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Varieties of *Temporalization*: Disciplinary Tasks Related to Historical Time

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**Abstract**

This article calls attention to the outstanding conceptual work related to time that the historical research and writing imply. The starting point is an overview of the disciplines dedicated to time studies in the recent theory of history: the metaphysics of natural time, the (classical and the new) metaphysics of historical time, the regimes of historicity, and the historiographical regimes. According to these disciplines, four varieties of temporalization, with which historians have been dealing currently, are categorized and discussed: the chronological-historical, the substantive, the quasi-substantive, and the historically-experienced temporalization (and its narrative representation). This categorial structure, specially the quasi-substantive temporalization, assigns epistemic unity to the so-called new metaphysics of time and allows the classification of time-based concepts which are instrumentalized by historians. In order to demonstrate the consistency of the categories that this article proposes, some concepts concerning Koselleck's theory of time (nature-like patterns of repetition, diachronic-synchronic layers of time, contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous) will be studied as cases that illustrate the way a theorist combines different temporalizations to conceive of a theory of historical time that deals with the treatment of the temporal experience and the writing of history which integrate historians' practice.

Keywords

Philosophy of history. Temporalities. Reinhart Koselleck.

Theory of History and Time Studies: a Diagram

Fernand Braudel (1902-1985) asserted that what decisively distinguishes the practice of history as a discipline is the way historians handle timeframe, provided that "History is a dialectic of the time span" (BRAUDEL, 1982, p. 69), *la dialectique de la durée*. Likewise, Reinhart Koselleck (1923-2006) claims: "history can only exist as a science if it develops a theory of historical times without which history loses itself in the unlimited as a query concerning everything" (KOSELLECK, 2000, p. 302). However, the idea that historiographical practices and the theory of history's disciplinary autonomy rely upon the theory of times (SIMON, 2019a, p. 102) is broadly accepted but barely assumed as a subject matter. In effect, Lynn Hunt warns that "Historians do not generally examine many of their categories of time" (HUNT, 2008, p. 22). Even worse, many historians might understand that the "'theory' or 'philosophy' constitute unnecessary distractions from their 'real work'" (ZAMMITO, 2009, p. 64).

This poor backdrop has been changing since time studies draw lately significant academic attention. As a recent bibliometric study shows, since the 2000s (BEVERNAGE *et al.*, 2019), both historians (LORENZ, 2017, p. 109) and theorists (GORMAN, 2013, p. 156) are increasingly attracted by the revival of the "ontology (of time)" that toned down narrativism (LORENZ, 2011, p. 25-26). However, the increasing attention of historians and theorists cannot transform this theoretical inquiry to the extent at which time is reified as a historical agent, as Ankersmit warned: "in current texts celebrating historical time, the suggestion often is that *time*, not *things* happening

in time, does the real work” (ANKERSMIT, 2021, p. 55). Between the revival of the ontology of time and the harmful entification of time, time studies build an epistemic unity related to different theoretical positions.

Aiming at account for the “plurality of disciplinary viewpoints and contexts” (HELLERMA, 2020a, p. 9) that the investigation of temporality encompasses as a subject matter in the recent theory of history, this article begins by proposing an overview of time studies in the recent theory of history by means of Figure 1:



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

Source: Author’s design.

Figure 1 is a diagram divided by four parallel lines that define the subjects of time studies related to the theory of history: a) natural time; b) historical time; c) experience of historical time; d) historical time as it is integrated by historiographical practices and represented in historical writing. In between lines a, b, c, and d, there are the 1, 2, 3, and 4 areas, which encompass the different subfields of the historical time studies:

1) Metaphysics of natural time (DENG, 2018, p. 1): it is located above line a, and looms ahead as the ultimate, misty boundary whereupon both the historians’ disciplinary practices and the theoretical efforts concerning historical time meet natural time;



- 2) Metaphysics of historical time (KLEINBERG, 2012, p. 1-7): it is located between lines a and b, meeting natural time on the top, and the experiences of historical time at the bottom;
- 3) Regimes of historicity (HARTOG, 2015, p. 106): it is located between lines b and c, and involves modes that the experience of historical time might take;
- 4) Historiographical regimes (HARTOG; LENCLUD, 1993, p. 26-27): it is located below line d, and stands not only for the handling of time by historiographical practices related to time (chronology, timetables, periodization, chronicle) but also for the representation of historical time in historical writing.

This article understands that all the areas assigned in figure 1 develop different varieties of *temporalization* related to the disciplinary tasks of history. As this article's specific goal is to categorize temporalizations related to history as a discipline, we will observe the temporalization that each subfield of the historical time studies (areas 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the diagram) develops according to different theoretical procedures.

It will be seen in detail that the metaphysics of natural time temporalizes by means of natural time and, therefore, seeks plotting history upon a non-human timeframe. Reciprocally, the metaphysics of historical time temporalizes by detaching historical time from natural time. The regimes of historicity temporalize the experience of historical time according to its varieties (past-, present-, or future-centered). The historiographical regimes temporalize the experience historical time by means of the representation of historical time in the writing of history. These varieties of temporalization will be defined and discussed in sections 2, 3, and 4. After that, the article will show by means of some of Koselleck's temporal-based concepts (nature-like patterns of repetition, diachronic-synchronic layers of time, contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous) that a successful theory of historical time nowadays shall involve a combination of these different temporalizations as disciplinary and practical tasks. This will be done in sections 5 and 6.

To begin, it is important to ask: does the categorization of varieties of temporalization bring some theoretical and practical gain to history as a discipline?

G. Deleuze (1925-1995) said that the symptomatology brings an important historical lesson: "symptoms are named, renamed, regrouped in various ways" over time (DELEUZE, 1991, p. 15). For instance, when the symptoms of the disease related to women's womb called 'hysteria' were decomposed and regrouped under the psychosomatic spectrum, the hysteria, a former womb disease, gained a new symptomatology and etiology, which in turn opened the way for psychoanalysis to arise. Similarly, this article intends to detect and map an

innovative disciplinary field, the *new metaphysics of historical time* as it proposes the category of the *quasi-substantive temporalization*, which rearranges concepts of time studies related to the theory of history. At the same time, the conceptual rearrangement that the new metaphysics of historical time provides resets the relationship with the concurrent disciplines: the metaphysics of natural time, the classical metaphysics of historical time, the regimes of historicity, and the historiographical regimes, and their respective temporalizations: the chronological-historical, the substantive, and the historically-experienced temporalization.

To take into consideration the quasi-substantive temporalization and the new metaphysics of historical time, we should understand, in the first place, how the metaphysics of natural time temporalizes history.

Metaphysics of Natural Time: The Chronological-Historical Temporalization

What people ordinarily say about the experience of time, temporal change, and the relationship among past, present, and future are the starting point of the metaphysics of natural time, which usually labels itself as the metaphysics of time only (OAKLANDER, 2014, p. x-xiv; BOCCARDI, 2016, P. 5-6). The general title of the discipline implies no consideration of historical time as a special temporality, so the theorists of natural time understand historical time according to the ordinary linguistic structure that humans use to express the experience of time. Consequently, anyone could verify the truth of a statement about past events if they conveniently place themselves from the point of view of the one who originally said it (DUMMETT, 2004, p. 44), notwithstanding whether the experience is directly felt or not. For instance, any person in the same time zone looking out from the window on a sunny day could have experienced the sunrise yesterday. The same procedure applies to a historical event, for instance, the Battle of Hysiae (417 B.C.) during the Peloponnesian War that Thucydides, who actually fought in the war, described. Basically, anyone could verify the truth of a past event if they could prove the eyewitness' report about the reported event.

Even though the metaphysicians of natural time agree that the linguistic structure stands for the experience of time, they split into two parties regarding the intervening role that consciousness might play in the perception of the dimensional experience of time: a) cosmological time and b) time as the human mind perceives it (MEYER, 2016, p. 143-145; KING, 2000, p. 29-30). The metaphysics of natural time integrates these two positions to conceive the *unification* of the physical time with the human experience of time, that is, the union between mind-dependent, human time and mind-independent, physical time: "There is just one fundamental physical time



which the brain developed..." (GRUBER; BLOCK; MONTEMAYOR, 2022, p. 1). That integration launches an operation that will be categorized, henceforth, as the *chronological-historical temporalization* that the metaphysics of natural time provides about historical time.

The conscious participants think from inside time, so that their temporal perception is mind-dependent. However, they are also able to think outside time, that is, one can exchange the perspectival view of time for a mind-independent view, and vice-versa, provided that "The view through the eyes of the participant includes the view sub specie aeternitatis as the invariant relation among the parts of time" (ISMAEL, 2016, p. 119).¹ In short, individuals can look at themselves from the outside as parts of a cosmological timeline that exceeds any embodied participant.

Eventually, the combination between physical-natural and conscious-human time, which the chronological-historical temporalization implies, is the superimposition between two chronological scales: the one uses a cosmological timeframe of which consciousness does not take part, and the other uses a human timeframe through which consciousness posits itself as an inside observer of their own displacement through a timeline.

Could historical time be conceived of as something more than a composition of chronological scales? This is the question that the metaphysics of historical time asks.

Metaphysics of Historical Time and Substantive Temporalization

While the metaphysics of natural time, as the previous account shows, seeks to bridge physical time and human time in order to propose a chronological-historical temporalization, the metaphysics of historical time admits the mutual and initial entanglement of both. In fact, it recognizes natural time as part of the historical experience. Nevertheless, the metaphysics of historical time emerges as a disciplinary field as it painstakingly strives to set natural and human time apart as a condition to think historically. It starts from the assumption that human time can mold its relationship with natural time to the extent at which nature becomes increasingly secondary to history. Eventually, nature remains as history's ultimate boundary towards which historical time dissipates in the natural time.

For instance, according to Pomian, the order of time can take four timeframes, namely: "chronometry," "chronology," "chronography," and "chronosophy" (POMIAN, 1984, p. ix). These operations gradually put human time away from natural time until human time can be considered thoroughly historical time. The two first timeframes are related to the calendar and chronological

¹In the jargon of the metaphysics of time, this integration corresponds with the conciliation between A-theory and B-theory, which McTaggart, the founder of the metaphysics of time, considered thoroughly incompatible.

time and superimpose human and natural time. Chronography, the third Pomian timeframe, pushes natural time further from human time by introducing an active subject that arranges the events in a chronicle so that the order of natural time merely becomes a temporal marker of the story told, no matter how extended (being the upper limit of the cosmological time) or contracted (being the lower limit of the instantaneous present) the chronological markers may be.

Chronosophy, the fourth timeframe in turn detaches history from natural time even further by placing nature as the temporal threshold from which the historical time arises and, at the same time, for historical time to claim its identity as the non-chronological human time relatively to chronological, physical, natural time. Chronosophies imply that history proceeds with time, but it does not find its characteristic in any chronological scale upon which both natural time and human time could be measured indistinctively. In fact, it sets an *endogenous* temporalization regarding historical events. Thus, the progressive detachment of human time from natural time reaches the highest level, as cultural and social events temporalize human time as historical time. This detachment remains undisputed since human and natural timescales do not mingle.

First of all, the historical time is not natural time, and the former must detach from the latter to be *historical*. From the threshold that separates historical and natural time, the metaphysics of historical time builds its own disciplinary framework. The separation of history from nature can take two basic positions. The first position involves Kant's, Hegel's, Marx's, Nietzsche's, and Heidegger's *classical* philosophy of history, and the second the "*new metaphysics of time*" (KLEINBERG, 2012, p. 1).

The classical metaphysics (philosophy) of historical time assumes a *substantive* temporalization. It is, in general, devoted to the Hegelian inquiry regarding the internal sense of historical time: Should history lead societies to a purposive and progressive direction despite the potential chaos of human actions in the present? Therefore, it "aspire[s] to understand once and for all [d'amblée] the entire course [...] of history, of becoming or of time" (POMIAN, 1984, p. 5) by knowing in advance what the "relationship [rappports] between the present, the past and the future" (POMIAN, 1984, p. vi) essentially means. In order to search for the all-encompassing sense of history, the classical philosophies of history demanded a stronger, totalizing, more than mere chronological meaning, for history to fully withdraw from nature. That is the *substantive temporalization*, which is a kind of temporalization that intends to unveil "the historical significance of history as a whole" (DANTO, 1985, p. 13).

The emergence of the new metaphysics of time is very recent in comparison with the centennial origins of the classical metaphysics of historical time. In fact, by the turn of the first decade of this century, the outline of this new field of time studies was still vague. In 2011, Jordheim



pointed that the “theory of historical times [specially Koselleck’s] at present is both contested and simply overlooked” (JORDHEIM, 2011, p. 21). In contrast, one year after this skeptical evaluation regarding time studies, Kleinberg indicated that a “new metaphysics of time” (KLEINBERG, 2012, p. 1-2) had risen.

The difference between the classical and the new metaphysics of historical time involves a paradigmatic conflict that ruled the historical thinking for decades, which began with the rejection of the substantive temporalization.

The strongest reaction against the substantive temporalization dates from the 1960s when Arthur C. Danto (1924-2013) launched the thesis according to which there must be an analytical philosophy of history dedicated to the “conceptual problems which arise out of the practice of history as well as out of substantive philosophy of history” (DANTO, 1985a, p. xv). Danto refused the substantive philosophy of history due to the speculative risks that not only the philosophers of history but also theorists and professional historians might take, as they seek “to give an account of the *whole* of history” (DANTO, 1985b, p. 167-168). Consequently, they should restrain the theoretical enterprise instead to the temporal references that the historians’ language ordinarily uses to write the “narrative sentences” out of which historical knowledge is effectively made (DANTO, 1985b, p. 178-179).

The contention of the analytical philosophy of history against the substantive temporalization opened the way to the narrativist philosophy of history, from the 1980’ on, and to a new type of temporalization that the new metaphysics of historical time launched from the 2000’s on, as we will see in the next section.

Temporalization in the Context of the Paradigmatic Conflict

The new metaphysics of historical time reconsiders the weight of the substantive characteristic of time for history. Therefore, it has to negotiate with the rejection of the substantive temporalization by the narrativist philosophy of history.

On the one hand, the new metaphysics of time did not forget Hayden White’s lesson according to which historians tell stories about events that are language-dependent, and that the historical writing is shaped by “poetic” cultural patterns of ordering historical narrative or “*emplotment*” (romance, tragedy, comedy, and satire) which are “metahistorical” (WHITE, 1975, p. ix). Decades of immersion in the Whitean narrativism immunized more recent theories of historical time against the speculative risks that the substantive philosophy of history took about conceiving the overall sense of history. It also made historians and theorists cautious about

substantive temporalization as the underlying basis that historical language should conform to. In short, the new metaphysics of time could not dispense with the rejection to the substantive idea of historical time as a mind-independent experience that language represents.

On the other hand, if the new metaphysics of historical time takes part in that long-lasting contention against the substantive philosophies of history, it will not thoroughly reject them. In fact, the new metaphysics of historical time retrieves and renews some of the old substantive temporalizations, such as the representation of time regarding events and experienced history, concrete engagement among past, present, and future, temporal change, and continuity/discontinuity of historical time. According to Simon, the current phase of the theory of history does not exactly show a hard divide between the classical and the new metaphysics of historical time, but a movement along which new theories of historical time launch a “quasi-substantive philosophy of history” (SIMON, 2019b, p. 39).

Accordingly, the new metaphysics of historical time assumes a *quasi-substantive temporalization* by combining the classical issues regarding the historical time and the suspicion that narrativism raised against the substantive philosophies of history. Even though indebted to White’s thesis, narrativism is not *ontologically* interested in historical time, whereas the new metaphysics of history approach is. The new metaphysics of historical time understands historical writing as the representation and interpretation of the historical experience, but it goes further as it contends narrativism’s tendency to reduce “the role played by time as a factor in the process of constituting historical forms” (HAROOTUNIAN, 2013, p. 120), so that time became a mere rhetorical construct – a “narrative’s time” (HAROOTUNIAN, 2013, p. 130).

At last, which ideas the new metaphysics of historical time provide to the historians’ disciplinary tasks that the classical, the narrativist, and the analytical philosophers of history could not? To answer this question, we shall define the parameters that structure the metaphysics of historical time: i. detachment of the historical time from the natural time, ii. relationship among past, present, and future, iii. temporal change.

i. The quasi-substantive temporalization does not deal with the detachment of the historical from natural time. In general, it temporalizes history as detached from natural time in the first place, in so far as historical knowledge responds to nature either by converting time into a human matter (RUSEN, 2013, p. 33) or by humanizing natural-like patterns as reverberations of nature in history (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 29). In fact, the new metaphysics of historical time at the start restrains itself to the disciplinary demands of history as it places it self against “a kind of thinking that overflows that of the knowable [...] limits [within which] historians’ history confines itself” (RICOEUR, 2004, p. 155). At best, it considers natural time as a distant border that runs



inconspicuously beneath the threshold of human time which from time to time might emerge with catastrophic and disruptive consequences that confront individuals and societies with the natural limits of their lives.

ii. and iii. The new theories of historical time consider that the relationship among past, present, and future changed its central issues. Therefore, the quasi-substantive temporalization emphasizes the diversity among those relationships, not aiming at revealing the sense of history as the secret of temporal passage, so that temporal change is a matter of involvement between the past and the present. For instance, historical change regarding the theories of presence is related to the effect that the presentification of the absent past has upon the present, since presence is the “fistula” that transfers the present of the past into the present as it connects two contiguous layers in the same location pushing time forward (RUNIA, 2006, p. 10).

However, the quasi-substantive temporalization would remain only as an abstractive exercise, if the new metaphysics of historical time does not take into account the experience of historical time regarding the *historically-experienced temporalization*.

Culturally and socially experienced historical time fits the historians’ disciplinary needs. The historians describe historical events temporally lived, not concepts of time. In general, the affirmation of an experienced, ordinary historical time coincides with a movement that affirms the autonomy of history as a professional discipline and acknowledges the theory of history as its reflective meta-discipline. In effect, the substantive and speculative character of the classical philosophies of history have been firstly opposed by historians, for instance, by Leopold von Ranke’s (1795-1886) historicism (IGGERS, 2011, p. xxvi-xxvii), as early as the mid-nineteenth century. This reactive movement on the part of professional historians continued during the twentieth century, for instance, by the Annale’s icons Marc Bloch (BLOCH, 1953, p. 3) and Jacques Le Goff (LE GOFF, 1988, p. 24), who rejected the philosophy of history.

The long-lasting contention of historians against the philosophies of history is supported by recognized theorists of history, such as Paul Ricoeur (1913-2005), Reinhart Koselleck (1923-2006), Hans U. Gumbrecht, Frank Ankersmit, and Paul A. Roth, who took part in the narrative turn and, at the same time, maintained historical time as a subject of inquiry. Moreover, the renowned works of those prolific theorists circulate since the two decades of the twentieth-first century and influenced theorists of historical time such as Achim Landwehr, Anton Froeyman, Berber Bevernage, Eelco Runia, Ethan Kleinberg, Hans U. Gumbrecht, Ewa Domanska, Helge Jordheim, Zoltán B. Simon, to cite a few.

The new metaphysics of historical time tunes the demands of the recent theories of historical time to the ontological demands of theorists of history – the quasi-substantive temporalization – and to the historians’ disciplinary tasks related to human time and change in history, that is, the experienced historical time. This effort, according to Hellerma, involves different theories of time that investigate the ontological conditions for possible relations between past, present, and future and “thus seek to establish conceptual ground valid and informative across concrete temporal attitudes and temporal regimes and chronotopes” (HELLERMA, 2020a, p. 19). In short, the quasi-substantive and the historically-experienced temporalizations together give access to the regimes of historicity and historiographical regimes, as will be seen in the next sections by means of the analyses of Koselleck’s theory of time.

The Quasi-Substantive Temporalization and Koselleck’s Multiple Temporalities

Koselleck’s multiple temporalities will be characterized as a theory of time that combines three categories that the previous sections defined: the chronological-historical time, the quasi-substantive, and the historically-experienced temporalization. Firstly, we will show how some Koselleck’s concepts related to natural and historical time (nature-like patterns of repetition, diachronic-synchronic layers of time, contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous) exemplify the reach and range of the proposed categorizations. Secondly, the combination of these categories provides disciplinary tools for historians to deal with the regimes of historicity that analyses the temporal experience and historiographical regimes by means of which experienced historical time is represented (see Figure 1).

Against the backdrop described in the previous sections, without a shadow of a doubt, Koselleck’s theory of historical time played a decisive role in placing “the issue of historical time on the agenda in German and international historiography” (OLSEN, 2013, p. 232), from the 1980’s on, when narrativism put aside ontological questions. To be precise, Koselleck faced the challenge about historical time: “The question of what historical time belongs to those questions which historical science has the most difficulty answering” (RICOEUR, 2004, p. xxi).

Therefore, among the theories of time that share the broad field of the metaphysics of historical time, what would definitively characterize Koselleck’s recognized theory about historical time?

For Kleinberg, the field of the new metaphysics of time acquired a steady basis and could be mapped into three emerging trends: “presence, multiple temporalities, and reconceptualizing



history" (KLEINBERG, 2012, p. 2). In effect, the second trend of the new metaphysics of time is properly named *multiple temporalities* after Koselleck's influence over the field of time studies in the recent theory of history. To be precise, Koselleck's theory of history paves the way for the development of the new metaphysics of historical time as it launches a quasi-substantive philosophy of history in terms of multitemporal relations. It overcomes the anti-speculative prejudice by bringing together history, as knowledge or narrative – therefore, an epistemological approach –, and the structure of the intertwined dimensions of time – therefore, an ontological appeal to historical experience (BOUTON, 2016, p. 173-174). Likewise, according to Escudier, Koselleck's theory of time stands out "both by [the] degree of philosophical formalization and by [its] heuristic empirical scope" (ESCUDIER, 2009, p. 1269). From the ontological point of view, the theory of multiple temporalities, basically, teaches historians and theorists of history to pay attention to the existence of not only "one historical time, but rather [...] many forms of time superimposed one upon the other" (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 2).

According to Ankersmit, "the notion of the layers of time has much in common with the notion of structure that was so popular among French and German historians in the 1970s and the 1980s" (ANKERSMIT, 2021, p. 44). In fact, even though the multilayered arrangement of historical times makes the soil of history restless, it is possible to detect "temporal structures" (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 94) which pulse *regularly* according to a lively temporal factor. In addition, the Koselleckian structure of time is closer to the Braudelian structural *longue durée* than to its structuralist and poststructuralist counterparts, as the *diachronic* structures "unfold not vertically, in the space of synchronic discourse, as for Saussure and Foucault, but horizontally, in diachronic time" (JORDHEIM, 2011, p. 33).

To explain the design of the Koselleckian structure of time as the temporal, multilayered-arranged schemas (HELLERMA, 2020b, p. 195), the parameters related to the quasi-substantive temporalization according to the previous section (i. detachment of the historical time from the natural time, ii. relationship among past, present, and future, iii. temporal change) will show to be developers of the Koselleckian metaphysics of historical time according to the following interrelated instances: i.1. the nature-like patterns of repetition of historical time, i.2. the multilayered, diachronic-synchronic arrangement of the relationship among past, present, and future, and i.3. the rhythm of temporal change in the instance of the "contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous". In short, i.1., i.2., and i.3. together integrate and perform the Koselleckian quasi-substantive temporalization, as will be seen.

Firstly (i.1.), the Koselleckian temporal structures of history ultimately face natural time, even though they are "imbued with a strong, theoretically motivated, and methodologically

implemented anthropocentrism.” (JORDHEIM, 2022, p. 396). In fact, not being insensitive to the role that natural time plays in historical thinking, Koselleck stated that history ought to be considered apart from the natural, clock time, since “historical time remains embedded within natural time without being entirely contained in it” (KOSELLECK, 2000, p. 304). Historical time relatively departs from natural time because interrelations of human events “forces us to adopt social and political determinations of time that, although they are naturally caused, must be defined as specifically historical” (KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 110).

Humans can be considered apart from nature with regard to “historical interrelations” since the latter are not “entirely contained” in natural time. Despite their divorce, even historiography cannot dispense with natural time (KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 106) since “social and political determinations” of history entail some resonances of nature. In effect, the structure of historical time, even though immersed in the human and institutional agency (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 2), instantiates itself by means of nature-like patterns of repetition, such as generational constraints, biological rhythms, cycles of life and death, and others, towards evolutionary, geographical, geological, and astrophysical time, all of them “pregivens of possible histories that escape human control but not human use” (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 29). Hence, the involvement of the Koselleckian temporal structures with natural time is *translated* by categories on the border between nature and history (OLSEN, 2013, p. 227). That is, the chronological-historical temporalization, as defined in the second section of this article, is a variety of temporalization which is adapted by Koselleck as the *inner* reverberation of the repetition that characterizes natural time inside historical time, on the condition that humans are on the top of these “structures of repetition” since only language can discover and recognize natural patterns of repetition (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 162-163).

Secondly (i.2.), Koselleck summarizes in a geological image his lesson about the relationship among past, present, and future, which mingles and merges in a changeable sheaf of “‘layers of time’ [...] that differ in age and depth and that changed and set themselves apart from each other at differing speeds over the course of the so-called history of the earth” (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 3). The layered characteristic of a temporal structure avoids the realignment of both past and present as antecedent and subsequent in a linear timeline since any revolving layer of historical time is interdependent. The multilayered historical time *beats* in two combined rhythms. On the one side, there is the diachronic distance that separates the past from the present. On the other side, past and present are synchronic and contiguous as layered times. In short, the structure of historical time is diachronically and synchronically intertwined according to their dissonant rhythms of temporal change (KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 30).



Thirdly (i.3.), and consequently, the order of historical time regarding the relationship among past, present, and future, locates temporal change in the “contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous” (KOSELLECK, 2002, p. 90), since the layered involvement of the past and the present unsettles any layer of time and makes the passage of time historically perceptible as a restless involvement between past and present both diachronically and synchronically.

The relationship between natural and historical time according to patterns of repetition, the layered diachronic-synchronic relationship among past, present, and future, and the historical change based on the dynamics of the contemporaneous over the noncontemporaneous characterize what Koselleck named temporal structures and summarize the Koselleckian quasi-substantive temporalization, according to the categorial work this article proposes.

Furthermore, the ‘contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous’ allows the historical change to be *felt* in so far as it conveys a sense of experiencing historical time in terms of historical change. Consequently, the experienced historical time provides historians with a non-chronological, immanent procedure regarding the periodization of historical change to differentiate types of historical experience: “The past, then, may be, and often is, distinguished from the present not by reference to chronology (‘the passage of time’), but by reference to significant and substantive changes in behavior and activity” (KING, 2000, p. 45).

In effect, the involvement of the temporal layers in the temporal structures can be differently shaped according to the specific ranges of the experienced history they instantiate. The recursive structures of historical time, even though supporting a law-like, natural character, cannot be measured with a clock due to the mutual interference of multiple layers of time (KOSELLECK, 2000, p. 304). Therefore, those structures of repetition should be detected in the time passage as such, provided that the temporal structure and its shift over time are demonstrated by the unfolding experienced events that actualize and singularize them (OLSEN, 2013, p. 226). Structures of repetition such as cosmological and biological durations along with their expression in language, especially in concepts used to talk about history and historical time, must be detected by historians since they are “durable structures that continue to determine human existence” (ESPOSITO, 2021, p. 97).

All in all, Koselleck’s quasi-substantive temporalization engages the ontological reflection on historical time with the historians’ disciplinary work, that is, it becomes feasible through the immanent discrimination of the periods that different temporal experiences might take over time (ZAMMITO, 2004, p. 126). The quasi-substantive historical temporalization, therefore, besides establishing the metaphysical or ontological image of historical time as a multilayered temporal structure, shows that the latter can be *historiographically* worked out according to the historians’

epistemological task of periodizing and analyzing the varieties of the experienced historical time. In fact, according to Ankersmit (ANKERSMIT, 2021, p. 36), “the ‘inside’ ([historical] ontology) and the ‘outside’ ([historical] epistemology) are interwoven” in Koselleck’s works. Eventually, as Zammito assumes, “Koselleck’s theory of ‘sediments of time’ aims at the enablement of historical practice” (ZAMMITO, 2021, p. 403).

At this point, despite the conceptual tools for the disciplinary practice that the Koselleckian of the multilayered historical time provide, it “ultimately does not describe any concrete experience of history” (HELLERMA, 2020a, p. 17). Should a further step be made for the theory of time to reach the “concrete experience of history”?

Regimes of Historicity and Historiographical Regimes: Combining Temporalizations and Historicizing Historical Experience

According to the diagram of time studies in the recent theory of history (figure 1), the metaphysics of natural and of historical time, the regimes of historicity, and the historiographical regimes are situated in different areas. However, those areas are interrelated, and the representative authors of each area *often* go across the other areas. As a matter of fact, Koselleck’s theory of time irradiates up and downward from the metaphysics of historical time to consider natural time, regimes of historicity (historical experience) and historiographical regimes (representation of historical time), thereby combining different varieties of temporalization. Consequently, it is possible to follow in detail the development of the Koselleckian metaphysics of historical time as it spreads all over the disciplines related to time studies and meets the point of convergence of the historians’ disciplinary tasks. The Koselleckian theory of time allows to understand how historical time arises and leaves natural time, relates historical time to historical experience, and how it represents historical time through historical writing.

However, how are these operations eventually carried out?

On the one hand, for Koselleck, time is a metahistorical category that “is embedded in every experience of history, which implies the basic distinction between present, past, and future” (BOUTON, 2016, p. 180). On the other hand, the experience of historical time is the lived, “existential time” (BOUTON, 2016, p. 180). According to Olsen, it is difficult to separate Koselleck’s theory of time (historical ontology) from the Koselleckian approach to the experience of historical time (historical epistemology) since he has never explicitly connected them (OLSEN, 2013, p. 230-231). These two dimensions are indeed “hard to reconcile” (ANKERSMIT, 2021, p. 40) Despite that restriction, according to Jordheim, some links between both are made



throughout his works (JORDHEIM, 2011, p. 22-23). The interplay between the metahistoricity of the historical ontology and the varieties of historical experience that the historical epistemology approaches is prone to be explained as we assume with Hellerma that the “relationship between the two frameworks [should be interpreted] not necessarily in terms of opposition and exclusion, but rather as complementary” (HELLERMA, 2020b, p. 189).

For the Koselleckian quasi-substantive temporalization to be fully accomplished by the combination between the metaphysics of historical time and the experienced historical time, two concomitant movements shall be discriminated. On the one side, (t.1) the experienced historical time embodies the quasi-substantive temporalization insofar as the temporal structure is periodized according to regimes of historicity. On the other side, (t.2) the experienced historical time retemporalizes the quasi-substantive temporalization by means of the flexibilization of the historical structure of time. The combination of operations t.1 and t.2 performs the *historically-experienced temporalization* and gives access to the temporalization that the historical writing provides regarding the historiographical regimes. Hence, we will proceed by detailing the demarches that t.1 and t.2 imply.

(t.1.1) Firstly, for Koselleck, the structure of historical time can be historically analyzed by the differential relations between “space of experience” and the “horizon of expectation” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 263). The distance between these temporal markers changes the perception of the relationship among past, present, and future so that the quasi-substantive structure of historical time is specified according to different historical experiences. Those temporal markers perform the Koselleckian historically-experienced temporalization as they ascribe an intrinsic periodization to the quasi-substantive temporalization by differentiating kinds of historical experience over time.

(t.1.2) Secondly, the temporal structure specifies different, but not randomly, experienced structures of historical time according to a major guiding vector, “The technology-induced acceleration of temporal rhythms” (EWING, 2016, p. 420), which speeds up over time. Therefore, the multilayeredness that characterizes the structure of historical time contracts and protracts at different paces. If a change takes longer, the present becomes closer to the past; therefore, history is experienced as a repetition of the past. Otherwise, if temporal changes come along frequently, the present circumscribes to an episodic timeline, so that the past recedes as a detached dimension and history is experienced disruptively regarding past experiences. Thus, the Koselleckian quasi-substantive temporalization is measured according to the periodization of different rhythms related to the experienced historical time.

(t.1.3) Thirdly, the periodization of the temporal structure of history becomes *historiographically* intelligible through the semantic shift of the concepts that are used to refer to the historical experience, so that different temporal experiences become immanently perceptible in the “linguistic organization of temporal experience” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 4). A shorter distance between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation characterizes the past-dominant *Historia Magistra Vitae* (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 28), and a wider distance characterizes the future-dominant historical experience of modernity, the *Neuzeit* (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 225-263). The shifts between the latter and the former taking place around 1780 can be observed in the historiographical vocabulary. As the *Historia Magistra Vitae* and the *Neuzeit* involve the experienced historical time, they can be properly named regimes of historicity after Hartog’s categorization, even though Koselleck uses the expression “regimes of temporality” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. xvi) to name the pattern-like, metahistorical, though transitory, structures of repetition in history.

On the one side, the experienced historical time immanently discriminates the quasi-substantive temporalization according to different periods. Reciprocally, on the other side, for the Koselleckian temporalizations of multiple temporalities to be complete, the quasi-substantive historical temporalization should be internally affected or *retemporalized* (t.2). The operation of retemporalizing the quasi-substantive temporalization accomplishes the Koselleckian historically-experienced temporalization by means of two interconnected operations.

(t.2.1) Firstly, the quasi-substantive temporalization and the historical experience superimpose one another due to the structural game they play, describing different ways that the relationship among past, present, and future (regimes of historicity) might take. In fact, the Koselleckian semantics of historical time shows that the relationship between the experience and the structure of historical time *historically* changes, not only in terms of the experienced historical time, but also according to the order of the temporal structure that underlies the regimes of historicity. This changeable characteristic of the Koselleckian structure of historical time is the main character regarding the characterization of the quasi-substantive temporalization.

To be precise, the historical experience of past societies (*Historia Magistra Vitae*) before modernity found temporal references outside the historical events that instantiated those experiences. The historical events were scanned and ordered upon natural scales and theological plots. As the space of experience was closer, according to the *Historia Magister Vitae* regime of historicity, the past was projected into the horizon of expectation as a changeless historical experience whose structure of repetition demands natural or messianic temporal markers. In contrast, the modern experience of historical time, represented by the *Neuzeit*, owing to a wider



distance between past and future, and the acceleration of time imposed by technology, required the experience of historical time to be referenced by the historical events themselves, so that “chronology [started to] be arranged according to history and not history according to chronology” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 106) and “Time becomes a dynamic and historical force in its own right” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 236).

The acceleration of time, therefore, owes its formal conditions to the temporal layers that dislocate the tensions and the relative acceleration between past and present regarding on how fast they slow down or speed up (HELLERMA, 2020b, p. 188-189; 202-203). As the modern temporality speeds the rate of temporal change, history became the driving force of transformation within time, and the “coefficients of motion and acceleration which are no longer derivative of expectations of the Last Judgment [...] remain [instead] adequate to [...] a world increasingly technical in nature.” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 104). Consequently, the space of experience could not find its smooth and expected continuity in the distant horizon of expectation, in as much as historical change “occurs at increasingly shorter intervals of time” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 314), “because the structural preconditions are themselves changing more quickly than had been previously possible” (KOSELLECK, 2018, p. 265).

In this sense, the temporalization of the quasi-substantive has an internal effect upon the structure of time itself. We call this operation *retemporalization* of the temporal structure by historical experience.

(t.2.2) Secondly, and consequently, the historically determined regimes of historicity, as past and future increasingly move away from each other according to the space of experience and horizon of expectation, present the case study whereupon the experienced historical time determines the quasi-substantive temporalization. In fact, in the modern regime of temporality, the experienced historical time allows the structure of temporality to reveal its historically-determinate characteristic. It means that the short-circuit that the structure of historical time undergoes as the modern experience of historical time arose (*Sattelzeit*) provides a heuristic tool for theorists to deal with and scrutinize regimes of historicity and for historians to disentangle the historiographical regimes (narratives) from the perspective of *our* modern historical experience. The current historical point of view can observe itself in its relative and ephemeral position: “the question of temporal structure [...] discloses a means of adequately examining the whole domain of historical investigation, without being limited by the [...] semantic threshold for our [from around 1780] experience” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 94). Thus, the *retemporalization* of the quasi-substantive of Koselleck’s historical ontology assigns an epistemological consequence for the historians’ disciplinary task.

The new metaphysicians of time do not frustrate the relationship between the theories of time and the historiographical regimes of historical writing either. As already stated by Hartog, the regimes of historicity set “the conditions of possibility of historical writing” (HARTOG, 2015, p. 17). Plus, according to Mudrovic “there should be a change in the perception of time that historiography portrays whenever the way a society, the western one in this case, articulates past, present, changes” (MUDROVIC, 2019, p. 23). Koselleck, as early as 1970, in a conference paper stated that not only regimes of historicity but also temporal structures organize both “historical writing” and “history itself” (OLSEN, 2013, p. 219).

For instance, the historical writing of the “Christian experience of history” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 29; 229-230), which belonged to the *Historia Magister Vitae*, according to Koselleck, provided the narrative coherence of “world history” (KOSELLECK, 2004 p. 35; 230-231) by the end of the eighteenth century, when the modern experience of time arouse. The *Historia Magister Vitae*, though past-centered and cosmologically referenced ancient historical experience, allowed the historical writing to redirect the narrative from the exemplary past to engage historians with the anticipation of the future according to the historically temporalized modern historical experience (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 40-41; 234-236).

Final Remarks

Our main goal was to characterize the epistemic unity of the new metaphysics of historical time as it emerges and develops in the recent theory of history. According to this goal, different varieties of temporalization related to history as a discipline were categorized, namely: the chronological-historical, the substantive, the quasi-substantive, and the historically-experienced temporalization. This categorial framework intends to cover many a theory of time (theories of presence, theories of multitemporalities, analytical theories about historical time). The theories of the new metaphysics of historical time should combine these different temporalizations to be competitive in the new disciplinary field.

This main goal forked in two specific goals. Firstly, the effort of categorizing varieties of temporalization aimed at characterizing the emergent field of the new metaphysics of time in order to establish its boundaries and to understand its many conceptual achievements from a standpoint that reveals the epistemic unity of the recent time studies. Secondly, this article reveals the conceptual work about time that runs unnoticed beneath the historian’s disciplinary tasks. To that effect, Koselleck’s concepts related to natural and historical time were taken as *examples* of the new metaphysics of time as it combines different varieties of temporalization.



The temporal structure upon which the Koselleckian theory of time lies temporalizes natural time by including the bold natural repetition as nature-like patterns of repetition in history. According to this operation, the temporalization considers natural time as one of its factors. As seen, the overlapping between the modern historical experience of time (*Neuzeit*) and the temporal structure of history performs this phenomenon insofar as history started to be temporalized by human events in the turning of the eighteenth to the nineteenth century. As a matter of fact, the “temporalization of history” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 37) corresponds with the reverse phenomenon of the “denaturalization of historical temporalities” (KOSELLECK, 2004, p. 104; 113) as natural scales and theological plots were no longer used to measure history.

Nevertheless, technical progress increasingly thrust historical time into natural time to the extent that it started a historicization of natural time, reversing the former modernist tendency of denaturalization of historical time. Nowadays, a counterpoint to the phenomenon that Koselleck called “temporalization of history” arises. In contrast, recent reflections about future scenarios beyond the human era, in special those that Posthumanism and Anthropocene provide, prospect “the definitive re-entry of the natural world into the time of human life” (LOPES; VIANA JUNIOR, 2020, p. 22). Therefore, they require historians to understand and to explain that the intertwined natural and historical time includes the “changes in the entangled human/nonhuman world” (SIMON, 2019c, p. 80). It means that a *renaturalization* of historical time is under way (JORDHEIM, 2022, p. 413-415) provided that from inside history historians have been urged by natural forces to look upon ourselves from the outside.

This phenomenon does not concern historians only, since “more and more non-historians award an unprecedentedly central place to the historicity of the physical and living world” (QUENET, 2017, p. 196). And this is a challenge that the categorial framework launched in this article must face. It remains to be inspected if new quasi-substantive varieties of temporalization arise when human time does not rule alone historiographical work. Provided that historians must deal with time scales that are non-synchronous, or even desynchronous, with historical time, they are challenged “to make visible the alternative temporalizations and historicizations” (JORDHEIM, 2022, p. 395), which might reintegrate the plurality of historical times in the plurality of natural times.

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