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Trauma, Exile, and Cultural Displacement



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## Temporal Rupture and the Logic of the Lack: Trauma, Exile, and the Fragmentation of Subjectivity

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### Abstract

This paper develops a philosophical account of trauma and exile through the interrelation of lack, temporality, and narrative identity. Drawing on Lacan, Husserl, Heidegger, and Ricoeur, it interprets trauma as a rupture within the logical and temporal structures that constitute subjectivity. In Lacan, the *manque-à-être* exposes the subject’s constitutive lack—the impossibility of coincidence between language and being—while trauma appears as the return of the Real that resists symbolization. In Husserl and Heidegger, this rupture manifests as a disjunction in time: the breakdown of the synthesis that unites retention and protention, revealing temporality as finite and ecstatic rather than continuous. Through Ricoeur, narrative emerges as a symbolic mediation that re-figures the temporal wound without closing it, transforming absence into meaning while preserving its negativity. The argument culminates in the proposal of a non-totalizing logic of subjectivity, where reason itself is reinterpreted as mediation through difference and delay. The paper thus articulates a Continental conception of logic grounded not in identity but in incompleteness—a logic of becoming that makes possible both thought and life within rupture.

**Keywords:** *Trauma; Exile; Temporality; Narrative Identity; Non-totalizing Logic; Subjectivity*

## 1. Introduction: Trauma, Exile, and the Logic of Subjectivity

Trauma and exile expose a profound fracture at the core of human subjectivity. They reveal that the self is not a stable unity but a temporally stretched structure whose continuity can be violently interrupted. This study aims to articulate a logic of this rupture—a logic that does not seek to restore wholeness but to understand how lack, temporality, and narrative interweave within the very constitution of subjectivity. To approach this question, we draw on the psychoanalytic logic of lack in Jacques Lacan, the phenomenology of temporality in Edmund Husserl and Martin Heidegger, and the hermeneutics of narrative identity in Paul Ricoeur. These four perspectives—psychoanalytic, phenomenological, ontological, and narrative—form a constellation through which trauma and exile can be interpreted not only as psychological or sociological conditions, but as disruptions in the very logical and temporal architecture of meaning.

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the subject is constituted by a *lack of being* (*manque-à-être*)—a structural void that arises from entry into the Symbolic order. Far from being a mere deficiency, this lack is the dynamic principle of desire and the condition of possibility for subjectivity itself. Trauma, in this framework, emerges as an encounter with what resists symbolization—the *Real*, that which cannot be integrated into the signifying chain and thus returns as repetition or compulsion.<sup>1</sup> The exilic condition—both literal and metaphoric—thus appears as a displacement from the Symbolic coordinates that give meaning and identity. To be exiled is to experience the loss of the signifier that grounds one's being in language; it is to confront, in lived form, the impossibility of full belonging to the order of meaning. From a phenomenological perspective, this dislocation manifests as a disruption of temporal synthesis. In Husserl's analysis of inner time-consciousness, consciousness constitutes time through the dynamic correlation of retention, primal impression, and protention. Each now-moment is

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<sup>1</sup> Lacan J., *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, trans. B. Fink, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 2006, pp. 204–215.

a synthesis of what has just elapsed and what is anticipated, forming a continuous horizon of temporal self-awareness.<sup>2</sup> Trauma interrupts this synthesis: the past ceases to be retained as past and returns as the ever-present wound. The future, in turn, becomes foreclosed; protention collapses into a suspended now. Thus, trauma is not simply an event within time—it is an alteration of temporality itself, a deformation of the flow that unifies consciousness. Heidegger's existential analytic radicalizes this insight by grounding temporality in Dasein's ecstatic structure—its projection toward possibilities, its thrownness, and its being-toward-death.<sup>3</sup> Exile, when viewed through this lens, is not only spatial displacement but existential ungrounding: the loss of the world as the meaningful horizon of being. The exiled subject stands before an estranged temporality in which the past no longer serves as a ground of familiarity and the future no longer promises dwelling. Trauma here becomes a mode of *Unheimlichkeit*, unhomeliness, in which being is severed from its temporal belonging.

The attempt to reconstitute meaning after rupture finds expression in Ricoeur's notion of *narrative identity*. For Ricoeur, narration mediates between lived time and cosmic time, offering a configuration (*mise en intrigue*) through which the subject can reinterpret its past and project itself anew.<sup>4</sup> Narrative thus performs a reparative function: it refigures the fragmented temporal field of the self into a partial coherence. Yet, as Ricoeur himself insists, this coherence is never total; the self remains an open-ended hermeneutic project, exposed to the excess of meaning and the irreducibility of the event.<sup>5</sup> The act of narration is therefore both an *ethical* and *logical* gesture: it accepts the non-closure of subjectivity and transforms lack into the condition of creative refiguration.

This paper argues that trauma and exile should be understood within a non-totalizing logic of subjectivity—a logic that resists the

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<sup>2</sup> Husserl E., *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, trans. J. B. Brough, Springer, Dordrecht 1991, pp. 35–48.

<sup>3</sup> Heidegger M., *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Harper & Row, New York 1962, §§65–83; Cf. Sakizli, A. “The Neutrality of Dasein and the Shame in the Female Experience: A Feminist Philosophical Analysis”, *Dia-noesis*, 17, 2025, pp. 313–30, <https://doi.org/10.12681/dia.41716>.

<sup>4</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1984, p. 52.

<sup>5</sup> Ricoeur P., *Oneself as Another*, trans. K. Blamey, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1992, pp. 140–148.

metaphysical demand for unity and instead affirms the constitutive absence that underlies consciousness, temporality, and identity. Such a logic aligns the psychoanalytic with the phenomenological: Lacan's lack parallels Husserl's temporal gap between retention and protention, Heidegger's *not-yet* of existence, and Ricoeur's narrative mediation that forever defers completion. By placing these traditions in dialogue, we can articulate a conceptual framework that does not treat trauma as mere dysfunction but as a disclosure of the subject's structural openness. The exiled and the traumatized reveal, more radically than any other figures, the truth of our condition: that to be human is to dwell in the interval between presence and absence, between the lost past and the unattainable future—a logic of being fractured by time.

## 2. The Lacanian Logic of the Lack

### *Manque-à-être* and the Impossibility of Completeness

At the heart of Lacanian psychoanalysis lies the recognition that the subject is constituted through a structural lack—what Lacan terms *manque-à-être*, the “lack of being”.<sup>6</sup> This lack is not an empirical deficit to be filled but the very condition of subjectivity. It arises from the process of symbolic alienation, whereby the subject becomes separated from the immediacy of being through its insertion into language. Entry into the Symbolic order requires subjection to the law of the signifier; it is by accepting this mediation that the speaking being (*parlêtre*) emerges. Yet this act of entry also produces a split: the subject is never identical with itself but divided between its signified representation (*je parle*) and what resists representation (*je ne suis pas là où je parle*).<sup>7</sup> Lacan reformulates this split as the difference between *être* and *avoir*: the subject no longer *is* its being but merely *has* a signifier that stands for it. The Symbolic replaces immediacy with mediation, substituting signifiers for the fullness of being.<sup>8</sup> Desire, in turn, emerges as

<sup>6</sup> Lacan J., *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, pp. 204–215.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 494–502.

<sup>8</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. A. Sheridan, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 1977, pp. 203–215.

the movement generated by this loss—an attempt to recover the lost object that can never be regained. The *objet petit a*, the object-cause of desire, thus stands as the remainder of this initial operation: a trace of the Real that both animates and frustrates desire.<sup>9</sup>

In *Écrits*, Lacan describes *manque-à-être* as “the essential gap that constitutes the subject in its relation to being”.<sup>10</sup> The logic of this gap rejects the metaphysical fantasy of totality. There is no final synthesis of self and world, no reconciliation between language and being. The subject is instead constituted through negativity—through what it is not. This structural incompleteness defines the ethical and ontological horizon of psychoanalysis: to be a subject is to live in tension with the void that founds one’s existence. Within this framework, trauma appears as the moment in which the illusion of completeness collapses and the lack reasserts itself. It is the sudden eruption of the Real—the unsymbolizable kernel that marks the limits of representation. Yet Lacan does not view this lack as pathological; rather, it is the logic of subjectivity itself. Every act of signification reaffirms the impossibility of full presence, while every articulation of desire re-enacts the gap that makes speaking possible. To understand trauma, then, one must first understand that the subject was never whole. The logic of *manque-à-être* is the logic of a being that is structurally out of joint with itself—a being exiled from its own fullness, condemned to speak from within its absence.

### Trauma as the Return of the Real and the Foreclosure of Symbolization

If *manque-à-être* defines the subject’s structural incompleteness, then trauma represents the moment when this lack becomes unbearable—when the Symbolic order, which normally conceals the void through signification, fails to contain the irruption of the Real.<sup>11</sup> The Real, in Lacan’s triadic schema (Imaginary, Symbolic, Real), designates not a positive domain but the residue that escapes

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<sup>9</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X: Anxiety*, trans. A. R. Price, Polity Press, Cambridge 2014, pp. 55–63.

<sup>10</sup> Lacan J., *Écrits*, op. cit., p. 207.

<sup>11</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 48–55.

symbolization. It is that which “resists the signifier”,<sup>12</sup> appearing only as a rupture within the field of meaning. Trauma is precisely such a rupture: a moment when the subject confronts the impossibility of representing what has occurred, when the symbolic network collapses and sense is suspended. Lacan’s logic of the Real rejects both psychological and metaphysical understandings of trauma. It is not the *content* of a terrifying event that is decisive, but its *form*: the way it shatters the continuity of the signifying chain.<sup>13</sup> Trauma thus names the failure of symbolization, the point where meaning breaks down. The subject encounters something that cannot be integrated into its narrative, an event that resists being made sense of. What is experienced as horror is not simply the event itself, but the encounter with meaninglessness—the return of the Real that undermines the coherence of the Symbolic.<sup>14</sup>

In *Seminar XI*, Lacan interprets trauma as the sudden emergence of the Real *as tuché*—the encounter that strikes the subject from outside the field of anticipation.<sup>15</sup> It is, as he puts it, “that which always returns to the same place”,<sup>16</sup> a compulsive repetition that testifies to the failure of its integration. The traumatic kernel repeats not because it is remembered but precisely because it was never properly inscribed in the first place. The *Nachträglichkeit*—the deferred action through which the event is retrospectively constituted as traumatic—reflects the temporal paradox of the Real: what has not yet been symbolized returns as if it were already known.<sup>17</sup>

This logic allows us to reinterpret exile in psychoanalytic terms. Exile is not merely a geographical or political condition but the subjective experience of the foreclosure of the Symbolic—an *existence*, a being-outside of the signifying structure that constitutes identity.<sup>18</sup> The exiled subject is displaced not only from place but from language, from the coordinates through which meaning and

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 66.

<sup>13</sup> Lacan J., *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, pp. 250–256.

<sup>14</sup> Laplanche J. & Pontalis J.-B., *The Language of Psychoanalysis*, trans. D. Nicholson-Smith, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 1973, pp. 466–470.

<sup>15</sup> Lacan J., *Seminar XI*, op. cit., pp. 52–53.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>17</sup> Freud S., *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. J. Strachey, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 1961, pp. 18–24.

<sup>18</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses*, trans. R. Grigg, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 1993, pp. 203–205.

belonging are sustained. In this sense, trauma and exile share a formal structure: both reveal the moment when the Symbolic order fails, when the subject is thrown into the Real of its own non-belonging. Yet this foreclosure is not simply destructive. In the Lacanian logic, the Real also functions as the site of truth—the impossible point around which the Symbolic organizes itself.<sup>19</sup> To confront the Real is to confront the limit of representation, the point at which the subject's desire and language reach their boundary. Trauma, therefore, discloses the logical condition of subjectivity: that there is always a remainder that cannot be signified, a void that no discourse can close. The subject is constituted in relation to this void—it is not simply wounded by trauma but *structured* by it. This paradoxical insight prepares the ground for understanding, later through phenomenology and hermeneutics, how temporality and narrative attempt to reconfigure the field opened by this encounter without ever fully suturing it.

### Exile from the Symbolic: Subjectivity and the Lost Signifier

The notion of exile acquires a distinctive philosophical significance when approached through the Lacanian logic of the Symbolic. In this framework, exile is not only spatial or political, but a *structural* condition of the speaking subject. The human being is, by definition, exiled from immediacy—expelled from the imaginary fullness of being by its very entrance into language.<sup>20</sup> To speak is to substitute signifiers for presence, to inhabit a world mediated by difference and absence. What is experienced as metaphysical homelessness or existential estrangement is thus not an accidental feature of human life but its very condition of possibility. In Lacan's formulation, "the unconscious is the discourse of the Other"<sup>21</sup>—meaning that subjectivity always takes place elsewhere, in a field of signification that precedes and exceeds the self.

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<sup>19</sup> Žižek S., *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology*, Verso, London 1999, pp. 21–28.

<sup>20</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 203–215.

<sup>21</sup> Lacan J., *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, p. 214.



This structural exile from the Symbolic becomes particularly visible when the Symbolic order falters or collapses. Trauma, as discussed previously, marks precisely this moment of collapse: the encounter with the Real that exposes the insufficiency of the signifier. The *Name-of-the-Father* (*Nom-du-Père*), the signifier that guarantees the coherence of the Symbolic, may be foreclosed, leaving the subject without the anchoring point (*point de capiton*) that stabilizes meaning.<sup>22</sup> When such foreclosure occurs, language no longer secures the boundaries of identity; signification disperses into an ungrounded field where meaning perpetually slides. In this sense, exile is not merely a metaphor for displacement but a logical topology of subjectivity: to be human is to be outside the signifier that could name one's being. Lacan's early reflections in *The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis* portray the subject as constituted through a "lack of being which finds its reality in speech".<sup>23</sup> Speech both reveals and conceals the absence at the heart of the self. Every act of enunciation presupposes the subject's division—"I speak, therefore I am not where I speak".<sup>24</sup> The Symbolic promises belonging but delivers only representation; its structure always implies an element of exclusion. Exile is therefore inscribed in the logic of signification itself. The subject's relation to the Other—language, law, community—is one of dependency and alienation. To exist as a speaking being (*parlêtre*) is to dwell in a space of mediation that cannot be mastered, to inhabit what Derrida later calls the *différance* of meaning.<sup>25</sup> When the Symbolic order is disrupted, this structural alienation turns into experiential exile. The subject who has lost the stabilizing network of signifiers—the homeland of language and culture—encounters a form of radical displacement. In this situation, the Real no longer appears as a momentary rupture but as a persistent condition: a void where the coordinates of belonging once stood. The traumatized and the exiled thus converge in their exposure to a

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<sup>22</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III: The Psychoses*, pp. 203–205.

<sup>23</sup> Lacan J., "The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis", in *Écrits*, trans. B. Fink, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 2006, p. 246.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 248.

<sup>25</sup> Derrida J., *Of Grammatology*, trans. G. C. Spivak, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore 1976, pp. 63–70.

world no longer guaranteed by the Symbolic. The loss of language, in both literal and figurative senses, becomes the loss of self.

However, Lacan's logic suggests that this loss, while devastating, is also constitutive. The subject emerges precisely through this non-coincidence with itself. The exile from the Symbolic is the very movement that makes desire—and therefore life—possible.<sup>26</sup> If one were to be fully inscribed in the Symbolic, to occupy one's place entirely, there would be no gap from which to desire, speak, or act. The subject must remain partially excluded in order to exist as a subject at all. In this paradox lies the non-totalizing nature of Lacan's logic: what seems like absence or loss is, in fact, the structural opening through which meaning, creativity, and ethical responsibility become possible. In the following sections, this logic of constitutive exile will be reinterpreted phenomenologically. Husserl's analysis of the temporal synthesis of consciousness and Heidegger's conception of ecstatic temporality will allow us to see how the loss of symbolic grounding corresponds to a disruption of temporal continuity—how the subject's exile from meaning manifests as a disjunction within the very flow of time.

### 3. The Logic of Temporality and Rupture: Husserl and Heidegger

#### Husserl's Time-Consciousness and the Synthesis of Retention–Protention

In Edmund Husserl's phenomenology, time is not an external dimension in which consciousness unfolds but the very form of its constitution. Consciousness is temporal through and through, not because it exists in time, but because it *constitutes* time as the horizon of experience.<sup>27</sup> The subject's awareness of duration, sequence, and persistence depends upon a complex synthesis that unites the *no-longer*, the *now*, and the *not-yet* into a continuous flow. Husserl's *Lectures on the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time* provide the most detailed account of this synthesis,

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<sup>26</sup> Lacan J., *Seminar XI*, op. cit., pp. 274–276.

<sup>27</sup> Husserl E., *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, p. 35.

which he describes in terms of three interrelated moments: retention, primal impression, and protention.<sup>28</sup> Retention refers to the consciousness of what has just been; it is not memory in the psychological sense but an immediate holding-on of the past within the present. Primal impression is the living now—the vivid presence of what is currently given. Protention, in turn, is the anticipation of what is about to come.<sup>29</sup> The unity of temporal experience arises from the ceaseless interplay among these three dimensions: each moment of consciousness contains within itself a horizon of what has just elapsed and what is expected next. Time-consciousness, therefore, is not a series of discrete points but a *streaming continuity*—a self-constituting movement in which consciousness and temporality coincide.<sup>30</sup> As Husserl himself emphasizes, this synthesis is fragile. It depends on the continuous retention of the past and the unbroken projection of the future. The minimal disturbance in this dynamic equilibrium—whether through shock, loss, or existential rupture—produces a collapse of temporal unity. When retention no longer connects seamlessly with protention, the temporal flow disintegrates into disconnected fragments.<sup>31</sup> It is precisely this discontinuity that phenomenologically corresponds to what psychoanalysis calls *trauma*. The traumatic event suspends the synthesis of consciousness: the past intrudes into the present as a frozen repetition, while the future becomes closed or inaccessible. The subject is trapped within a suspended now—a temporal loop that negates the horizontality of experience.

Husserl's description of passive synthesis provides a further clue to the logic of this disruption. Passive synthesis is the pre-reflective activity through which consciousness constitutes continuity without explicit intention or will.<sup>32</sup> In the wake of trauma, this automatic coherence is broken; the retentive thread that sustains self-identity is torn. What remains is a field of discontinuous impressions—what phenomenologists such as Bernet and Zahavi later

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 35–40.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 41–43.

<sup>30</sup> Husserl E., *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy*, trans. F. Kersten, Springer, Dordrecht 1983, §§80–84.

<sup>31</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, p. 68.

<sup>32</sup> Husserl E., *Analyses Concerning Passive and Active Synthesis*, trans. A. J. Steinbock, Springer, Dordrecht 2001, pp. 69–72.

describe as “temporal wounds”.<sup>33</sup> The self’s capacity to constitute its own duration falters, revealing that temporality, far from being an indestructible a priori, depends on the vulnerability of synthesis. This vulnerability is not an external limitation but belongs to the very logic of time. Husserl notes that each now-moment carries within itself the trace of its disappearance; the present is always already slipping into the past.<sup>34</sup> In this vanishing, consciousness encounters its own *nothingness*—the negation that makes succession possible. The self’s continuity is thus constituted through loss: it endures only by ceaselessly letting go of itself. Trauma can be read as the moment when this dialectic of loss becomes perceptible, when the normally invisible movement of temporal self-dissolution erupts into experience. The *shock* of trauma is therefore the phenomenological revelation of what is always structurally true: that consciousness maintains itself only through an ongoing self-negation.

In this sense, Husserl’s time-analyses prefigure the non-totalizing logic that later psychoanalytic and existential thinkers will radicalize. The self is never fully present to itself because its being is stretched across temporal difference—between retention and protention, between what has vanished and what is not yet. The phenomenological subject is already “lacking” in the Lacanian sense: not through an external deprivation, but through its temporal constitution. To live in time is to live in delay, to be perpetually displaced from oneself by the very structure of temporal synthesis.<sup>35</sup> This particular idea opens a direct passage to Heidegger’s reworking of temporality, in which the ecstatic unity of past, present, and future reveals not only the ontological structure of Dasein but also its existential exposure to finitude. If Husserl’s account exposes the *phenomenal fragility* of temporal synthesis, Heidegger’s analysis will uncover the *ontological ground* of this fragility: being itself as a mode of temporal incompleteness.

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<sup>33</sup> Bernet R., *Consciousness and the Human World: Husserl and the Phenomenological Method*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1989, pp. 112–114; Zahavi D., *Self-Awareness and Alterity: A Phenomenological Investigation*, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1999, p. 52.

<sup>34</sup> Husserl, *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time*, op. cit., p. 52.

<sup>35</sup> Derrida J., *Speech and Phenomena*, trans. D. B. Allison, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1973, pp. 54–58.

## Heidegger's Ecstatic Temporality and the Structure of Being-Toward

Martin Heidegger's rethinking of temporality in *Being and Time* transforms the Husserlian model of time-consciousness into an existential–ontological analysis. For Husserl, time is a transcendental structure of consciousness; for Heidegger, temporality (*Zeitlichkeit*) is the very being of Dasein—that is, of the entity that exists as understanding.<sup>36</sup> Dasein does not *have* time; rather, it *is* time insofar as its existence is always a project stretched across a horizon of possibilities. Heidegger's central thesis, that “temporality makes possible the being of Dasein itself”,<sup>37</sup> converts Husserl's descriptive phenomenology into an ontology of finitude, revealing that the self's relation to time is not merely cognitive or perceptual but existentially constitutive.

Heidegger defines temporality through the ecstatic unity of the three temporal dimensions—future, past, and present—which are not successive points but “ecstases” (from *ek-stasis*, standing-out).<sup>38</sup> Dasein is *ecstatic* because it exists outside itself: its being is a constant movement of projection, retrieval, and presence. The future (*Zukunft*) is primary, for Dasein is always ahead of itself, projecting its possibilities; the past (*Gewesenheit*) signifies thrownness—its having-been already situated in a world; and the present (*Gegenwart*) is the moment of making-present, the situation of acting within what is given.<sup>39</sup> The unity of these ecstases forms the temporality of care (*Sorge*), which constitutes the ontological structure of existence. In this sense, temporality is fundamentally finite. The horizon that unifies the temporal ecstases is *being-toward-death* (*Sein-zum-Tode*). Death is not a biological event but the existential limit that individuates Dasein by revealing the impossibility of total presence.<sup>40</sup> In facing its own finitude, Dasein encounters the temporal truth of its being: that its existence is defined by what is *not yet* and by what will ultimately not be. The anticipation of death (*Vorlaufen zum Tode*) opens the subject to its most authentic temporality, one no longer absorbed in the present tasks of

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<sup>36</sup> Heidegger M., *Being and Time*, §65.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., §68.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., §65–§68.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., §70.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., §53–§55.

the “they” (*das Man*), but attuned to the nothingness at the core of being.<sup>41</sup> From this perspective, trauma and exile can be interpreted as ontic manifestations of a deeper ontological structure: they make palpable the constitutive incompleteness of Dasein’s temporal being. When the everyday continuity of worldhood is disrupted—by the loss of homeland, by violence, or by the shattering of meaning—Dasein is confronted with its own *Unheimlichkeit*, its not-being-at-home.<sup>42</sup> This unhomeliness is not merely psychological disorientation but a revelation of the truth of existence: that being is always already ungrounded, that the home (*Heim*) was never absolute but a temporary stabilization of the abyssal openness of time.

Heidegger’s notion of thrownness (*Geworfenheit*) provides the conceptual bridge between the phenomenology of trauma and the logic of exile. Dasein always finds itself “thrown” into a world not of its choosing, into conditions and meanings that precede it.<sup>43</sup> Trauma radicalizes this condition by destroying the reliability of these meanings; it exposes the groundlessness of existence itself. The exile, similarly, experiences thrownness as a *literal* displacement: a being-cast-out from the world’s familiar structures. What both figures reveal is that Dasein’s being-in-the-world is never simply grounded—it is always a being-toward something that escapes mastery. This being-toward expresses a temporal tension: the subject’s openness to what is not yet realized, and its simultaneous inability to coincide with itself. Heidegger describes this structure as *Entwurf*—projection—through which Dasein’s “projection of itself upon possibilities”.<sup>44</sup> Every projection, however, takes place from within thrownness; the future is always conditioned by the past. The exile, deprived of continuity, finds that the horizon of projection collapses: the future loses its ontological grounding in the “having-been”. Trauma, in this light, can be read as the disintegration of ecstatic unity—the loss of the horizon that allows time to unfold as meaningful possibility. Nevertheless, Heidegger insists that this very disruption may reveal the *truth* of temporality: being is temporal precisely because it is finite, and its

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., §62.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., §40.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., §38.

<sup>44</sup> Heidegger M., *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. A. Hofstadter, Indiana University Press, Bloomington 1982, p. 289.

finitude is not a limitation but its essence. To exist temporally is to exist as incompleteness, to be continually ahead of oneself, to live in the deferral of completion. Here, Heidegger's ontology converges with the Lacanian logic of lack: both expose the impossibility of total self-presence and the necessity of absence for the constitution of meaning. The subject is not a substance but a *clearing*—an open site in which being discloses itself only through the withdrawal of its full presence. In this sense, exile and trauma are not accidental disruptions of existence but radical unveilings of its ontological structure: being as temporal openness toward nothingness.

### **Trauma as Temporal Disjunction: The Interruption of Temporal Synthesis**

If Husserl shows that consciousness depends upon the delicate synthesis of retention and protention, and Heidegger reveals that existence is ecstatically stretched between past, present, and future, then trauma represents the moment when this synthesis collapses—when temporality itself ceases to hold together. Trauma is not simply an event that occurs *in* time; it is an event of time's breakdown. It reveals the fragility of the very structures through which temporal continuity is constituted and experienced.<sup>45</sup>

In phenomenological terms, the temporal disjunction of trauma arises when the intentional correlation between the phases of consciousness—retention, impression, and protention—becomes disrupted.<sup>46</sup> The traumatic moment resists assimilation into the continuum of lived experience; it cannot be integrated into the narrative arc of “before” and “after”. Instead, it persists as a frozen presence—an *ever-returning now*—in which the past invades the present as something that cannot be relegated to memory. The future, in turn, becomes inaccessible, since the horizon of anticipation collapses into the repetition of what has already occurred. As Husserl might say, the horizontal intentionality of consciousness—

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<sup>45</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pellauer, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1988, pp. 176–179.

<sup>46</sup> Husserl E., *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, pp. 52–58.

its temporal unfolding—is arrested.<sup>47</sup> The traumatized subject does not simply remember; it *relives* the event as an eternal recurrence of the same. Heidegger's analytic of Dasein deepens this phenomenological insight by revealing the ontological ground of this disruption. Trauma can be understood as a collapse of ecstatic temporality, an experience in which the unified openness of being-toward-the-future, being-as-having-been, and being-in-the-present disintegrates.<sup>48</sup> The ecstatic movement that projects Dasein toward its possibilities falters; being-toward becomes paralyzed being-in. What emerges is a form of temporal imprisonment, a mode of existence stripped of its capacity to transcend the immediacy of the present. Heidegger's concept of *Angst* (anxiety) offers an analogue: in anxiety, Dasein experiences the nullity of the world and of its own possibilities.<sup>49</sup> Trauma radicalizes this structure—it is anxiety transformed into event, an existential arrest where the future no longer opens and the past no longer recedes.

At the intersection of these phenomenological analyses, Lacan's notion of the Real becomes intelligible as the logical correlate of this temporal fracture. The Real, as that which resists symbolization, also resists temporalization.<sup>50</sup> It is what remains *outside of time*, the kernel that cannot be integrated into the narrative flow of becoming. In the traumatic experience, this kernel ruptures the continuity of time-consciousness, suspending the subject between a past that refuses to pass and a future that cannot arrive. The repetition compulsion described by Freud—the endless reenactment of the unassimilable event—thus finds its phenomenological equivalent in the breakdown of temporal synthesis.<sup>51</sup> The Real is not merely unspeakable; it is untimable.

Ricoeur's hermeneutics will later interpret this same structure as the disruption of narrative temporality: the inability of emplotment (*mise en intrigue*) to integrate a moment that shatters the coherence of the story.<sup>52</sup> Yet from a logical standpoint, what unites

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., pp. 62–64.

<sup>48</sup> Heidegger M., *Being and Time*, §65–§70.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., §40.

<sup>50</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 48–55.

<sup>51</sup> Freud S., *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, trans. J. Strachey, W. W. Norton & Company, New York 1961, pp. 18–24.

<sup>52</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, pp. 66–70.



the Lacanian and phenomenological analyses is the recognition that temporality and subjectivity share a negative foundation. The self endures only through the internal fracture of its temporal flow. When this fracture is revealed—as in trauma or exile—the illusion of wholeness dissolves, and the subject confronts the truth of its own incompleteness. Therefore, trauma can be conceived as the exposure of time’s ontology. It is the moment in which the meta-physical continuity of temporal experience is undone, laying bare the abyssal condition that makes temporality possible in the first place: the gap between presence and absence, between being and its perpetual slipping-away. The traumatic subject, trapped in the simultaneity of past and present, inhabits this gap as its existential space. Time no longer flows—it wounds. The temporal wound is not simply an interruption of experience but the revelation of its logical form: to exist as temporal consciousness is to be forever delayed, fractured, and haunted by what cannot be fully present. In this sense, trauma is not external to time but its most truthful manifestation—the disclosure of the void that temporality itself conceals.

#### 4. Narrative Reconstitution: Ricoeur and the Logic of Refiguration

##### *Temps et récit: Time, Plot, and the Hermeneutics of Identity*

Paul Ricoeur’s *Temps et récit* (*Time and Narrative*) stands as one of the most profound rearticulations of the relationship between temporality and meaning in 20th-century philosophy. In dialogue with both Husserlian phenomenology and Heideggerian ontology, Ricoeur’s project reinterprets the problem of time through the mediation of narrative, establishing a bridge between the lived experience of temporality (*temps vécu*) and its symbolic configuration in language and storytelling.<sup>53</sup> For Ricoeur, narrative is not merely a literary form; it is a mode of temporal synthesis, a way of organizing human action and suffering into intelligible patterns that give form to existence.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, pp. 3–9.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., pp. 52–56.

Ricoeur begins from the classical insight that time becomes human to the extent that it is articulated through narrative, and narrative attains its full significance when it unfolds the features of temporal experience.<sup>55</sup> This reciprocity is articulated through three interconnected moments: prefiguration (mimesis I), configuration (mimesis II), and refiguration (mimesis III).<sup>56</sup> *Prefiguration* refers to the pre-narrative structure of lived temporality—our world of actions, motives, and projects that are already meaningful before being told. *Configuration* is the act of emplotment (*mise en intrigue*), by which disparate events are organized into a coherent whole. *Refiguration* designates the moment of reception, when the narrative world and the reader's or listener's world intersect, transforming self-understanding.<sup>57</sup> This triadic schema allows Ricoeur to conceive of narrative as a synthetic act parallel to the Husserlian synthesis of time-consciousness, but operating at a hermeneutic rather than a transcendental level. Just as retention and protention unify the flow of inner time, *emplotment* unifies the flux of lived events into an intelligible totality. The *plot* performs what Husserl called the "constitution of continuity", but now through the mediation of symbols, language, and interpretation.<sup>58</sup> Narrative thus performs the impossible task of reconciling the discordance of temporal experience—it transforms the aporetic character of time into a meaningful sequence.

However, Ricoeur is acutely aware that this synthesis remains fragile and never complete. Drawing on Heidegger, he argues that narrative emplotment is a way of responding to the fundamental *discordance* between cosmic time (the objective succession of instants) and lived time (the existential stretching of being).<sup>59</sup> Storytelling does not abolish this discordance but renders it bearable. The act of narrating does not heal time; it configures it, endowing it with a form that can be inhabited even as its gaps remain. Through emplotment, the fragmented moments of experience are

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp. 68–71.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., pp. 52–54.

<sup>57</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, pp. 158–161.

<sup>58</sup> Husserl E., *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, pp. 52–58.

<sup>59</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 2, trans. K. McLaughlin and D. Pel-lauer, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1985, pp. 9–12.

reconnected, but the fissure between temporal levels—the difference between the world’s time and the self’s time—persists.<sup>60</sup> It is in this sense that narrative acquires its hermeneutic function. It does not merely recount events but *interprets existence* by integrating the incompleteness of life into a provisional order. Ricoeur calls this the “hermeneutics of the self”, wherein identity is not a fixed substance but a dynamic configuration that emerges through the act of narration.<sup>61</sup> The self, far from being an origin of meaning, becomes the *outcome* of the stories it tells about itself. Narrative identity (*identité narrative*) thus reintroduces a form of temporal synthesis at the level of meaning: it holds together what has been, what is being lived, and what is yet to come.<sup>62</sup>

As we shall see in the subsequent subsections, this synthesis is always incomplete. Trauma and exile reveal the limits of narrative configuration: they confront narrative with the impossibility of total coherence. In the wake of rupture, storytelling becomes not a closure but a response—a form of symbolic resistance to the disintegration of time. Through *emplotment*, the subject does not overcome trauma but learns to dwell within its interval. In this respect, Ricoeur’s narrative philosophy converges with the non-totalizing logic articulated by Lacan, Husserl, and Heidegger: the logic of a subject that constitutes itself through the tension between continuity and fracture, presence and absence, memory and anticipation.

### Narrative as Symbolic Repair and Temporal Mediation

In the wake of trauma and exile, when the temporal synthesis of experience has been shattered, narrative emerges as a symbolic response to fragmentation. Ricoeur conceives of narration not as a return to pre-traumatic coherence but as a mediating act—a work of reconfiguration (*refiguration*) that allows the subject to regain orientation within a disordered temporality.<sup>63</sup> The narrative act does not erase rupture; rather, it symbolically integrates it into a

<sup>60</sup> Ibid., pp. 61–63.

<sup>61</sup> Ricoeur P., *Oneself as Another*, pp. 140–148.

<sup>62</sup> Ricoeur P., *Memory, History, Forgetting*, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 2004, pp. 94–99.

<sup>63</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, pp. 159–164.

broader structure of meaning. Through this mediation, the subject re-establishes a relation to the world and to itself, even if that relation remains provisional, deferred, and incomplete.

To understand the reparative function of narrative, we must recall that for Ricoeur, emplotment (*mise en intrigue*) is a form of synthesis that operates analogously to the Husserlian synthesis of consciousness but on the plane of cultural symbolization.<sup>64</sup> Emplotment draws together heterogeneous elements—events, motives, emotions—into a coherent whole by introducing causal and teleological connections. Yet this coherence is hermeneutic, not ontological: it arises from the interpretive act that confers order on what is otherwise discordant. Narrative repair, therefore, is not a restoration of lost unity but an interpretive *as if*—a fiction that allows the subject to dwell within the gap between temporal discordance and the longing for meaning.<sup>65</sup> Ricoeur's concept of refiguration (mimesis III) plays a crucial role in this process. It denotes the intersection between the world of the text and the world of the reader or listener, the moment when narrative understanding transforms lived experience.<sup>66</sup> In the context of trauma, this refiguration enables the traumatized subject to re-enter time symbolically—to rearticulate the past as a sequence rather than as a static wound. The narrative form converts the circular temporality of traumatic repetition into a linear or dialectical temporality, opening a space for anticipation and retrospection.<sup>67</sup> The act of storytelling becomes an existential mediation: it reconnects the disjointed horizons of temporality through symbolic articulation.

This hermeneutic process, however, presupposes what Ricoeur calls a "poetics of the will"—a creative capacity of imagination that projects meaning beyond what is given.<sup>68</sup> Imagination mediates between the empirical and the possible, transforming suffering into a language that can be shared. The narrative act is thus both cognitive and ethical: cognitive, because it restores intelligibility to an otherwise senseless rupture; ethical, because it allows the subject

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<sup>64</sup> Husserl E., *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, pp. 41–43.

<sup>65</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, pp. 66–70.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 158–161.

<sup>67</sup> Ricoeur P., *Memory, History, Forgetting*, pp. 78–84.

<sup>68</sup> Ricoeur P., *Freedom and Nature: The Voluntary and the Involuntary*, trans. E. V. Kohák, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1966, pp. 435–438.

to bear responsibility for its own story, to reappropriate what had been experienced as alien.<sup>69</sup> Yet the repair that narrative offers is fragile and never total. The wound remains, but it becomes speakable; and in speaking, it acquires a place within the order of meaning. The symbolic function of narrative can also be read through a Lacanian lens. In Lacan's terms, narration belongs to the Symbolic order—the register of language through which the subject structures reality.<sup>70</sup> The act of telling one's story re-inscribes the traumatic encounter with the Real into the Symbolic, transforming what was unassimilable into discourse. However, this transformation is necessarily partial: what returns in the telling is not the event itself, but its trace. The narrative, therefore, performs what we might call a secondary symbolization—an operation that gives form to the formless while preserving the void at its core.<sup>71</sup> This corresponds precisely to the non-totalizing logic that underlies both psychoanalysis and phenomenology: the recognition that meaning is generated not through closure but through the mediation of absence.

In the condition of exile, narrative becomes even more explicitly a space of symbolic repair. The displaced subject, deprived of the spatial and linguistic coordinates that constitute belonging, reconstructs identity through the act of narration. The story of exile is not merely recollection; it is the symbolic reconstitution of a world that has been lost. Through narration, the exiled subject transforms dislocation into narration—a way of being in language that replaces the lost geography of home. The temporality of exile is thus reconfigured from circular nostalgia to a dynamic process of retelling, of *dwelling through words*. Narrative repair, however, does not lead back to total reconciliation. Ricoeur's hermeneutics resists the temptation of closure: the function of the narrative is not to heal in the medical sense but to refigure the wound—to make it part of meaning without erasing its negativity.<sup>72</sup> The gap between event and narration, between trauma and its telling, remains irre-

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<sup>69</sup> Ricoeur P., *Oneself as Another*, pp. 165–172.

<sup>70</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 203–205.

<sup>71</sup> Derrida J., *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1978, pp. 278–280.

<sup>72</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative, Vol. 3*, op. cit., pp. 162–165.

ducible; it is the space of the subject's freedom. In this way, narrative mediation is not an antidote to rupture but the very form through which rupture becomes livable. It transforms the impossibility of complete understanding into a condition of interpretive openness—a logic of continuation without completion, which mirrors the ontological finitude of temporal existence itself.

### **The Limits of Narrative Closure: Between Repetition and Refiguration**

If narrative offers a symbolic reconfiguration of trauma and exile, its power lies not in restoring a lost totality but in sustaining the movement between disruption and meaning. Ricoeur's hermeneutics insists that every act of emplotment carries within it an aporia: the tension between the desire for closure and the irreducible openness of time.<sup>73</sup> Narrative can organize events, but it cannot abolish contingency; it can integrate suffering into meaning, but it cannot annul the wound. The temporality of storytelling thus remains fundamentally non-totalizing—a process of *refiguration* that constantly negotiates with repetition, deferral, and incompleteness.<sup>74</sup> The concept of *refiguration* (mimesis III) marks the point where the reader's lived time and the time of the narrative intersect. This intersection does not produce a synthesis but a mutual transformation: the reader's temporality is re-shaped by the story, while the story's temporality is actualized through interpretation.<sup>75</sup> It is precisely this ongoing exchange that prevents narrative closure. Trauma, as the return of the Real, perpetually re-opens what the narrative seeks to resolve. Each retelling thus repeats the attempt at integration while preserving the failure that makes narration necessary.<sup>76</sup> Ricoeur acknowledges that this dynamic reflects an underlying aporia of time—a discordance between phenomenological time (as lived, finite, and fragmented) and cosmological time (as measurable and objective).<sup>77</sup> Narrative seeks to mediate this

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<sup>73</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, op. cit., pp. 178–182.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., pp. 161–163.

<sup>75</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, pp. 52–54.

<sup>76</sup> Lacan J., *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI: The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, pp. 53–55.

<sup>77</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 2, pp. 9–12.

discordance but can never fully reconcile it. The very act of emplotment, which aims to confer order, depends upon what it cannot encompass: the excess of temporality that eludes representation. Hence, every narrative is shadowed by a remainder, a surplus that resists closure. This remainder, Ricoeur suggests, is the mark of *finitude*—the sign that human temporality cannot be mastered but only interpreted.<sup>78</sup>

This recognition brings Ricoeur's thought into deep proximity with Lacan's logic of the lack. The structural absence that, for Lacan, defines the subject—the impossibility of coincidence between signifier and being—reappears in Ricoeur's temporal hermeneutics as the impossibility of narrative completion. The story can never say the whole truth of the subject because the subject itself is never whole.<sup>79</sup> Each act of narration mirrors the *repetition compulsion* of the unconscious: it circles around the void, seeking to articulate what resists symbolization. Yet, unlike in pathological repetition, the hermeneutic act introduces difference—what Derrida calls *différance*: a spacing and deferral that transforms repetition into creation.<sup>80</sup> Narrative refiguration thus becomes a *productive failure*: a repetition that both preserves and transforms, maintaining fidelity to the wound while opening a space for new meaning.

Exile and trauma provide the paradigmatic contexts for this logic. The exiled subject can never return home in the literal sense, but through narration, it constructs a symbolic home within temporality—a structure of meaning that substitutes for the lost geography. This “home” is never complete, always provisional, and continually re-narrated. Similarly, the traumatized subject does not overcome the event through narration but reworks its temporal position: the unbearable *now* becomes a past that can be told, even if it remains untotalizable. Narrative transforms repetition into remembrance without dissolving its residue.<sup>81</sup> The limit of closure, then, is not a deficiency but the very condition of narrative vitality.

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 60–65.

<sup>79</sup> Lacan J., *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, pp. 204–207.

<sup>80</sup> Derrida J., *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1978, pp. 278–280. Cf. Kakoliris Gerasimos, “Jacques Derrida's Deconstruction of Western Metaphysics: The Early Years”, *Dia-noesis: A Journal of Philosophy*, 4, 2017, pp. 43–62.

<sup>81</sup> Ricoeur P., *Memory, History, Forgetting*, pp. 85–89.

To close a story would be to deny the openness of human temporality and the constitutive lack that defines subjectivity. Ricoeur's hermeneutics thereby articulates an ethics of narration: to tell is to acknowledge incompleteness, to translate suffering without pretending to exhaust it.<sup>82</sup> The narrative self is never identical with itself; it is always in excess of its own stories, perpetually rewritten by time. This self-understanding through storytelling mirrors the ontological structure described by Heidegger and the logical condition articulated by Lacan: being, subjectivity, and meaning are possible only through repetition within difference, through a logic of unfinished temporality that sustains the openness of existence.

Narrative, in the end, does not reconcile trauma and exile—it keeps them intelligible. It situates rupture within the order of language while preserving the abyss that language cannot fill. The task of philosophy, as Ricoeur conceives it, is not to close this gap but to think within it: to accept that meaning is inseparable from fracture, that every configuration of time is haunted by disjunction, and that to narrate is to live within the interval of refiguration.

## 5. Synthesis: The Non-totalizing Logic of Subjectivity

The preceding analyses have traced three distinct but converging trajectories—psychoanalytic, phenomenological, and hermeneutic—each revealing that subjectivity is structured not by presence but by absence, delay, and incompleteness. Lacan's logic of the *manque-à-être* exposes the constitutive lack at the heart of being; Husserl and Heidegger show that consciousness and existence are temporally stretched and ontologically ungrounded; Ricoeur's hermeneutics demonstrates that narrative meaning arises from the mediation of discordance. Taken together, these perspectives converge upon a single principle: that the human subject is governed by a non-totalizing logic, a logic that operates through negativity rather than synthesis, through mediation rather than identity.

At the level of psychoanalysis, this logic manifests as the structural impossibility of coincidence between the subject and itself. The Lacanian subject emerges through the signifier, yet the signifier never fully represents being. Every act of speech reaffirms the

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<sup>82</sup> Ricoeur P., *Oneself as Another*, pp. 165–172.



absence that grounds it, producing a surplus of meaning that is both constitutive and disruptive. The Symbolic order provides coherence only by excluding what it cannot contain—the Real—which returns as trauma, repetition, or silence.<sup>83</sup> This constitutive exclusion is not an anomaly but a formal condition of signification. Hence, the logic of the subject is paradoxical: it depends on the non-identity of its own elements. The *truth* of subjectivity is therefore not consistency but division. To be a subject is to inhabit contradiction without resolution, to exist as the mediation between meaning and its impossibility.

Phenomenology translates this structure into the language of temporality. Husserl's model of time-consciousness shows that the continuity of experience arises from the synthesis of retention and protention, yet this synthesis is sustained only through the perpetual vanishing of the now.<sup>84</sup> The present never coincides with itself; it is always already becoming past. The temporality of consciousness thus mirrors the Lacanian lack: it is constituted through self-differentiation, through the internal negation that makes succession possible. Heidegger radicalizes this insight by revealing that Dasein's being is ecstatic—that it stands outside itself, projected toward possibilities and grounded in finitude.<sup>85</sup> The unity of temporality is not given but achieved through openness to what is not yet, to what cannot be enclosed within the present. The logic of time is therefore identical with the logic of lack: both signify a structure of incompleteness in which being becomes intelligible only through its own self-withdrawal.

Ricoeur's hermeneutics extends this logic into the domain of meaning and interpretation. Narrative does not close the fractures of temporality; it translates them into a symbolic form capable of being inhabited. Through emplotment, the discordance of time is refigured into a partial order, yet this order is itself provisional and revisable.<sup>86</sup> The act of narration constitutes identity not by

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<sup>83</sup> Lacan J., *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, pp. 204–207.

<sup>84</sup> Husserl E., *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*, pp. 41–52.

<sup>85</sup> Heidegger M., *Being and Time*, §65–§70; Filippopoulos, Y. G. “Understanding the Concept of Being in General: From Being and Time Back to Young Heidegger”, *Conatus - Journal of Philosophy*, 9:1, 2024, pp. 9–32, <https://doi.org/10.12681/cjp.32079>.

<sup>86</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 1, pp. 66–70.

eliminating the gaps in experience but by configuring them. The subject of narration, like the subject of desire or the subject of time, persists through the repetition of non-coincidence—through what Ricoeur calls *refiguration*, the never-final synthesis of self-understanding.<sup>87</sup> Hence, the narrative process reveals an underlying logic of continuity through discontinuity: identity endures precisely by incorporating its own fragmentation.

Across these three registers—psychoanalytic, phenomenological, and hermeneutic—a single logical pattern emerges. It is a logic of incompleteness, in which negation functions not as failure but as structure. Unlike the classical logic of identity ( $A = A$ ), this logic acknowledges that identity is internally divided:  $A$  becomes itself only through its difference from itself.<sup>88</sup> The subject cannot coincide with itself because the very act of self-reference introduces mediation and deferral. In Lacanian terms, the signifier produces a gap between  $I$  and  $I$ ; in phenomenological terms, the now is constituted through the non-presence of its past and future; in hermeneutic terms, the self is narrated through stories that never fully capture its being. The structure that unites these fields is not that of synthesis but of aporia—a unity produced through the recognition of its own impossibility. This non-totalizing logic carries significant implications for the philosophical understanding of reason and subjectivity. It undermines the classical model of rationality as closure, completeness, or total self-grounding. Instead, reason itself must be reconceived as a function of mediation, an operation that preserves openness by acknowledging contradiction. The subject is rational not insofar as it achieves harmony, but insofar as it can sustain dissonance without collapsing into silence. Temporality, language, and narrative all testify to this rationality of the incomplete: a rationality that organizes absence, delay, and difference without subsuming them into unity. In this sense, the non-totalizing logic of subjectivity is also a logic of temporality. Each mode of consciousness—linguistic, existential, narrative—unfolds as a form of temporal articulation, a spacing that both separates and connects. The present, like the signifier or the narrative moment, is never pure; it contains within itself traces of what it

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<sup>87</sup> Ricoeur P., *Time and Narrative*, Vol. 3, pp. 159–164.

<sup>88</sup> Hegel G. W. F., *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller, Humanities Press, Atlantic Highlands 1969, pp. 55–59.

excludes. The logical principle underlying these phenomena could be formulated as *non-contradictory contradiction*: the necessity of division for the possibility of unity.<sup>89</sup> The self endures because it is divided; meaning persists because it is deferred; time flows because it fails to coincide with itself.

This view redefines the very notion of logical coherence. Instead of identifying coherence with closure, it aligns it with consistency through difference—a structure closer to the paraconsistent or dialectical model of logic than to the classical Aristotelian one. In paraconsistent reasoning, contradiction does not entail collapse but cohabitation; opposites can coexist without annihilating each other. Similarly, the human subject—temporal, desiring, and narrating—coincides with itself only by incorporating negation. The logic of the lack, of temporal disjunction, and of narrative refiguration are all expressions of the same fundamental structure: a logic that resists totalization while sustaining intelligibility. What unites Lacan, Husserl, Heidegger, and Ricoeur is not merely a shared critique of metaphysical unity but a common intuition about the form of reason itself. The logic of subjectivity is not a logic of synthesis but of mediation; not of totality but of openness; not of reconciliation but of relation. To think the subject philosophically, therefore, is to think logic otherwise—to think a logic that begins from lack, unfolds through time, and endures through narrative. It is the logic of a being that can never coincide with itself, because its very existence depends on the difference that divides it.

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<sup>89</sup> Priest G., *In Contradiction: A Study of the Transconsistent*, Oxford University Press, Oxford 2006.

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