details did not assume relative importance, then, when Napoleon gives an order to his troops, the historian would explain each time why the soldiers obeyed him (we remember that Tolstoy puts the problem of history almost in those terms in *War and Peace*). It is true that if the soldiers had disobeyed once, that event would have been pertinent, for the course of the drama would have been changed.

Then what are the facts worthy of rousing the interest of the historian? All depends on the plot chosen; in itself, a fact is not interesting or uninteresting. Is it interesting for an archaeologist to go and count the number of feathers on the wings of the Victory of Samothrace? Will he give proof, as he does so, of a praiseworthy rigor or of a superfluous exactitude? It is impossible to say, for the fact is nothing without its plot; it becomes something if it is made into the hero or the supernumerary in a drama of the history of art in which the classical tendency not to use too many feathers and not to split hairs about the rendering, the baroque tendency to overload and to seek the detail and the taste of barbarian arts to fill space with decorative elements, will be made to follow each other.

Let us notice that if our plot mentioned above had not been the international policy of Napoleon, but the Grand Army, its morale, and its attitudes, the customary obedience of the Old Guard would have been relevant and we would have had to say why. But it is difficult to add up the plots and make a total; either Nero is our hero and it will suffice for him to say, "Guards, carry out my orders," or else the Guards are our heroes and we will write another tragedy. In history as in the theater, to show everything is impossible—not because it would require too many pages, but because there is no elementary historical fact, no eventworthy atom. If one ceases to see the events in their plots, one is sucked into the abyss of the infinitesimal. Archaeologists know this well—you discover a rather rough bas-relief representing a scene whose meaning escapes you; since the best photograph cannot replace a good description, you undertake to describe it. But which details are to be mentioned, which are not? You cannot say, since you do not understand what the figures in the scene are doing. And yet you foresee that a particular detail, insignificant to you, will provide the key to the scene for a more

ingenious colleague than yourself—that slight inflection at the end of a sort of cylinder that you take for a stick will make him think of a serpent; it is indeed a serpent the figure is holding, so the figure is a genie. Thus, in the interest of science, is all to be described? Try to do so.

There Is No Atomic Fact

Unfortunately, even if we refuse to treat the historical event as depersonalized behavior, even if we do not cover our eyes so as not to see its meaning, we are not at the end of our difficulties; we shall find an event-worthy atom by following this course, and we shall be sucked down by two abysses instead of only one. An event, whatever it is, implies a context because it has a meaning; it refers back to a plot of which it is one episode—or, rather, to an indefinite number of plots—conversely, one can always divide an event into smaller events. What may constitute an event? The German breakthrough toward Sedan in 1940? It is a whole strategic, tactical, administrative, and psychological plot. Will the atom of a historical fact be the conduct of each individual soldier in the two armies? It is a vast labor to understand a single individual. Or each action of each soldier, each step of each soldier. But a step is not a spatiotemporal behavior that can be recorded by means of an ingenious apparatus. It has a meaning; a soldier does not walk like everyone else—he walks in step, even in goose step; Frederick II is not far off, nor is Frederick William I. What are we to choose? Which drama shall we prefer? One cannot speak of everything, neither can one tell the life story of all the pedestrians who pass each other in the street.

It is impossible to describe a totality, and all description is selective; the historian never draws the map of the eventworthy—at the very most he can multiply the routes that cross it. As F. von Hayek says² (more or less), it is a misuse of language to talk of the French Revolution or of the Hundred Years' War as if they were natural units, which makes us think that the first step in the study of those events must be to determine what they resemble, as is done with a stone or an animal. The object of the study is never the totality of the phenomena observable at a given time and place, but only certain aspects of them; according to the question we ask, the same spatiotemporal situation can contain a certain number of different objects to be studied. Hayek adds that

according to those questions, what we are accustomed to consider as a unique historic event may split into a multitude of objects of knowledge; it is a confusion on this point that is principally responsible for the doctrine, so fashionable today, according to which all historical knowledge is necessarily relative, determined by our "situation" and bound to change with the passage of time; the kernel of truth contained in the assertion concerning the relativity of historical knowledge is that at different times historians will be interested in different objects, but not that they will hold different opinions on the same object.

Let us add that if the same "event" can be dispersed among several plots, then data belonging to heterogeneous categories—social, political, religious—can compose one and the same event; it is even very frequently the case. The majority of events are "total social events," in the opinion of Marcel Mauss; indeed, the theory of the total social fact merely means that our traditional categories mutilate reality.

Indeed, there comes to my mind a little enigma: Why is it so often a question of the decomposition of the historical object, the crisis in the objectivity of history so often brought up, and so rarely a question of the decomposition of the geographical object, a subjectivity of geography? And what about the "total geographical fact"? Yet it is clear that a region has no more objective existence than has an event; we divide it at will (a Toynbee of geography would decree that there are 43 or 119 "regions" on the globe and that all "*should be regarded as philosophically equivalent*"). An area is broken down into geological, climatological, botanical, and other data, and the region will be what we make of it by the questions we choose to put to it: Shall we attach importance to the question of the open field, and shall we ask it? A civilization, it is said, questions history starting from its own values and loves to admire itself in its past; if it is true that civilizations have those existential needs and that they satisfy them in history, they will satisfy them even more in geography, which will allow them to admire themselves in their present. Consequently, one is astonished that there is not a geographism as there has been a historicism; must we think that geographers had less philosophical minds than historians, or that philosophers had more historical than geographical minds?³

It is obviously impossible to relate the whole of becoming, and a choice must be made; nor does there exist a particular category of events (political history, for example) that would be History, and our inevitable choice. So it is literally true to state, with Marrou, that all historiography

is subjective. The choice of a historical subject is free, and by right all subjects are of equal value; there is no History, nor is there a "sense of history"; the train of events (drawn by some engine of really scientific history) does not move forward on a fully laid track. (The itinerary chosen by the historian to describe the eventworthy field can be freely chosen, and all the itineraries are equally legitimate (though not all are equally interesting). Having said that, the configuration of the eventworthy territory is what it is, and two historians who may have taken the same road will see the territory in the same way, or will discuss their disagreement very objectively.)

Structure of the Eventworthy Field

Historians relate plots, which are like so many itineraries that they mark out at will through the very objective field of events (which is infinitely divisible and is not made up of eventworthy atoms); no historian describes the whole of this field, for an itinerary cannot take every road; none of these itineraries is the true one, is History. In short, the eventworthy field does not comprise spots to be visited and that would be called events; an event is not a being, but an intersection of possible itineraries. Let us consider the event called the 1914 War—or, rather, let us take up a more precise position: the military operations and the diplomatic activity; that is an itinerary as good as any other.

We can also take a wider view and move into neighboring zones; military needs brought state intervention in economic life, raised political and constitutional problems, changed customs, increased the number of nurses and women workers, and brought about a complete change in the condition of women. We are now on the itinerary of feminism, which we can follow more or less far. Some itineraries pull up short (the war has had little influence on the evolution of painting, unless we are mistaken); the same "fact" that is a deep-rooted cause on a given itinerary will be an incident or a detail on another. All these connections in the eventworthy field are perfectly objective. So what will be the event called the 1914 War? It will be what you make of it according to the scope that is freely given to the concept of war: the diplomatic or military operations, or a greater or lesser part of the itineraries that cross that concept. If the view is wide enough, the war will even be a "total social fact."

Events are not things, consistent objects, substances; they are a décou-

page we freely make in reality, an aggregate of the processes in which substances, men, and things interact. Events have no natural unity; one cannot, like the good cook in *Phèdre*, cut them according to their true joints, because they have none. Simple as it is, that truth did not become well known before the end of the last century, and its discovery produced a certain shock; people spoke of subjectivism, of the decomposition of the historical object. It can hardly be explained other than by the very eventworthy character of historiography up to the nineteenth century and by its narrowness of vision. There was great history, especially political history, which was sacred; there were "accepted" events. Non-eventworthy history has been a sort of telescope that, by letting us see in the sky millions of stars other than those known to astronomers of old, would make us understand that our dividing the starry sky into constellations was subjective.

Thus, events do not exist with the consistence of a guitar or a soup tureen. It must still be added that, whatever is said, they do not exist in the manner of a "geometrical figure"; it is popular to affirm that they exist in themselves, in the manner of a cube or a pyramid. We never see all the faces of a cube simultaneously, we never have more than a partial point of view; on the other hand, we can multiply those points of view. It may be the same with events; their inaccessible truth would integrate the numberless points of view we could have of them, each of which would be a partial truth. That is not so; to compare an event to a geometrical figure is deceptive, and more dangerous than convenient. We shall first develop at some length an example (we shall do so two or three times in the course of this book—no more than that), so that we may see of what this so-called plurality of points of view consists.

An Example: Public Benefaction

In Roman society the gift—or, rather, all that can be designated by that vague word—had as big a place as in potlatch societies or in those that have a redistributive fiscal policy and aid the Third World; bread and circuses, distribution of land to veterans, New Year's presents, "gifts" from the emperor to his officials, baksheesh raised to the rank of an institution, wills by which a man's goods are distributed to his friends and his servants, banquets to which the whole town is invited, patronage of the leading citizens who make up the ruling class. (The importance of

is subjective. The choice of a historical subject is free, and by right all subjects are of equal value; there is no History, nor is there a "sense of history"; the train of events (drawn by some engine of really scientific history) does not move forward on a fully laid track. (The itinerary chosen by the historian to describe the eventworthy field can be freely chosen, and all the itineraries are equally legitimate (though not all are equally interesting). Having said that, the configuration of the eventworthy territory is what it is, and two historians who may have taken the same road will see the territory in the same way, or will discuss their disagreement very objectively.)

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building technique; for us, the product of mass production shines rather by its monotony and its pitiless regularity. The five centimeters of sag are specific, they have a "collective" sense and are worth remembering; everything is historic, except that of which one does not yet understand the reason. At the end of the dig, there will perhaps be no detail of the house unconnected with its species; the only incontrovertible fact will be that the house in question is itself and that it is not that other one rising beside it. But history has no use for that singularity.⁹

Definition of Historical Knowledge

Thus we reach a definition of history. Historians have always felt that history was about man in the group rather than about the individual, that it was the history of societies, nations, civilizations—indeed, of humanity, of what is collective in the vaguest sense of the word; that it did not concern itself with the individual as such; that if the life of Louis XIV was history, that of a Nivernais peasant during his reign was not, or was only material for history. But the difficulty is to reach a precise definition; is history the science of collective facts that would not amount to a collection of tiny individual facts? Is it the science of human societies? Is it the science of man in society? But what historian, or what sociologist, is capable of separating what is individual from what is collective, or even of attaching a meaning to these words? The distinction between what is historic and what is not is nonetheless made immediately and as if by instinct.

In order to see how approximate these attempts at a definition of history are, multiplied and successively crossed out, without ever having the impression that one has "got it," it is enough to seek to state them precisely. The science of what sort of societies? The whole nation, even humanity? A village? At least an entire province? A group of bridge players? A study of what is collective: Is it heroism? The fact of cutting one's nails? The argument of the sorites here finds its proper use, which is to denounce as being badly put every problem where it can be used. Indeed, the question is never asked thus; when we are in presence of a singularity come down from the past and suddenly understand it, there is produced in our mind a click that is of a logical order (or, rather, ontological) and not sociological. We have not found something col-

lective or social, but something specific, comprehensible individuality. History is the description of what is specific—that is, comprehensible—in human events.

As soon as it is no longer valorized, the singularity is obliterated, because it is incomprehensible. Among the 90,000 epitaphs contained in the corpus of Latin inscriptions, here is that of a man named Publicius Eros, who was born, died, and in between married one of his freedwomen; peace to his ashes, and he falls back into the nothingness of oblivion—we are not novelists, and our job is not to take an interest in Dupont for the sake of Dupont and to interest the reader in Dupont. Only it happens that we can, without too much difficulty, understand why Publicius had married one of his freedwomen—formerly a public slave himself (we would say a municipal employee), as his name reveals, he married among his own; his freedwoman must have been his concubine for a long time, and he had only freed her to have a wife worthy of him. He may have also had very personal motives for doing so; she was perhaps the woman in his life or the most famous local beauty.

None of his motives would be singular; all are inscribed in the social, sexual, and conjugal history of Rome. The only fact of no difference to us—but important for those round him—is that Publicius was himself and no other; instead of being centered on the interesting personality of this Roman Dupont, our true novel bursts into a series of anonymous plots. Slavery, concubinage, intermarriages, sexual motivations in the choice of a wife—the whole of Publicius will be found there, but in pieces; he will have lost only his singularity, about which there is exactly nothing to say. Thus historical events are never confounded with the *cogito* of an individual, and that is why history is knowledge through traces, as we have seen in chapter I. We must only add that by pulling Publicius to pieces in plots, we shall separate universal truths (man is sexual, the sky is blue), for the event is difference.

The historical is that which is not universal and not singular. For it not to be universal, there must be a difference; for it not to be singular, it must be specific,¹⁰ it must be understood, for that sends us back to the plot. The historian is the naturalist of events; he wants to know for the sake of knowing, but there is no science of singularity. To know that there has existed a singular being named Georges Pompidou is not history, so long as one cannot say, in the words of Aristotle, "what he did

and what happened to him"; if one can say that, he is thereby raised to specificity.

History of Man and History of Nature

If history can thus be defined as the knowledge of the specific, then the comparison becomes easy between that history—I mean the history of human facts—and the history of physical facts, such as the history of the Earth or of the solar system. One willingly affirms that there is nothing in common between these two kinds of history; it is said that the history of nature does not matter much to us unless it is about something considerable, as big as our globe. But no one will tell in a chronicle what happened on a bit of Earth without men (there was a great storm one day, an earthquake the next year; a century and a half later a colony of marmots settled on the bit of Earth). On the other hand, the slightest incidents in the life of human societies are judged to be worthy of recollection. We ought to conclude from that that we would give special, anthropocentric attention to human history, because that history tells us of people like ourselves.

It is not so. True, if we write the history of the terrestrial globe, we do not bother to keep a meteorological and zoological chronicle of the various parts of our globe—meteorology and zoology, which study their subjects in a nonhistorical way, are sufficient for us, without giving ourselves the trouble of recounting the history of marmots and that of storms. But if that is so, if our globe has its historians, whereas marmots do not have theirs, it is for the same reason that causes us to write the history of Nivernais peasants under Louis XIV, but not the biographies of those peasants individually: interest for the specific alone. History is not existential, neither is historiography humanism. Our attitude is exactly the same to human events and natural events: Only their specificity interests us; if that specificity varies in time, we write the history of those variations, of those differences; if it does not vary, we draw a nonhistorical picture of it.

We have seen above that when a historian writes about Nivernais peasants or Roman freedmen, his first concern is to remove the singularity of each person, to scatter it in specific data that regroup themselves into items (standard of living, matrimonial customs of the population under study); in place of a juxtaposition of biographies, he obtains a juxtaposition

of items, the whole of which constitutes "the life of Nivernais peasants." At most he will not mention that those peasants took food and were sexed, for that is true at all times.

Now the same two criteria, specificity and difference, are enough to explain in what measure we write the history of natural facts and why we write it less than that of human facts. Here is a little part of our globe. It rains and it snows there, but it also happens that it rains in the neighboring areas; since we have no reason for preferring that area to any other, the rainfalls will regroup in a single item, whenever they fell. And since rain has hardly changed for some millions of years, we have no history of it to relate; we shall make a sempiternal picture of this mechanical meteor. On the other hand, the climate and relief of that district have changed between the Secondary period and the Tertiary period; that will be a little event in the history of our globe, whose records we are keeping.

Finally, the only nuance that separates the history of man and that of nature is quantitative; man varies more than nature and even than the animals, and there are more stories to tell about him. For he has, as we know, a culture, which means that he is both reasonable (he has goals and deliberates on the best way of attaining them; his recipes and his works are transmitted to his posterity and are susceptible of being understood by the latter in their rationality and taken up "in the present" as being still valid) and unreasonable, for he is arbitrary (for example, he eats, as animals do; but, unlike them, he does not always and everywhere eat the same thing—each culture has its traditional cuisine and finds that of neighboring people detestable). The historian will not relate, meal by meal, all the luncheons and dinners of all men, for those meals, like the rains mentioned above, regroup in items, the whole of which constitutes the culinary ways of each civilization. Nor will the historian take the trouble to say "man eats," for that is not a differential event. But he will tell the history of cooking through the ages, in the same way as the history of the terrestrial globe.

The opposition between the history of nature and human history is unessential, no less than the opposition between the past, which alone would be "historical," and the present. Against Heidegger, against historicism, without forgetting existentialism and the sociology of knowing, we have to reaffirm the intellectualist character of historical knowledge. Assuredly, nothing of what is human is foreign to the historian, but

neither is anything animal foreign to a biologist. Buffon thought that the fly should not hold a greater place in the concerns of the naturalist than it occupies in nature; on the other hand, he maintained a value relationship with the horse and the swan—in his own way he was a disciple of Weber. But zoology has changed a great deal since then and, after Lamarck had pleaded the cause of the lower animals, every organism became of interest in the science; it attaches no particular value to the primates, because it feels its attention slackening slightly once beyond the tarsier specter and becoming almost nonexistent as it reaches the fly.

Weber was indignant that the history of the Bantus could be studied as much as that of the Greeks. Let us not retort that times have changed, that the Third World and its nascent patriotism . . . , that the awakening of the African people who are taking an interest in their past . . . ; it would be a fine time to see that patriotic considerations should be the criterion of intellectual interest and that the Africans have more reasons to despise Greek antiquity than Europeans had to despise Bantu antiquity; anyhow, today there are many more Africanists than there were in the time of Weber and of Frobenius. And who still dares to state that the study of the Nuers or of the Trobriand Islanders is not as instructive as that of the Athenians and the Thebans? It is exactly as instructive, given equality of documentation, for we see the same motives playing there; let us add that if the Bantu *Homo historicus* proved to be a more primitive organism than the Athenian, it would only add to the interest, for it would thus reveal a less known part of the plan of Nature. As for knowing—Weber also asks the question—how many pages are to be devoted to Bantu history and how many to Greek, the answer is simple, as was seen in chapter II: It all depends on the volume of documentation.

Knowledge has its goal in itself and is not related to values. The proof of it is the manner we have of writing Greek history. If it is naïve to put the fights of the Bantus on the same footing as the wars of the Athenians, what reason could we really have for being interested in the Peloponnesian War, were not Thucydides there to make it interesting? The influence of that war on the destiny of the world was practically nil, whereas the wars between the Hellenistic States, which in France are known only to five or six specialists, played a decisive role in the destiny of the Hellenistic civilization in regard to Asia and, thereby, in the destiny of Western and world civilization. The interest of the Peloponnesian War

is like that of a war between Bantus if an African Thucydides had related it. It is thus that naturalists are particularly interested in a definite insect if there exists a particularly well-written monograph on it; if that is a relation to values, the values in question are exclusively bibliographical.

History Is Not Individualizing

History is not related to values; furthermore, it is interested in the specificity of individual events rather than in their singularity. So if it is ideographic, if it relates events in their individuality, the War of 1914 or the Peloponnesian War and not the phenomenon of war, it is not from aesthetic taste for individuality or faithfulness to remembrance. It is because it cannot do better; it would only like to become nomographic, if the diversity of events did not make that mutation impossible. We have seen in the first chapter that singularity is not a privilege that historical facts have over physical facts; the latter are no less singular. Now the dialectic of knowledge is subtended by a mysterious law of economy of effort. By virtue of that law, if the revolutions of peoples were as entirely reducible to general explanations as physical phenomena are, we would lose interest in their history; all that would matter to us would be the laws governing human evolution; satisfied with knowing through them what man is, we would omit historical anecdotes, or else we would be interested in them only for sentimental reasons, comparable with those that make us cultivate, alongside great history, that of our village or of the streets in our town. Unfortunately, historic events cannot be compressed into generalities; they only very partially reduce to type, their succession is neither directed to some end nor regulated by laws known to us; everything is different and everything has to be said. The historian cannot imitate the naturalist, who is occupied only with the type and is not concerned with describing each representative of the same animal species. History is an idiographic science, not because of us, and our taste for the detail of human events, but because of those events themselves, which persist in keeping their individuality.

The Charter of History

Each event is like a species in itself. And it is from the founder of natural history that we can borrow the charter of plain history. In one