

TIMES OF HISTORY:

An Overview of Time Studies Related to the Theory of History (Concepts, Issues, and Trends)*

Tempos da História: Uma Visão Geral dos Estudos acerca do
Tempo Relacionados à Teoria da História (Conceitos, Questões
e Tendências)

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes a four-layered diagram that displays as an overview of the current field of historical time studies according to the following branches of investigation: 1) the metaphysics of natural time, 2) the metaphysics of historical time, 3) the regimes of historicity, and 4) historiographical regimes. By defining these fields and their connections, identifying essential concepts, revealing the questions they address, and sketching tendencies that have emerged since the 2000s, this article tackles historical temporality as a theoretical and historiographical subject. This framework, which portrays the state of the art in temporal studies, allows for the presentation and classification of the variety of contributions gathered in this special edition.

Keywords: history; time; time studies; philosophy and theory of history.

RESUMO

Este artigo propõe um diagrama de quatro camadas que exibem os subcampos de investigação como uma visão geral do campo atual dos estudos do tempo histórico: 1) a metafísica do tempo natural, 2) a metafísica do tempo histórico, 3) os regimes de historicidade e 4) os regimes historiográficos. Ao definir esses campos e suas interrelações, apontar os principais conceitos, as questões que abordam e as tendências que se constituíram desde o início dos anos 2000, este artigo aborda a temporalidade histórica como tema teórico e historiográfico. Este quadro, que apresenta o estado da arte dos estudos temporais, permite apresentar e classificar a variedade de contribuições que esta edição especial reúne.

Palavras-chave: história; tempo; estudos do tempo; filosofia e teoria da história.

* Tradutora: Gabriela Feracini Batista.

The special edition “Times of History” presents a representative sample of time studies in the theory of history since the 2000s. Therefore, the presentation of the essays that this volume assembles begins with an overview of the field related to temporal studies, in order to delineate its boundaries, primary tendencies, and current issues.

Time Studies Related to the Theory of History

A long-standing disciplinary consensus recognizes the paramount role that time plays in the practice and thought of history. However, time only drew significant academic attention (BEVERNAGE *et al.*, 2019, p. 420) for historians (LORENZ, 2017, p. 109) and theorists of history (GORMAN, 2013, p. 156) from the 1990s on. The growing interest in the “fundamental material” of historians (LE GOFF, 1988, p. 24) has promoted a “radical critique of the dominant concept of historical time and the metaphysical assumptions and ontological commitments that accompany it” (BEVERNAGE, 2008, p. 151). The focus on time has introduced historians and theorists of history to the broad field of “time studies,” which entails a transdisciplinary inquiry – from the humanities to the arts – into “our conceptions of time (...) in specific social contexts” (BRUGES; ELIAS, 2016, p. 2).

However, the growing attention of historians and theorists cannot turn time into an entity that behaves as a historical agency, as Ankersmit cautioned: “in current texts that celebrate historical time, the suggestion is often that *time, and not the things that happen in time, does the real work*” (ANKERSMIT, 2021, p. 55, author’s italics). Between the well-appreciated resurgence of the ontology of time and the harmful reification of time, time studies establish an epistemic unity related to different theoretical positions.

To accommodate the “plurality of points of view and disciplinary contexts” (HELLERMA, 2020, p. 9) that the investigation of temporality encompasses as a theme of the theory of history, we present a summary of time studies in recent historical theory through Figure 1.

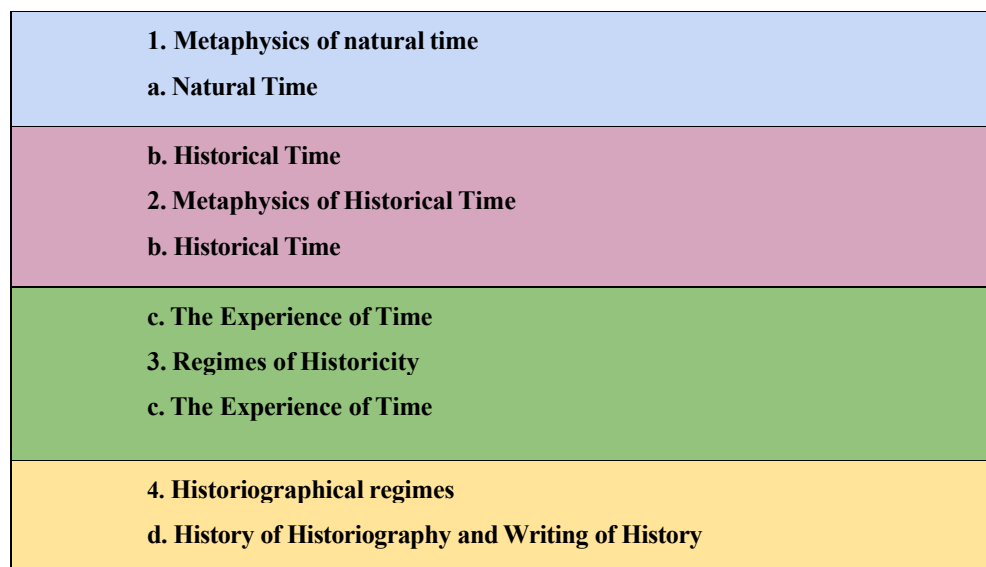


Figure 1 – Diagram of Time Studies Related to the Theory of History.

Source: Conceived and designed by Hélio Rebello C. Jr.

Figure 1 is a diagram divided by four parallel lines that define the main subjects of time studies related to the theory of history: a) natural time, b) historical time, c) experience of historical time, and d) historical time as managed by historiographical practices and represented in historical writing. In the spaces between lines “a,” “b,” “c,” and “d,” areas 1, 2, 3, and 4 stand for the subfields of historical time studies:

1. Metaphysics of natural time (DENG, 2018): Located above the line “a,” it stands as the ultimate and ambiguous boundary where both the practices of disciplinary history and theoretical pursuits converge with natural time.
2. Metaphysics of historical time (KLEINBERG, 2012): Positioned between lines “a” and “b,” it encounters natural time at the top and experiences of historical time at the lower section.
3. Regimes of historicity (HARTOG, 2015): It lies between lines “b” and “c” and encompasses the ways in which the experience of time represented, encountering historical time at the top and the representation of time in historiography and historical writing at the bottom.
4. Historiographical regimes (MUDROVIC, 2013): Located below line “d,” it represents not only the use of time by historiographical practices related to time (chronology, chronicles, schedules, periodization), but also the representation of historical time in historical writing.

The areas of the diagram have a very close relationship with each other, as “The distance between the writing of history and its philosophical and theoretical analyses are quite close” (KUUKKANEN, 2021, p. 6).

Metaphysics of Historical Time

As the term *metaphysics* is semantically and philosophically inflated, in this article we adopt a simplified definition for this term that has the advantage, for our purposes, of relating metaphysics essentially to time. As Whitehead stated in 1929, “the explanation surrounded in the phrase ‘everything flows’ is the key point of metaphysics” (WHITEHEAD, 1978, p. 208). The Whiteheadian definition, which gives the term metaphysics a broad sense, can encompass what we call in this article the *metaphysics of historical time*, as it leads to a reflection on the meaning of conceptual or practical uses of time in the sphere of historical theory and historiography.

The classificatory work on the metaphysics of historical time, to which the fundamental contributions in this edition are related, starts from an almost generational hiatus between classical or substantial philosophy of history by Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, or Heidegger – which historians like Oswald A. G. Spengler (1880-1936) and Arnold Toynbee (1889-1975), for example, still draw from –, and the “new metaphysics of time” (KLEINBERG, 2012) – which foundational theorists such as Hans U. Gumbrecht, Reinhart Koselleck (1923-2006), and Frank Ankersmit developed from the 1980s onwards.

Ultimately, the classical and the new metaphysics of historical time primarily depend on the attention they devote to the boundaries between the order of historical time and the order of natural time (I). Moreover, it is relevant to distinguish how each side deals with the relationship between the past, present, and future (II). Finally, the potential pattern of this relationship defines temporal change in history (III).

Classical metaphysics of time is concerned with the substantive question about the meaning of history: should history lead societies to progressive improvement despite the chaos that the present view attests to? This is Hegel's central inquiry.

To address the question of historical meaning, classical metaphysics of historical time "aspire to understand once and for all [d'amblée] the entire course [...] of history, becoming, or time," (POMIAN, 1984, p. 5) in order to foresee the final meaning of the "relationship between the present, the past, and the future" (POMIAN, 1984, p. 6). To do so, most of all, the classical metaphysics of historical time must consider the distinction between historical time and natural time. Secondly, for the classical philosophers of history, the relationship between past, present, and future is historically specified according to the dominance of one dimension over the others. The meaning of history, manifesting in temporal change, depends on the dominant dimension of time. Take, for instance, the Nietzsche's approach: The dominant dimension of historical time is the present, the present upon the instant, the blink of an eye, as only the present brings man into contact with the "ahistorical element" that envelops history, making oblivion and, therefore, change in history possible (NIETZSCHE, 1954, p. 214). For Heidegger, the main dimension is the future, as it implies the being-toward-death as the major temporal aspect on the horizon of Dasein, so the future is "the primary phenomenon of primordial and authentic temporality" (HEIDEGGER, 1977, p. 436).

Starting in the 1970s, the immersion of historical theory in the narrative aspect overshadowed the focus on temporality. This relative abandonment of temporal subject was justified by the fact that time gave rise to the quest for a historical substance or reality to which narrative, as a mental construct, did not provide access. In 2011, Jordheim considered that the "theory of historical times [...] at the moment, is either contested or simply ignored" (JORDHEIM, 2011, p. 21). In contrast, just one year later, in 2012, Kleinberg pointed out the emergence of a "new metaphysics of time." So, the question arises: what led to the emergence of a new metaphysics of time?

After years submerged in narrativism, the new metaphysicians of historical time developed immunity to the speculative risks that classical metaphysics of time had embraced when pondering the overall meaning of history and time. On the other hand, they did not abandon some substantive and ontological about historical time, such as the continuity/discontinuity of history, linear/non-linear time, synchronous/asynchronous time, and temporal change. Indeed, there is a connection that bridges the gap between the classical metaphysics and the new metaphysics of historical time, overcoming the narrativist disdain for speculative explorations regarding the ontological nature of time. According to Simon, the new theories of historical time rehabilitate temporal theories by launching an "quasi-substantive philosophy of history" (SIMON, 2019a).

What does the quasi-substantive metaphysics of time provide that classical and substantive philosophers of history could not?

The new metaphysics differs from the classical philosophy of history in two main ways. First, that it does not deal with the detachment of historical time from natural time as such, like Nietzsche or Heidegger, as it generally assumes that historical time should be conceived of essentially apart from natural time. In fact, the new metaphysics of historical time goes against "a kind of thought that exceeds the limits of the knowable, [...] [within which] the history of historians is confined" (RICŒUR, 2004, p. 155). At best, it used to consider natural time superficially, like a distant boundary that stands insensitive human history. However, as we will see, if the metaphysics of time begins by considering the separation of human time from natural time, as in Ricoeur or Koselleck, the new theories of historical time increasingly acknowledge that historical time and natural time constitute a temporal continuum in which

the two temporalities become indistinct and interfere in each other. Furthermore, unlike classical metaphysics of historical time, the emphasis on the relationship between past, present, and future changes in the new metaphysics of time. In fact, the meaning of the temporal relationship lies in how the past touches the present, and the present opens to the future in a way that compels history to change, rather than revealing the meaning of history as the secret of temporal passage, as classical metaphysics of historical time used to do.

Therefore, the new metaphysics of time (b.2) pays attention to natural time (a.1). Furthermore, for the new metaphysicians of time, temporal relationships establish the conditions under which past, present, and future become epistemologically apprehensible by the theoretical tools and the practical tasks of historians. The latter characteristic calls attention to the connection between the metaphysics of historical time (b.2) and the lower layers of the time studies diagram (Figure 1), which are the regimes of historicity (c.3) and the historiographical regimes (d.4).

The quasi-substantive tasks of the renewed metaphysics of historical time, therefore, encompass an epistemological inquiry that depends on ontological commitments: (I) detachment from natural time, (II) the relationship between past, present, and future, and (III) temporal change. The *onto-epistemological* patterns that the new metaphysics of historical time assume can be classified into three tendencies: *presence*, *multiple temporalities*, and *analytical historical time* (KLEINBERG, 2012, p. 2).

According to Kleinberg, these tendencies seek to reexamine “our relationship with the past and the very nature of the past”, and hence, align with a recent movement in theory and philosophy of history that aims to “move beyond the emphasis on language and representation” (KLEINBERG, 2012, p. 2), in other words, the new theories of historical indicate the exhaustion of the narrative philosophy of history. Furthermore, these new theories of historical time aim to present alternatives to the traditional forms of historical temporality that framed historical perception: linear time, circular time, and dialectical time. Hence, each of the tendencies in the new metaphysics of historical time presents its temporal structure for relating past, present, and future. These structures will be summarized below.

A) (Paradigm of) Presence

The concept of historical presence seeks to understand how it is possible to experience and represent the aporetic feature of the past that is present in its remains (objects, documents, or memorials), and, at the same time, absent because it is irrevocably lost, as the past is *past*. According to the temporal paradigm of presence, the point of absence-presence of the past encounters the thin distance between the past and the present.

Recent historical theory moves away from the emphasis on linguistic and representation to reframe the problem of historical experience in terms of the presence of the absent, the past. Therefore, narrativism is now criticized for having pushed too far the absence of the past to the extent at which the “past in itself” (BENTLEY, 2006, p. 349), the “real past” (DOMANSKA, 2006, p. 348), or the sublime experience of the past (ANKERSMIT, 2005, p. 318) were neglected. The idea of presence responds to this theoretical shift by making a “post-linguistic or post-discursive attempt to return to the real, to objects and material conditions” (KLEINBERG, 2013, p. 7). So, presence aims to overcome narrativism as “an alternative to meaning, representation, hermeneutics, and postmodernism” (PETERS, 2006, p. 362). Consequently, the historical presence of the past disconnects historians and theorists of history from “the mantras of this oppressive and suffocating linguistics [that threatens] the intellectual health of our discipline” (ANKERSMIT, 2006, p. 336).

From the 2000s on, there has been a remarkable collective effort to create concepts of historical time in terms of historical presence. This effort branches into various approaches and has generated many concepts of historical time based on the conceptual framework of historical presence. In fact, most subdivisions of historical presence can be named on behalf of Hans U. Gumbrecht, Ewa Domanska, Anthon Froeyman, Frank Ankersmit, Eelco Runia, Beber Bevernage, and Ethan Kleinberg, to cite some representative theorists. Two Brazilian theorists, Matheus Pereira and Valdei Araújo, have dedicated themselves to revisiting the Heideggerian matrix concerning the temporal scheme of presence. They seek to reframe the contemporary presentism through Heidegger's "improper temporalization" to fill its gaps and provide a suitable genealogy for characterizing "actualism" (CARDOSO JR., 2023, p. 31-32) as a "temporal dimension that emerges in societies trapped by structures of infinite expansion" (PEREIRA; ARAÚJO, 2019, p. 18).

B) Multiple Temporalities

Multiple temporalities are the trend in the new metaphysics of historical time that stems from the prolific temporal theory of Reinhart Koselleck. Multiple temporalities encourage historians and theorists of history to recognize the existence not only of "a historical time, but [...] many forms of time superimposed upon each other" (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 2). Koselleck's metaphysics of time is illustrated by a geological metaphor in which the relationship between past, present, and future brings together a changing bundle of "'sediments or layers of time' [...] that differ in age and depth and have changed and differentiated from each other at different speeds throughout the so-called history of the Earth" (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 3). However, the image of superimposed layers of time is only an approximate scheme of the relationship between past, present, and future required by multiple temporalities as a framework for concepts of historical time, given that for it to be more faithful, each temporal layer would have to be animated so that the displacements and superimpositions of each relative to the others could be observed.

In addition to the factor of multi-temporal dynamics, the sediments of time encompass "temporal structures" (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 94). First and foremost, the temporal structure reveals that the past and present do not align as preceding and subsequent moments on a timeline, since the diachronic distance that sets them apart simultaneously makes them contiguous and synchronous as layered times that interact. Consequently, the order of historical time presents itself as the "contemporaneity of the non-contemporary" (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 94), as "any synchrony is *eo ipso* at the same time diachronic" (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 94), because "In fact, all temporal dimensions are always intertwined" (KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 30), according to their dissonant rhythms of temporal change. Moreover, Koselleck examines historical time according to time structures that are shaped according the different senses that the experience of historical time can assume, as the latter can be periodized according to two temporal markers: "The space of experience [which] is the past organized for a given present, and the horizon of expectation [which] is the forefront of future possibilities for any present" (ZAMMITO, 2004, p. 128-129).

Some of the main subdivisions of the Koselleckian matrix of multiple temporalities can be named in the new metaphysics of historical time: Helge Jordheim, Stefan Helgesson, Achim Landwehr, Zoltán B. Simon & Marek Tamm, Elías Pauti, Rodrigo Turin, and Inclan & Valero, whose theses will be summarized below.

Jordheim demonstrates that Koselleck's theory of multiple temporalities transcends the extralinguistic and interlinguistic dichotomy because it represents a "general theory, a metatheory, of historical times" (JORDHEIM, 2012, p. 152). Jordheim further advances the development of Koselleck's contemporaneity of the non-contemporary by altering the "synchronicity of the non-synchronous" (JORDHEIM, 2014, p. 66).

Stefan Helgesson's contribution radicalizes "the notion of multiple temporalities" to launch a "necessary revision of Koselleck's Eurocentric framework" (HELGESSION, 2014, p. 556). In this context, he draws a lesson from the post-colonial debate, emphasizing that global synchronization tends to support local temporalities and homogenize them along a linear timeline. In short, Helgesson promotes the concept of "heterochrony" (HELGESSION, 2014, p. 547) to highlight the need for historians and theorists to escape the "homogenizing force of modernity" (HELGESSION, 2014, p. 548).

Achim Landwehr argues that Koselleck's synchronization of the plural nature of historical time revives the undesirable "diachronic dissonance" (LANDWEHR, 2012, p. 20) that embodies the Eurocentric paradigm of modernization by imposing the "chronocentrism [Chronozentrismus]" (LANDWEHR, 2012, p. 22) on temporal dissonances. Moreover, Landwehr introduced the idea of "chronocentrism" to reinforce a "science of simultaneity [*Gleichzeitigkeitswissenschaft*]," in which the present includes a restless balance of "simultaneities [*Gleichzeitigkeiten*]" that disrupt the previous relationship with the past and renew chronoferences that tend to stabilize historical time (LANDWEHR, 2016, p. 28).

Simon and Tamm coined the term "historical futures" to set up for the most recent theory of historical time related to Koselleck's multiple temporalities. It emphasizes the future in the relationship among the dimension of time. Indeed, "historical futures" invites historians and theorists to consider the future because "what we call 'historical' is not limited to relationships with the past but also with the future" (SIMON; TAMM, 2021, p. 131), specifically because the future has acquired seminal importance for historical thinking and knowledge due to the emergence of a new temporal experience that coexists and blends with modern temporality, as defined by Koselleck. Hence, "historical futures" seems to propose a metaphysics of historical time whose temporal framework "clearly departs from Koselleck's structure" (SIMON; TAMM, 2021, p. 11), because the future, in the crisis of modernity, becomes disruptive rather than a continuous time in relation to the past. Furthermore, technical progress has pushed historical time towards natural time, as a historicization of natural time arises, reversing the modernist trend of denaturalizing history. Therefore, intertwined natural and historical times include "changes in the entangled human/non-human world" (SIMON, 2019b, p. 80). Finally, historical futures add multiple temporalities with a new concept of historical change called "eventual temporality" (SIMON, 2019b, p. 75). The latter articulates "a renewed philosophy of history" (SIMON, 2019a; 2019b) that reorganizes the relationship between past, present, and future.

C) Analytical Historical Time

Analytical philosophy of history directly addresses the linguistic habits of historians and ordinary people about time. Arthur C. Danto is the primary source of analytical historical time as a prominent trend in the new metaphysics of time. He rejected the substantive philosophy of history to avoid the speculative and metaphysical risks assumed by historians, as they attempt to write “the history of events before the events themselves have occurred” (DANTO, 1985, p. 14). The analytical philosophy of history also scaped other forms of philosophy of history that, while not strictly substantive, reintroduce metaphysical clauses that tarnish the work of the historian, such as the realistic empiricism of positivists or the empathetic understanding of historicists. In this sense, analytical philosophers of history focus the outcome of historiographical work, i.e., the language through which the historian presents the result of their research and provides historical explanations, whether based on general laws, as in G. Hempel, in colligative acts, or as in W. Walsh, or simply through the tensed sentences, as in Danto.

Individuals, much like historians, according to Danto, are confined within the prison of language and cannot access historical experience as such because there is no external stock of past facts to be discovered by the historian. Instead, historians provide historical explanations of the past through language-dependent resources. Hence, the historian’s task is essentially to organize the explanation of events based on the temporal frameworks available in language, following the temporal perspective of so-called “narrative sentences.” The latter provide historians with the unique privilege of viewing actions from a temporal perspective (DANTO, 1985, p. 183).

According to Danto’s diagnosis, an eclipse obscured the analytical philosophy of history from the mid-1960s onwards (DANTO, 1995, p. 72), mainly due to the narrativism of H. White, which, according to Roth, “swept aside all discussions about explanatory or epistemic norms” (ROTH, 2020, p. 7) related to narrative sentences and other analytical issues such as the directionality of time and historical causality. However, in 2016, after a period of inactivity, there has been a revival of the analytical philosophy of history (BRZECHCZYN, 2018). In the new backdrop of the analytical philosophy of history, Danto’s principle still holds, that is, historical explanation cannot transcend language. Nonetheless, for the new analytical philosophers of history, the question arises as to whether events recounted from within the linguistic confinement of historical explanation (analytical philosophy of history), or if historical writings (H. White’s narrativism) could themselves be sensitive to historical change. This question assumes that temporal passage, from outside the realm of language, exerts pressure on the confined environment where narrative sentences are uttered.

The response to this theoretical dilemma has been divided at least into two epistemologies that qualify the recent analytical philosophy of history as a matrix of historical time concepts concerning the development of a metaphysics of historical time: Paul Roth’s and Jonathan Gorman’s.

Relying on Danto and Louis O. Mink, Paul Roth asserts that the past is open to historians’ narratives since historians apply a “dynamic nominalism” (ROTH, 2020, p. 39) that reconstructs the past. However, if nominalism rejects the realistic solution, it does not imprison the historians’ practices because it depends on the categorizations that historical explanation implies (ROTH, 2020). In short, provisional habits involve the epistemic categories of explanation in historical change. Indeed, the new categories that the disciplinary framework of the community applies to reconceptualize the past are socially mediated negotiations of an adjustment between descriptions and experience (ROTH, 2012, p. 319; ROTH, 2020, p. 57-59).

Jonathan Gorman also advocates for the revival of the analytical philosophy of history. His proposal deals with the temporal arrangement of events. He believes that the reunion of partial temporal perspectives of a historical object fixates the change in historical explanations, whose temporal structures had been provisionally supported by “absolute presuppositions” (GORMAN, 2013, p. 174) shared at any given time. In his view, historical change only becomes perceptible when a later absolute presupposition replaces an earlier one.

Regimes of Historicity and Historiographical Regimes

How the metaphysics of time (b.2) focuses on historical experience to consider the regimes of historicity (c.3) arise from the differing positions that Koselleck and Hartog assume regarding the relationship between b.2 and c.3.

Koselleck asserts that the gap between the “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectation” (KOSELLECK, 2004) alters the perception of the relationship between the past, present, and future. It means that different experiences of time manifest in the “linguistic organization of temporal experience” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 4), showing a shift since 1780. Over time, “The acceleration induced by technology in temporal rhythms” (EWING, 2016, p. 420; KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 113-114) increases from a smaller gap between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation, characterizing the past-centered *Historia Magistra Vitae* (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 28), to a larger gap characterizing the historical future-centered experience of modernity, the *Neuzeit* (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 225, p. 263).

Historia Magistra Vitae are, for Koselleck, what we can name nowadays regimes of historicity as they represent perceptions of time – centered on the past and on the future, respectively – that assigns a change in the historical experience of time. In contrast to Hartog regimes of historicity, their characterization, according to the Koselleckian reading-key, derives from temporal structures that frame the characterization of any historical experience of time based on three variables: (a) the space of experience, (b) the horizon of expectation, and (c) the relationship between a and b that takes into account an independent variable, that is, the acceleration due to the technological vector that regulates the temporal distances between past and future. To sum it up, we can say that there is a Koselleckian metaphysics of time based on these variables upon which the regimes of historicity can be rephrased according to a Koselleckian mode.

Even though the demarche of the metaphysics of time and the approach historical experience appears to be convergent (JORDHEIM, 2011, p. 22-23), Koselleck never clearly connected them (OLSEN, 2013, p. 230-231). On one hand, he acknowledges historical time as “proper historical time” (ESCUDIER, 2011, p. 137). On the other hand, he shows that the experience of historical time contains the multifaceted order of historical time, realizing “existential time” (ESCUDIER, 2011, p. 137) as a temporal structure that takes different arrangements and whose varieties are revealed through the semantics of historical time concepts.

The semantics of historical time, through the history of concepts, reveal the mutual implication between the metaphysics of time and the Koselleckian regimes of historicity. The historical experience of pre-modern societies is arranged according to references found outside historical events (*ex-references*), as they are projected on a natural, cosmological, or a theological scale. In contrast, the modern experience of historical time, due to the greater distance between past and future and the acceleration of time, allows historical time to establish its references within historical events themselves (*end-references*). Historically determined structures of time, in which experience and expectation move further apart, reveal

the special case where historical experience itself determines historical time as a variety of historical experiences. Eventually, the overlap between the modern historical experience of time (*Neuzeit*) and the temporal structure of history achieves the “temporalization of history” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 37, p. 245-246), disconnecting from the naturalization of historical time on which the *Historia Magistra Vitae* was based.

Furthermore, the coincidence between the structure of historical time and the modern experience of historical time occasionally provides a heuristic tool for historians and theorists. It allows disciplinary practices to detach from the perspective of our modern historical experience: “The question of temporal structure [...] reveals a means of properly examining the whole domain of historical research, without being confined by the [...] semantic threshold of our experience [since 1780]” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 94).

These Koselleckian metaphysical assumptions regarding the regimes of historicity set apart Koselleck’s and Hartog’s accounts of historical time.

Even though François Hartog (2015, p. 9, p. 17) explicitly starts from Koselleck’s semantics of historical experience, his endeavor does not involve a metaphysics of historical time as such. Koselleck defines historical time as the multi-layered structure that brings together past, present, and future, intertwining synchronic-diachronic sediments in which the non-contemporary becomes contemporary, while Hartog is not interested in the order of historical time. He prefers to only talk about regimes of historicity, instead of speaking, as Koselleck does, about “regimes of temporality,” because the latter deal with historical time itself and have “the disadvantage of referring to ‘exogenous’ time, mathematical or astronomical” (HARTOG, 2015, p. 16). Hartog places historical time and regimes of historicity on an equal footing, dispensing with the complex interactions between temporal structures and historical experiences to emphasize the heuristic function of regimes:

A regime of historicity was never a universally applicable metaphysical entity sent from heaven. It merely expresses a dominant order of time [...] it is ultimately a way of expressing and organizing experiences of time – that is, of articulating the past, present, and future – and investing them with meaning. (HARTOG, 2015, p. 106, our translation).

Historical time becomes evident only in terms of temporal experiences (HARTOG, 2015, p. 38). Its varieties depend solely on which dimension of time – past, future, or present – is dominant concerning the other (HARTOG, 2015, p. 16). Ultimately, the dominance of one temporal dimension over the other determines historical experience “in its three modes of memory (the presence of the past), attention (the presence of the present), and expectation (the presence of the future)” (HARTOG, 2015, p. 16). The three modes of historical experience can be dated according to the crisis that the confrontation between the previous and the subsequent experience of historical time exposes: the old regime of historicity centered on the past with the modern dominant future around 1789, and the latter with presentism, the current prevalent regime of historicity, from 1989 (HARTOG, 2015, p. 98, p. 104).

As for the new metaphysics of historical time, there are critical accounts of Hartog’s regimes of historicity. For Gumbrecht, for example, the “broad present,” which is the “chronotype” of the early 21st century, “dictates the conditions under which human behavior finds its constitutive structures and experiences” (GUMBRECHT, 2014, p. 73). Thus, the broad present as a dated historical experience explores historical time to corrupt and diminish the presence of the past as an authentic historical experience. According to Gumbrecht, there is a specific configuration of the relationship between the present and the past characterized

by the metaphysics of historical presence that can be disoriented by the current regime of historicity, in this case, presentism.

Elias Palti asserts that after 1800, the heterogeneous nature of historical time led to the creation of temporalities that cannot be considered equally modern (PALTÍ, 2018, p. 414). According to Rodrigo Turin and María Inés Mudrovic (MUDROVIC, 2019), the regimes of historicity, due to their transhistorical character, lack a detailed historiographic analysis capable of specifying the current neoliberal regime of historicity (TURIN, 2019), known as presentism. Similarly, according to Fernando Nicolazzi, presentism and regimes of historicity, in general, are historically weak in specifying the multitemporal character of historical time, as temporal experience allows for “violations” that make regimes of historicity plural and dynamic (NICOLAZZI, 2010, p. 255). According to Daniel Inclán and Aurelia Valero (2017), historians must avoid the present-centered regime of historicity to dismantle the standardizing synchronicity of historical time that presentism imposes on historiographic regimes.

Contribution of the Articles in this Special Edition to the Study of Historical Time

Considering the general framework described in the preceding sections, we can introduce the articles featured in this special edition, titled “Times of History”, and highlight the contribution that they bring to the study of historical time.

The article “Between Kant and Gadamer: Classic Metaphysics of Time between Empty Time and Embodied Time,” by Harry Jansen, opens the special edition “Times of History” as it challenges the strict separation between classic metaphysics of historical time and the new metaphysics of historical time based on the distinction between “empty time” and “embodied time.” According to Jansen, the distinction between empty time and embodied time is structured around the conceptions of time put forth by Kant and Gadamer.

The article “On the Metaphysical Role of Historicity,” by Augusto de Carvalho Dias Leite, also revisits the classical metaphysics of historical time, focusing on Heidegger’s concept of historicity to inquire about the temporal foundation of history, whether understood as reality or historiography. The author returns to Schelling to define the contradictory nature of the past, which characterizes historicity with the metaphysical mark of historical presence. The article delves even further into the history of philosophy for a brief visit to Hegel’s philosophy of history, which is considered the root of all subsequent developments of the concept of historicity. At the end, Heidegger reappears to reaffirm the independent nature of philosophical reflection on historicity, which complements the historiographical work of narration.

Walderez Ramalho, in the article “On the Limits of Time: History of the Present, Polychrony, and Performativity,” discusses the boundaries between the present and the past, as the present defines, depending on the distance or proximity to the past, the nature of historical knowledge. Specifically, the boundaries of historical time allow for the qualification of temporal reflection and historiography produced by the so-called “history of the present.” To that effect, the author delves into temporal theories of multiple temporalities as they circumscribe the disciplinary field of the history of the present. Therefore, reflecting on the multitemporal present the historian does not play the chronicler of an immediate and time.

Rosa Belvedresi, in “Reflections on the Relationship Between the Past and the Future in Times of Urgency,” discusses some critical approaches to the Koselleck’s thesis on the modern regime of historicity. The foundation of history as a discipline depended, during the 19th century, on the emergence of a historical experience related to an open future. In the article, two questions are raised. First, the idea of an open future has come into crisis due to the persistence of the past that refuses to become past. Second, it takes whether

the future should involve other species and the planet's fate. This latter question, as we have seen, fits into inquiries that the "historical futures" addresses.

In her article, "The Anthropocene and the Challenge of a Premise: Natural Time and Human Time in Debates on Historical Time," María Emilia Arabarco focuses on the relationship between natural time and human time in order to examine the dichotomy between both. This task starts an interdisciplinary debate involving both geosciences and history. The article aims to understand how historians and theorists, considering their disciplinary practices, perceive the relationship between nature and history. It begins by presenting the common positions of prominent historians and historical theorists of the 20th century who shared the unquestioned assumption of the separation between natural time and historical time. Hence, the article also points out that the contributions of scientists regarding the Anthropocene need to be critically examined in terms of the historical generalizations they make. It is at stake, therefore, the historiographical approach to the interference between two different temporal scales.

The article "The times of the Anthropocene – reflections on limits, intensity and duration", by Alice Freyesleben, is also dedicated to temporal studies that focus on the relationship between nature and history. In this case, however, the author seeks to confront history, on the one hand, and geosciences, on the other, as disciplinary fields that take different positions regarding the definition, conceptualization, and periodization of the Anthropocene. The point is that historians cannot claim for themselves a monopoly on historical thought, as other fields of knowledge, in particular stratigraphy, claims to think historically by itself. Consequently, the article presents and discusses the various hypotheses regarding the historical beginning of the Anthropocene.

In "More Than Human History: Describing the Future as Repeating Update of Artificial Intelligence," Rodrigo Bragio Bonaldo addresses temporal issues related to "historical futures." Unlike other articles in this volume that focus on the future of the planet's environment, Bonaldo explores the question of artificial intelligence and its interactions with humans. This approach involves both metaphysical aspects related to the ontology of the future as a historical dimension and the consequences of this metaphysics of time for the regime of historicity, that is, for the experience of historical time. Regarding the metaphysics of historical time, the machines involved in this relationship become "temporalizing agents" that the historiography and historical theory must deal with to conceptualize a new form of temporality that departs from the acceleration of social processes that, according to Koselleck, characterized the modern regime of historicity. The author unfolds a sophisticated argument that reveals an uncommon level of technical knowledge about algorithm-based artificial intelligence and learning machines.

The article "City Times: Barbarism and Civilization in the Album *Ilustrado of the Comarca De Rio Preto* (1927-1929)," by Henry Marcelo Silva, in contrast to the previous articles, focuses on a historiographical object. The author investigates the process of intense transformation of the urban landscape in the city of São José do Rio Preto in the northwest of the state of São Paulo at the turn of the 19th to the 20th century. Hence, he uses the *Album Ilustrado of the Comarca De Rio Preto* (1927-1929), which promotes this city that, among others in the region, stood out for its modernization and, therefore, abandoned a past of economic backwardness and lawlessness. The methodological treatment of the object is noteworthy due to the technical knowledge about the printing industry of the period. Through the historiographical analysis of images and texts from the *Album Ilustrado*, the author demonstrates how a "space of experience" is transformed into a distant and

mythical past, due to a “horizon of expectation” that turns the city’s present into an open avenue for a promising future.

Finally, the article “Auto da Fé for Borba Gato: Public Historicities and Historiographical Keys,” by Francisco das Chagas Fernandes Santiago Júnior, also addresses historical temporality from historiographical research. It discusses the iconoclastic attack on the public monument dedicated to the Bandeirante Borba Gato in 2021, describing the event, its repercussions, and consequences at the level of public history. This Brazilian national event, similar to outbreaks of iconoclasm in other countries, is seen not only as a reaction that addresses the present racism and colonialism but also as a “temporalizing device” that destabilizes the relationships between the past, present, and future that historians often deal with. From the perspective of current temporal studies, the article observes how both the historical presence and the multiple temporalities intertwine in the act of assaulting the past. It is within this context that the positions taken by historians who reacted to assault on the Brazilian history icon are inspected. The article proposes an important temporal reflection about established concepts of memory and heritage and the politics of time they involve.

The articles in this special issue are representative of the current temporal studies in the theory of history, as they discuss natural time, historical time, regimes of historicity, and historiographical regimes. They also explore the three dimensions of time: present, past, and future.

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