

Images of Historical Times. Concepts, Metaphors, and Arts

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List of Abstracts by Panel

Panel 1 - Images of Historical Times

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Images of Futures Past: Reinhart Koselleck's Pictures of Historical Times

Images are often understood as representing or producing a uniform sense of time. The lecture will show how images, through their own inherent temporality, do not depict historical times uniformly, but rather always construct multiple relations between historical times. This will be demonstrated using the image practice and reflection of historian Reinhart Koselleck. He not only dealt with linguistic concepts, but was also very interested in pictures and their specific possibilities for making historical times visible and recognizable. Working with pictures gave him new and deeper insights into the interconnectedness of historical times.

Sina Steglich (Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich) – sina.steglich@lmu.de

Folding Time, Looping Time. Non-(Uni)Linear Metaphors of Thinking Historicity and Doing History

In recent years, the (uni)linear understanding of history in the singular has been increasingly problematised. This is not least because it is inherently modern and Eurocentric and fails to capture the diversity of human experiences of time. The paper aims to take this diagnosis seriously and discuss alternatives, namely non-(uni)linear approaches to historical temporalities. These are usually metaphors, such as folds, joints, and swirls, and can unfold particular plausibility precisely because they correspond more closely to the human experience of time. Non-(uni)linear conceptions of time can offer a more nuanced understanding of historical and contemporary worlds. Rather than adhering to monolithic categories of past, present, and future connected by a single developmental line, these metaphors reflect distinct temporal configurations and allow for thinking and articulating a multiplicity of time references. They are of particular interest to historians because they can capture the everyday practice of historians and their non-linear mode of knowledge production. Non-(uni)linear approaches, therefore, not only add value to our understanding of historicity in general but may also encourage stimulating praxeological reflections on the form of historiography in the 21st century.

Hélia Marçal (University College London) – h.marcal@ucl.ac.uk

Life in the Museum: Redressing the Historical Time of the Ephemeral

How is life as a category reframing the historical in the museum? This paper takes the recent rise in acquisitions of performance art and bio art commissions to investigate the effects life has had in the ways in which museum knowledge infrastructures are reinvested in modes of controlling historical *vis-à-vis* natural time in both their sociopolitical and discursive apparatus. Here, the notion of historical time as coined by Koselleck will be discussed in relation to Mbembe's necropolitics. In the process, the paper will also explore the limitations of

thinking the historical in condensed timescapes, without misrecognising the effects of such gesture. If that is arguably true for all museum objects, this paper will shed light on a site where those contradictions seem to be more palpable, proposing a new reading on museum ontologies and their project of retaining life beyond historical times. Indeed, if life is put forward as the site of symbolic capital in the museum, what then happens when inevitable change or death moves the stakes into its representations? How to reconcile the museum's need to retain the monumental, the always-already past, with time's inalienable "dynamic and historical force in its own right" (Koselleck 1985, 246)?

Espen Ytreberg (University of Oslo) – espen.ytreberg@media.uio.no
The Promises, Realisations and Impossibilities of Simultaneity

In their seminal discussions of simultaneity across a range of media, Stephen Kern proposed seeing it as a rising force at the previous turn of the century that would unite past, present and future. Benedict Anderson saw simultaneity as transverse, crossing empty clock-time to provide a sense of community. These theorists left open whether simultaneity was to be understood mainly as an emerging form in certain mass media and art works, or as a work of synchronisation that pulled actual societies together, counteracting tendencies of fragmentation and anomie in industrialised societies.

This paper argues for attending to three historical dimensions of simultaneity: at the previous turn of the century it represented a promise of temporal unity, a merging of past, present and future, among other in art works by Paul Gauguin, Edvard Munch and Halfdan Egedius. In the mid- and late 20th century, simultaneity came to be seen as an actual unifier of societies through the media of broadcasting, their unidirectionality, reach and affordances of liveness. In the era of social media, simultaneity has come to be seen as an impossibility, doomed to remain incomplete or caught in paradox. Such arguments have come to the fore following the attenuations of broadcast simultaneity, as broadcasting merges with digital media and with the volatile microtemporalities of certain digital media forms.

Chair – Willibald Steinmetz (Bielefeld University) – willibald.steinmetz@uni-bielefeld.de

Panel 2 – Architecture, Monuments, and Political Iconology

Rajesh Heynickx (KU Leuven) – rajesh.heynickx@kuleuven.be

The Siren of the Past: Modernist Architects and Oswald Spengler's Der Untergang des Abendlandes

In *The Decline of the West*, Spengler unconsciously wrote a job description for the pioneers of modern architecture, and in the fifty years that followed its publication, they fulfilled it to the letter.

Martin Pawley, *Theory and Design in the Second Machine Age* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 166

Many modernist architects found guidance - or at least inspiration - in Oswald Spengler's *Der Untergang des Abendlandes* (1918-1922), a notoriously pessimistic world history. Spengler's work helped them navigate a time when the foundations of the old order had been shattered by World War I or economic and political crises. Yet beyond its cultural shock value, *The Decline of the West* also provided architects with a "temporal domain": a conceptual space for debate and reflection on the role of time in architecture. The timelines modernists developed to map and imagine cultural evolution drew inspiration from Spengler's theory on the finite lifespan of civilizations. Spengler's cultural morphology - firmly rooted in art historical theories advanced by Heinrich Wölfflin and Alois Riegl - encouraged architects to (re)formulate their own art-theoretical framework for interpreting the visible traces of time.

This paper not only examines modernist architects' fascination for Spengler's ideas but also presents critical revisions of these ideas by prominent figures such as Mies van der Rohe and Richard Neutra, alongside lesser-known voices like Pal Ligeti. To do so, diverse cultural and intellectual contexts will be explored, including the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) in New York, a Swedish academy, a Mexican scholarly circle, the Bauhaus in Weimar, and an architectural office in Budapest.

By analyzing the reception and implementation of Spengler's ideas, this paper seeks to challenge one-dimensional, popular interpretations of modernist architecture. For instance, Marvin Trachtenberg's characterization of modernist architecture as "chronophobic" or even "chronocidal" calls for reconsideration, as does Sanford Kwinter's association of modernist architecture with the demise of the concept of absolute

time. Examining how modernist architects engaged with Spengler's conceptual framework in their texts, diagrams, and buildings will illuminate how the forgotten "job description" that Martin Pawley referenced was interpreted and fulfilled over time.

Graziela Ares (University of Coimbra) – grazielaares@ces.uc.pt

Resurrecting a Grandiose Nation: Aesthetic Politics and the Reimagining of Hungarian History Through the Monuments of Kossuth Square

Since 2011, the Hungarian political community, represented by the parliamentary supermajority, has reshaped the symbolic and material landscape of Kossuth Square in Budapest, to reflect the notion of a cultural nation enshrined in the 2011 Fundamental Law. Parliamentary Resolution 61/2011 mandated the square's restoration to its pre-1944 appearance - prior to the German occupation - as if the decades between 1944 and 1990 were excluded from national history. The selective reconstruction of the square and its monuments re-inscribes a singular vision of national identity into the site of the "constitutional temple," the Parliament building, by erasing alternative narratives that challenge the ideological foundations of illiberal democracy.

This research examines the square's material and symbolic elements to demonstrate how contemporary memory politics produce a performative historical narrative grounded in selective traumas and an idealized past. In addition to a critical literature review, the analysis draws on photographs, archival records, and excerpts from the Fundamental Law to interrogate the research objects - the monuments - that embody the current political-cultural interpretation of the Hungarian nation.

It argues that the aesthetic restoration of Kossuth Square serves to displace national responsibility for Hungary's 20th-century trajectory by advancing narratives of resilience and victimhood, and by reviving the image of a once-great nation undermined by external forces - most notably the 1920 Treaty of Trianon and subsequent occupations by German and Soviet regimes. These narratives reinforce the construction of otherness within the illiberal democratic project, despite the absence of any genuine contemporary threat or territorial dispute.

Alex-Gabriel Bolasz (Technical University of Cluj Napoca) – Alex.Bolasz@arch.utcluj.ro

Between Stone and Story: Notre-Dame as Temporal Monument and Ideological Figure in Hugo's Narrative

This paper explores the temporal and symbolic transformation of Notre-Dame Cathedral in Victor Hugo's *Notre-Dame de Paris* (1831), where architecture becomes both protagonist and ideological construct. At a moment when the Gothic monument faced neglect and potential demolition, Hugo's narrative acts as a political and cultural intervention: reclaiming the cathedral not through restoration, but through myth-making. The building is not merely backdrop – it is a temporal palimpsest, a metaphor of historical layering, and a living figure entangled in 19th-century anxieties about modernity, memory, and national identity.

Through a literary lens, Notre-Dame is reframed as a dual entity: material and imagined, historical and fictional, monumental and humanized. Hugo's portrayal politicizes the monument by transforming it into an emblem of a fading past and a symbol of resistance to the erasures of time and progress. This symbolic strategy reflects broader chronopolitical tensions in post-revolutionary France, where competing narratives of heritage and urban transformation were at stake.

This paper interrogates how architectural space can be ideologically recharged and temporally stretched through literature, challenging linear historicism. It also considers how monuments function as containers of collective memory, where emotional, symbolic, and political meanings collide. By positioning Notre-Dame as a culturally contested figure – caught between stone and story – the paper offers a case study in how narrative can reclaim built heritage, transforming it into a vehicle of ideological continuity and temporal resistance.

Timothy Scott Johnson (Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi) – Timothy.Johnson@tamucc.edu

"The Time of Martyrs": What the Algiers Joan of Arc Statue Meant in Summer 1962

This paper brings together work on the history of metaphor, monuments, and decolonization. Overlooking one of the main thoroughfares in downtown Algiers during the Algerian War for Independence (1954-1962), an equestrian Joan of Arc statue acted as a key site of contest that ciphered political legitimacy for the European settler population of Algiers and Algerian nationalists. During the war, the statue was a key site of settler activism and violence. Especially as it became clear that France would not retain control over Algeria, settlers saw in the statue vindication of their militancy despite what in their view was a national betrayal. In July 1962, when Algerian independence began, Algerian nationalist activists claimed the statue as their own, 1) dressing

it in a white *haïk* in memory of Hassiba ben Bouali, a woman nationalist militant killed during the Battle of Algiers, 2) hanging an Algerian flag from the statue, 3) finally severing the arm holding a cross-shaped sword from the statue's body. Joan of Arc provided a figurally rich metaphor for the Algerian War, providing a framework for discussing: insurgent warfare, torture, martyrdom, righteous suffering, and women's militancy. The changing image of the Joan statue in Algiers marked a change in two temporal regimes – from colonized to decolonized as well as imperial settler to defeated repatriate.

Chair - Matteo Pasetti (University of Bologna) - matteo.pasetti2@unibo.it

Panel 3 – Concepts of Politics and Power

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Meritocracy and Conceptual History

Conceptual history is typically concerned with origins, and tracing the etymology of 'meritocracy' is not particularly burdensome: it is a 20th century, modern, and post-war concept, originating with the sociologist Michal Young in 1958. Tracing the concept's later trajectory, however, is far from straightforward. Aifric Doherty discusses how the word 'meritocracy' has been used in British, Swedish, and French parliamentary debates from the 1960s until today (i.e., in which contexts did the critical debates on meritocracy take place? Can we analyse *how* and measure *the frequency with which* the concept was invoked in these debates, directly or indirectly?). To do so, a range of different perspectives and methodological tools (critical reading, discourse analysis, word counting) are implemented to inform and address the narrative. In terms of broader theoretical concerns, the presentation is particularly interested in competing notions of temporality in Conceptual History, and the limitations of their commensurability. By examining not merely the denotative, but more importantly the connotative meanings of 'meritocracy', from its introduction to its later manifestations in the 20th century, this presentation begins to highlight a polysemy that corresponds with the transition of a European political imaginary wherein meritocracy, initially conceived as dystopian, became understood as a vehicle of educational equity, broadly considered democratic.

Mattias Warg (Mid Sweden University Östersund) - mattias.warg@miun.se

Were There Realism and Idealism in Sweden 1805-1844?

Since the Cold War, states' foreign policy motives tend to be interpreted either as realistic adaptations to power relations or as idealistic stances in favor of a just order. However, when applied to Sweden's history during the first half of the 19th century, such a framework presents challenges. In the work-in-progress I am discussing here, I question whether the concepts of realism and idealism apply to the politics of that era.

Comparable ideas were expressed using different terms. There were several conceptual pairs, such as ideal and reality, law and necessity, virtue and *raison d'état*, substance and rhetoric, idealism and empiricism, idealism and materialism, as well as liberalism and the Holy Alliance, that are relevant. From the beginning of the 19th century, partly influenced by the philosophy of Friedrich von Schelling, the pair of realism and idealism was also in use. However, its connotations in foreign policy were counterintuitive to a modern observer. Realism was associated with the temporary forms of the physical world. Idealism tended to eternal aspects of the world of ideas. In this way, realism represented struggles for free constitutions in opposition to absolute monarchy, and idealism could be linked to the defense of existing power structures against the transience of human rational constructs. The political debaters of the time thus related questions about ideas versus power relations through a different conceptual framework than ours.

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The Concept of Corruption in Brazil and Argentina: From the Cold War to the Far Right

The concept of corruption holds a central place in the public sphere of Latin America. Its varied uses range from functioning as a rhetorical tool in electoral disputes to shaping narratives of national identity and justifying authoritarian ruptures or regime changes. In the past decade, it has played a significant role in both the democratic crises in Brazil and Argentina and the rise of far-right governments in these countries. The

concept of corruption has figured prominently in discourses calling for the replacement of a 'corrupt elite' with 'authentic representatives of the people' and has been central to arguments favoring the reduction of the state's role—depicted by some actors as inherently more corrupt than market institutions.

This paper proposes a history of the concept of 'corruption' in Brazil and Argentina, attentive to both the parallels and specificities of its political and discursive mobilizations. It seeks to trace the continuities and shifts in the concept from the mid-twentieth century to the present, with particular attention to its more recent appropriation by far-right movements. The central hypothesis is that contemporary uses increasingly associate corruption with the state itself—reflecting a gradual reconfiguration of the concept over time. A secondary argument highlights the reemergence of a link between corruption and subversion, a pairing especially prominent during the Cold War, which has returned in current far-right rhetoric in both countries.

Chair - Jorge Chaloub (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) - jchaloub84@gmail.com

Panel 4 – Difference and Repetition in Conceptual Change

Jan Ifversen (Aarhus University) - jif@cas.au.dk

Conceptual Creativity in Practice

In this paper, I want to discuss how conceptual creativity works in practice. Reinhart Koselleck strictu sensu is not a thinker of creativity. In his approach to conceptual history, historical actors develop new concepts both drawing from existing semantic reservoirs and from the push instigated by modernity to occupy the horizon of expectations. At times, as Koselleck admits, “there may be no appropriate concept to designate a new situation, or else one has to grope in the dark to discover it”. Conceptual renewal seems here caught between chaos and semantic. In line with Cornelius Castoriadis’ thinking I intend to view history as creation. History is stretched between a radical imaginary and the symbolic institution of society. Imagination (imago) is the source of creativity, which develops from interactions partly external to institutions. We know from postcolonial studies that marginalized peoples demonstrate creative skills through moving flexibly in intercultural and intertemporal contexts. We call it creolization, which according to Édouard Glissant leads to explosions “into momentary flashes of creation”. I propose to use this figure of to develop a methodology of conceptual creativity lacking in Begriffsgeschichte. As a case, I will explore how a marginalized group such as migrant care workers navigate between different forms of care knowledge, manage to transform existing understandings of caring and aging and question key concepts in this field. By focusing on situations – the desperate lack of care practices – and the practices of these actors, we can get more insights on conceptual creativity.

Martin Pettersson (University of Helsinki) - martin.pettersson@helsinki.fi

Opening a Scientized Immaterial: Conceptual Shifts in Finnish Political Imagination Since the Second World War

This paper discusses the usefulness and pitfalls of the theoretical notion of scientization as a characteristic of conceptual change in the 20th century (Geulen 2010) when applied as a means to generalize findings of several empirical case studies. Relaying the lessons learned from case studies on the words “empathy” and “quality of life” in Finnish politics, as well as on the global proliferation of the word “values,” the paper sketches the contours of a “scientized immaterial” which has been opened in political imagination during the latter 20th century. The studied words display many tensions which scientization helps grasp. This paper deals with one of these, the tension between calculability and incalculability. The words are, on the one hand, used in parliamentary debate to argue for the importance of considering incalculable subjective or social aspects when making political decisions on various topics. On the other, they draw much of their rhetorical strength from their supposed scientific background, or: the assumption that empathy, quality of life and values can somehow be calculated using personality tests or survey data. The words studied have been moulded in academic and expert discourses before moving into parliamentary debate in the latter part of the 20th century. However, it is not the transfer between “science” and “politics” itself, which is of interest, but rather how the *residues* of scientific ideals that live on in the words help them give shape to a credible “immaterial sphere” in the political imagination.

Adam Kozuchowski (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw) – akozuchowski@yahoo.com
The Polish Nobility: On the Durability of Historical Concepts

The goal of the paper is to investigate the transformations and developments of the Polish concept of nobility from the partitions of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth at the end of the eighteenth century up to the present. Exceptionally numerous (8-10% of the population at the time of the partitions), and politically powerful, the Polish nobility is typically believed to have left a particular mark on the modern Polish culture. Praised as the nucleus of the modern Polish nation, and the bearer of Polish patriotism, it has also been accused of being an obstacle against modernization and democratization, and indeed of any alleged disadvantage of the Polish national culture and 'character,' as imagined by its critics. This discussion started in the Enlightenment, and has continued up till today – more than a hundred years after the nobility lost its legal status. Has the Polish national culture been dominated by the noble patterns and mentality, and if so, is this mentality hierarchical or perhaps anarchical? Is the stratum of intelligentsia a descendant of the nobility, obsessed with guarding its elevated status? My goal is to elucidate on these question (as represented in historiography and the social sciences, journalism and fiction), focusing on the astonishing durability of the essentially premodern concept. What do we actually talk about, when we talk about the nobility and its alleged impact on the Polish society a long time after this stratum has ceased to exist? What makes a historical concept outlive its actual point of reference?

Chair - Olga Sabelfeld (University of Bielefeld) – o.sabelfeld@uni-bielefeld.de

Panel 5 – Democracy in Germanic Europe 1770-1870

'Democracy' is a concept that has figured in conceptual history studies since the days of Koselleck and the [Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe Project](#). Yet research remains patchy. Among other things we lack a comparative overview of its early development as a modern political concept in central and northern Europe – Germanic as opposed to Romance Europe. In this panel we aim to encourage a comparative approach by presenting papers within the Germanic group relating to Switzerland and the various Nordic countries across the period 1770-1870. The aim is to extend the frame of existing analysis to examine developments in German-speaking areas outside Germany, and to press questions of German influence across its Northern boundaries. The commentator will draw on new research on diversity of use and practice within the territory of the German Confederation.

In each case we recognise the influence of certain common experiences, such as the French Revolution and 1848, but seek to explore how this work out when local traditions of discourse try to grapple with these events and with particular local political challenges.

Andreas Würgler (University of Geneva), Irène Herrmann (University of Geneva) –
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Echoes of Democracy: Semantic and Political Shifts in the Swiss Context (16th-19th Centuries)

Switzerland is often regarded as one of the birthplaces of modern democracy. Indeed, the term "democracy" already appears in early modern sources. Yet, the word increasingly carried multiple meanings. At times, it served a purely descriptive function (using the Aristotelian typology) – referring to the political structures of the small central cantons. At other times, it was polemical: either legitimizing popular sovereignty or dismissing certain regimes as archaic relics of the past.

This presentation explores the semantic and political fluctuations of the term "democracy" in the Swiss context, focusing on two key periods: before and after the Revolutionary / Napoleonic era. The upheavals of the late 18th and early 19th centuries introduced a crucial rupture. After this moment, while "democracy" continued to signify a desired political order for some – it could no longer be invoked without also recalling a period marked by violence, instability, and trauma.

From the early modern period through to the late 19th century, the use of "democracy" oscillates between neutral description, nostalgic or antiquated resonance, aspirational rhetoric, and painful historical memory. This paper examines how these fluctuating connotations shaped the concept itself. By tracing these layered meanings, the talk seeks to illuminate how a single word – both ideologically charged and historically contingent – has influenced political thought and practice over four centuries.

Anne Engelst Nørgaard (Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Trondheim) –

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The Concept of Democracy in Denmark and Norway

This paper will examine the concept of democracy in Denmark and Norway. Both countries saw a significant rise in the usage of the concept in the years around 1848, following the European revolutions. Denmark and Norway were united under the same absolute monarch until 1814, when Norway briefly gained independence and a constitution in the whirlwind following the Napoleonic wars before being forced into a union with Sweden, now a constitutional monarchy. Denmark remained absolutist until 1848, when the European revolutions resulted in the fall of absolutism and the installation of a constitutional monarchy. In both countries, democracy remained a primarily academic concept until 1848. While the rise in usage in Denmark thus corresponded with the fall of absolutism and the struggles for a constitution, that was not the case in Norway, as there was little talk of democracy in 1814. This indicates that the general increase in talk of democracy in Europe in 1848 was decisive for the spread of the concept to this part of Scandinavia. The paper will investigate the usage of the concept in the period 1790 to 1855 with emphasis on the years around 1848. I will ask who the users of the concept were, in what contexts it was applied and with which meanings.

Jani Marjanen (University of Helsinki), Jussi Kurunmäki (University of Helsinki) –

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Democracy in Sweden and Finland in 1809-1870: Reception, Theorizing and Self-Ascription

During the Napoleonic wars, Swedish-language political discourse was split into two imperial contexts, the decimated Swedish Empire and the Grand Duchy of Finland within the Russian Empire. Political language in Sweden and Finland remained connected, but due to the different imperial constellations, they developed out of sync also with regard to the changing language of democracy. The paper explores this asynchronicity by studying the word democracy in newspapers from this period. First, we ask how the word democracy was made popular by being used in the foreign news section, particularly with reference to other countries in Europe and the US. Second, we study how the discourse on democracy was theorized, for instance, against the background of the Aristotelian conception of democracy and as a reaction to Alexis de Tocqueville's famous account on democracy. Third, we look into whether and how the Swedes and the Finns started to call their society or country "democratic" and who they saw as "democrats", perhaps ascribing the word to themselves. We argue that reception, theorizing and self-ascription are three moments in the ways in which democracy was made into an irreplaceable word in political discourse. These moments relate to Jörn Leonhard's suggestion that the reception of political language can be studied as modes of imitating translation, adaptive translation and discursive integration.

Commentary - Anne Heyer (University of Leiden) – a.heyer@hum.leidenuniv.nl

I will reflect upon the similarities and differences between the cases discussed with those I am currently working on in relation to the former Hanse towns (Bremen, Hamburg and Lübeck) in Northern Germany, drawing on recent work on other German regions.

Chair - Mark Philp (University of Warwick) – Mark.Philp@warwick.ac.uk

Panel 6 – Writing History: Truth, Testimony, and Fiction

Matilde Cazzola (University of Bologna) – matilde.cazzola2@unibo.it

History, Law, and the Kaleidoscope of Rulers: Testimony, Evidence, Truth

In 1939, Walter Benjamin urged the need to "smash the kaleidoscope" constantly creating "a new order" in the "course of history", as that order had always been moulded by "the concepts of the rulers". Forty years later, Reinhart Koselleck remarked that the accounts of historians were "kaleidoscopic in their variety of standpoints". The kaleidoscope metaphor establishes a link between the discipline of history and the "rage for order": vis-à-vis the ever-growing, messy mass of past events, the historian is supposed to turn the chaos of

res gestae into orderly assemblages of *historiae rerum gestarum* by selecting “true” facts and establishing causality among them. The control over the antithesis between true and false has been a persistent concern of rulers – both in history writing and in courts of law. Scholars including Arnaldo Momigliano, Marc Bloch, and Carlo Ginzburg identified in the priority conferred to “evidence” (unvoluntary proofs) over “testimonies” (intentional accounts) the strategy contrived by European historiography to ascertain true narratives. In most imperial contexts, the colonized – while being conceptualized as people without both history and historiography – were considered unreliable witnesses in legal proceedings. It was to circumvent the risk of deceitful Indigenous testimonies that the British rulers of India developed a different, “objective” type of evidence: forensic sciences. By building on the trope of “history as court” and the historian/judge comparison, this presentation interrogates the interplay between the concerns for judicial truth in colonial dependencies and the making of the categories of the European theory of history, including historical truth.

Davit Mosinyan (Yerevan State University) – davitmosinyan@ysu.am

Fiction and Nonfiction in Testimony: Between Truth and Representation

This paper explores the conceptual tensions between fiction and nonfiction within testimonial discourse, particularly in contexts marked by historical trauma and catastrophe. While testimony is often regarded as a genre rooted in factual recounting, it frequently relies on narrative forms, metaphors, and affective language to articulate what resists direct representation. Drawing on insights from conceptual history, trauma studies, and narrative theory, the paper argues that testimony occupies a liminal space where historical truth is negotiated through both narrative imagination and experiential memory.

By engaging with thinkers such as Paul Ricoeur, Hayden White, I examine how the boundary between fact and fiction in testimony reflects broader issues in the conceptualization of time, memory, and responsibility. The paper situates testimony within the larger framework of the politicization of temporality and the emotional economies of historical discourse, asking: What kinds of truth emerge when history is narrated by those who lived through its most violent ruptures? How do concepts like “witnessing” or “trauma” evolve as vehicles for both historical knowledge and ethical engagement?

In addressing these questions, the paper contributes to ongoing discussions about the conceptual and metaphorical architecture of historical thought, aligning with contemporary efforts to rethink the relationship between language, temporality, and the visual and narrative representation of the past.

Juan A. Fernández-Meza (University of the National Education Commission, Krakow) –

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Standing up to and Standing by: Conceptualisation of Heroism and Bystandership in the History of the Shoah

This presentation’s purpose is to share the progress made in the research project *History and Fiction. Historiographical categories and concepts for the analysis of historical fiction*, financed by the University of the National Education Commission, Krakow. The main objective is to contrast different definitions of the concept of bystanders, as utilised in the history of the Shoah, with an opposite figure to the bystander, which will be provisionally referred to as a hero.

Since the late 1980s, historians have attempted to describe individuals who were not victims or executioners but were a part of the Shoah's historical process. This middle ground encompasses a wide range of individuals, social groups, and institutions, making it an overly unstable repository of actions and attitudes towards the Nazi extermination. In this paper, in addition to a superficial review of the variations in the definition of the concept of bystanders, this will be understood as a way of describing those who, in the face of the catastrophe, did nothing to try to stop it or to help the victims.

Such a definition is constrained by the image of the hero. What this essay will say about the bystanders depends on what it will be described as a hero. In that sense, it will be an auto-limited reflection, although an attempt to contribute to the history of the concept of bystanders. The idea of the hero will be based on the work of three authors: Tzvetan Todorov, Georges Didi-Huberman, and Pierre Bayard.

Sebastiano Mosti (University Jean Moulin Lyon 3) – sebastianomosti@gmail.com

The Reality Principle of Interpretive Practice: Historiography and Post-Modernism

This paper aims to discuss Carlo Ginzburg’s theoretical response to the post-modernist identification of historiography and narrative, reasoning about the possibilities offered by their mutual discard. Within this framework, Ginzburg’s reflection skillfully intersects the fields of philosophy of history and narratology.

Against the tendency of postmodern skepticism to blur the boundary between historiography and narrative (cf. Barthes 1967; Foucault 1970; White 1973), rather Ginzburg proposes to consider the relationship between the two as a contest for the representation of reality. However, according to the Italian thinker, this contest can be conceived as an opportunity for mutual contamination capable of producing functional methodological hybrids: such as the literary genre of the historical novel. Such an approach while relying on the awareness that all phases of research are constructed and not given, at the same time rejects skeptical and post-modern implications, fruitfully insist on the gap between history and literary construction. Contesting the historiographical postmodernism that erases the distinction between fiction and history, Ginzburg emphasizes that a heightened awareness of the narrative dimension does not imply a weakening of the epistemic possibilities of historiography, but rather their intensification. In this regard, we will refer to the practice of “microhistory” as a methodology capable of harmonizing scientific and narrative instances. As *Il formaggio e i vermi* testifies, microhistory does not merely reconstruct historiographically an individual story but also narrates it. However, it will be concluded by noting the possible theoretical weaknesses of Ginzburg's approach.

Chair - **Filippo Triola (University of Bologna)** - filippo.triola2@unibo.it

Panel 7 – Iconography and Art History

Serzenando Alves Vieira Neto (Federal University of São Paulo) - vieira.neto@unifesp.br

From Aestheticization to an Anthropological Conception of the Image: A Case Study on Warburg in the Context of Global Art History and Intellectual History

Aby Warburg's journey to the United States between 1895 and 1896 represents a pivotal episode in his biography and has emerged as a seminal case in the field of art historiography. The most tangible outcome of this experience, his 1923 lecture, offers a detailed retrospective narrative of the expedition and has been widely debated since. However, despite extensive scholarship focusing on the biographical significance of this journey and on the limitations of a historian without formal ethnographic training, this episode remains surprisingly underexplored from the perspective of intellectual history. How did this experience shape the epistemological framework of a scholar who, until then, had been exclusively immersed in Italian art? What makes this transcultural encounter *sui generis*? How did it contribute to overcoming the aestheticizing approach by advancing an anthropological conception of the image, understood as “a biologically necessary product between the practice of art and that of religion”? By examining Warburg as a figure navigating among the late 19th-century German aesthetic tradition, Berlin ethnology, and the ethnological circles of the Smithsonian Institution, this paper aims to demonstrate: (a) how Warburg developed an anthropologically oriented theory of the image within the conceptual framework of empathy, symbolism, and anthropomorphism; and (b) how he pioneered a prototype of global art history in response to the philosophical problem of the origins of art.

Fangfang Tian (Sapienza University of Rome) - fangfang.tian@uniroma1.it

When Painting Meets Law: Tabula Picta in the Context of Accessio

The *accessio* means the union of one thing with another either by natural forces or artificially, so that they form an organic unity. A general rule is, to discuss which part was principal or accessory, then the ownership of the principal part was decisive. The painting case also belongs to the doctrine of *accessio*, but it was a controversial question: does the painted image belong to the painter, or to the owner of the material board?

Roman jurists also have different opinions about this. Gaius mentioned that the tablet is accessory to the painting (Gai.2.78). But Paul insisted that the painting should belongs to the owner of the board, although some writers held the opposite views on account of a painting's value, the fact is the painting cannot exist without the board (D.6.1.23.3). The Justinian accepted the view of Gaius, and he emphasized that the value of painting was an important standard, especially the works by the famous painters (I.2.1.34). Another special situation is, the paintings which are fixed on the walls of a house. Some jurists thoughts that they were the accessory of the house (D.18.1.34pr.), others thoughts that they were part of the house (D.33.7.12.23).

This paper will focus on these controversies, from the Roman period to the Mediaeval, compare the situation of *pictura* with *scriptura* and *intexere* in Roman Law, in order to clarify the history facts behind these phenomena.

Víctor M. Cázares Lira (National Autonomous University of Mexico) – victormanuelcazareslira@gmail.com
Crafting a Visual Narrative of Latin American Law: The Making of Divine Winds of South America (1762-1866)

In my presentation, I will reflect on the conceptual foundations of the project, the challenges of translating complex historical research into visual form, and the aesthetic choices involved, including the use of music, imagery, and metaphor.

In particular, I will discuss how I sought to replace conventional sociological variables with visual and artistic concepts such as Baroque and Modernist traditions to render visible the dynamics of constitutional transformation as both a temporal and spatial rupture. This approach allows us to explore how constitutions operate not only as legal texts but as powerful historical forces that reshaped Latin America's political landscape.

By addressing the theoretical influences, methodological decisions, and the process of adapting academic research into visual media, I hope to contribute to the conference's broader dialogue on how time and history can be imagined through concepts and metaphors. Then, I can just simply share the private link for the audience that may be interested in watching the film.

Timothy McCall (University of British Columbia) – timothy.mccall@ubc.ca
Temporal and Political Aspects in Ludovico Carracci's Calling of St. Matthew

An intense, unearthly gravity pervades Ludovico Carracci's *Calling of St. Matthew*. Monumental figures – Christ, St. Matthew, the tax collectors – populate this leaden world, frozen under a spell of static timelessness. They operate in the durational frame of imperishable monuments, foregoing the liveness of living things even as rippling drapery and shifting skies simulate the movement of empirical reality. This unearthly temporality, I argue, arises from rather more earthly conditions.

Ludovico's painting was originally located in a Bolognese church built in 1604 now called the Santa Maria della Pietà. Its construction and decoration, including a number of superb and influential early baroque altarpieces, came into being through the efforts of guild and civic administrators, that is, officials administering the economic and political life of Bologna. By pulling the church and its artistic patrimony from "the heights of the symbolic to the depths of the real" following Bernhard Siegert's formulation of cultural techniques, this paper approaches these objects as mediating the historical forces remaking the Bolognese civic subject under the conditions of an increasingly administered life. Using the uncanny temporality of Ludovico's *Calling* as a jumping off point, I seek to explore an emerging aesthetics of administration: the forms that subtend these aesthetics and the concepts sedimented in their forms. In terms of methodology, this study applies three historiographic traditions - history of concepts, history of administration, history of art - through the analysis of a single, albeit composite object: the Santa Maria della Pietà in Bologna.

Chair - **Chiara Tartarini (University of Bologna)** – chiara.tartarini@unibo.it

Panel 8 – Time and History in Ancient Philosophy 1/Archaic and Classical Period

Ancient philosophers, both Greek and Roman, approached the concept of history in three distinct ways: through images that sought to capture the – mostly circular – movement of historical time; in the form of paradigmatic, often idealized, examples; and as the reception of the thought of their predecessors. This two-part panel proposal aims to explore some representative cases of these three ancient approaches to investigating the relationship between the present, past, and future of human life.

Marco Guerrieri (University of Naples Federico II) – marco.guerrieri@unina.it
Denying Historical Time: The Case of Parmenides

This paper aims to investigate the so-called negation of historical time in the poem of Parmenides of Elea. By tracing the origins of this interpretative commonplace, the analysis will assess to what extent and in what

terms the Eleatic thinker can be associated with a position of contemporary analytic philosophy of time, namely presentism. The reflections developed in this context will serve a dual purpose: (i) to provide necessary clarifications regarding the widespread view of Parmenides' denial of becoming, and thus of human history, and (ii) to identify a precise point of contact between the concepts of Truth and Opinion – as articulated by the Eleatic in the two parts of his poem – within Parmenides' reflection on time. Finally, the paper will examine the moments of divine revelation in the poem, drawing original considerations on the nature of the work.

Carlotta Capuccino (University of Bologna) – carlotta.capuccino2@unibo.it

A Cultural Revolution: The Historical Dimension of Plato's Allegory of the Cave

At the heart of Platonic thought lies the relationship between two opposing poles: that which is eternal and that which is subject to decay. The proper setting for this relationship is the fabric of history understood as the consequence of the encounter between soul and body, whether in the cosmos, the individual, or the collective. In other words, *historical time is the time of life*. Plato narrates, in mythical form, the story of the cosmos and the human soul as a continuous alternation of vital cycles, punctuated by existential pauses “outside of time” (for the soul) or by a “reversal through time” (for the cosmos), moving back toward a kind of divine prehistory. The passage from the historical dimension to the prehistoric one consists in a retrograde movement or return to origins, entailing a reversal (*periagōgē*) triggered by the catastrophic event of corruption.

What happens in human life is left unspoken by the myth – but Plato does not neglect the topic. In my view, the most famous of all Platonic images – the allegory of the Cave in Book VII of the *Republic* – is devoted precisely to illuminating the nature of the embodied soul. This allegory appears within an anthropological digression that – in typical Platonic fashion – echoes, even lexically, the cosmological digression of the *Statesman*, transforming the movement of conversion (*periagōgē*), embedded in history, into a true cultural revolution. The aim of this paper is to reread the well-known image of the Cave in light of this previously unexplored historical dimension.

Giorgia Lugani (University of Cambridge) – gl573@cam.ac.uk

Plato Without History? Considerations Arising from the Dialogical Structure

While Plato never formulates a systematic philosophy of history, his dialogues often embed philosophical inquiry within carefully chosen historical settings. The *Charmides* offers a striking example. Set just after the Battle of Potidaea (432 BCE), the dialogue opens with Socrates' return from the front, marking not only a personal transition but a liminal moment for Athens, poised on the brink of the Peloponnesian War. This temporal backdrop is far from incidental: it conditions the philosophical content and casts retrospective shadows across the conversation. The theme of *sōphrosynē* is not explored in abstraction, but through the character of Charmides himself: a strikingly beautiful youth. His uncertain grasp of *sōphrosynē* is mirrored by the broader civic instability on the horizon. Alongside him stands Critias, his politically ambitious uncle and future tyrant, whose interventions color the ethical stakes of the dialogue with a sense of historical irony. In this way, Plato binds the inquiry into virtue to a specific temporal and biographical context, dramatizing the formation – and deformation – of civic character. Rather than treating history as background, the dialogue incorporates it as a mode of thought: the remembered past becomes a medium for conceptual formation. The setting deepens the stakes of the inquiry and frames *sōphrosynē* not just as a personal virtue, but as a fragile political necessity. Written in the shadow of Athens' recent traumas, *Charmides* reanimates the past to interrogate the ethical foundations of the polis – and to suggest how philosophy might offer a counter-memory in times of collective disorientation.

Rossana Zanetti (University of Pisa / University of Florence) – rossana.zanetti@phd.unipi.it

Veritas Filia Temporis? Aristotle's Cyclical Conception of History and Progress

This paper examines Aristotle's cyclical conception of history and of scientific and technological progress, a perspective common among ancient thinkers. In this view, humanity repeatedly discovers and then loses technological innovations and philosophical truths, due to periodic natural catastrophes that disrupt and “reset” civilization. By recovering and analyzing this model of historical development, the paper aims to clarify Aristotle's position and to disentangle it from certain “Hegelian” interpretations put forward by strands of 20th-century scholarship.

Chair - Carlotta Capuccino (University of Bologna) – carlotta.capuccino2@unibo.it

Panel 9 – Rhetorical Strategies of Ideological Concepts

Bartłomiej Blesznowski (University of Warsaw) – bartlomiej.blesznowski@uw.edu.pl

The Clash of Two Ideologies: Strategies for Decontesting the Cooperativism in Polish State Socialism 1944-1949

This paper explores the ideological trajectory and eventual dismantling of Polish cooperativism (*kooperatyzm*), focusing particularly on the postwar “battle for trade” (1947–1949) as a critical episode in the formation of state socialism and rejection of autonomous cooperative movement in Poland. Both during the interwar period and in the early years of state socialism, the cooperative ideology was closely linked with Polish Socialist Party official doctrine of the “socialization of the state”. After the II WW, the PPR—while attempting to seize control of the state and the economy—had to subordinate both cooperative institutions and discredit cooperativism as a leftist ideology. The presentation’s core concentrates on the postwar period, when the Polish Workers’ Party (PPR) sought to subsume cooperatives into the centralized socialist economy. Methodologically, the paper draws on the conceptual history framework and Michael Freeden’s morphological analysis of ideologies to trace the process of *decontestation*—whereby ideological meanings are fixed through discursive struggles—and identifies the key role of *asymmetrical counter-concepts* (“neutrality–class”) in structuring these ideological conflicts. Through archival materials, party debates, and theoretical interventions, the paper demonstrates how cooperativism evolved as a “minor ideology”: an associative vision of socialism that challenged both capitalist and state-socialist paradigms. Its eventual suppression during the “battle for trade” was not merely institutional, but symbolic—signaling the closure of a competing socialist imaginary. This presentation therefore contributes to a more plural understanding of socialist thought in twentieth-century Poland, moving beyond the teleology of party-centered Marxism to recover lost ideological alternatives.

Albert Byrski (University of Warsaw) – a.byrski@uw.edu.pl

The Concept of “Old Ways” in Lithuanian Political Discourse from Below (1570-1655)

This paper analyzes the concept of the “Old Ways” (*dawność*) in Lithuanian political discourse “from below” perspective, focusing on the period between 1570 (first Lithuanian dietines instruction) and 1655 (a moment of profound political crisis). The analysis is based on a corpus of instructions and resolutions issued by local assemblies in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. This approach offers a new perspective by incorporating everyday expressions of political thought, broadening our understanding of the linguistic and ideological landscape of the past.

The term “Old Ways” itself poses conceptual challenges that are central to this study. It is inherently difficult to define with precision—amorphous in nature, with fluid boundaries and meanings that vary depending on context, historical period, and authorial intent. Rather than appearing as an isolated concept, it typically functions as a qualifier in broader expressions such as “old freedom”, “old laws”, or “the old Commonwealth”, reflecting its embeddedness in larger discursive frameworks.

Special attention is given to the presence and usage of the “Old Ways” in Polish-language dietines discourse, with particular focus on patterns of co-occurrence and collocation. The paper conducts a semantic analysis of the term, exploring its meanings, rhetorical and political functions, as well as potential shifts in usage over time. Finally, it examines whether the notion of the “Old Ways” served as an expression of Lithuanian particularism within the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, and whether it functioned as a vehicle for articulating political or cultural distinctiveness.

Bingshu Zhao (University of Exeter) – bz262@exeter.ac.uk

Family Analogy in Jean Bodin’s Political Thought: Master, Father and Sovereign

It is often recognised that the 16th-century French thinker Bodin uses the family as an image for the absolute monarchy. Recent constitutionalist interpretation of Bodin’s political theory highlighted Bodin’s distinctions between sovereignty and government, and between the royal, seigneurial, and tyrannical governments. However, scholars tend to present the seigneurial rule as that of the family head, in contrast to the royal rule by a lawful king, but in this way, the positive and constitutional, and even liberating role of the family has undergone unnoticed.

Unlike the broad but loose use of the family as a metaphor for politics in early modern literary and political sources, Bodin develops a systematic analogy between the order of the family and the commonwealth, between the governing manners in various domestic relationships and the types of government, locating the two entities between the microcosmic human body and the macrocosmic universe. Also different from later theorists such as Hobbes and Filmer, who reduce the diverse connotations in family relationships to a singular logic of political power, Bodin carefully distinguishes the master's rule over slaves and the father's rule over freeborn children, as well as their implications for the commonwealth.

This paper demonstrates that Bodin employs the father-child relationship to illustrate the ideal sovereign, who is like an educator and a merciful father in a harmonious bond with his free subjects, keeping distance from private property, protecting freedom, and nurturing noble minds. Meanwhile, Bodin advocates for the gradual enfranchisement and abolition of slavery, and in the state, for more indirect rule through legislation and office, while less through personal will and prerogatives.

Christian Edward Cyril Lynch (Rio de Janeiro State University) – clynch3@hotmail.com

Between Judicialism and Authoritarianism: The Specter of Moderating Power in Brazilian Republican Debate (1890-1945)

This paper investigates the diverse meanings attributed to the concept of “moderating power” within the Brazilian Republic. It argues that, although the political crisis of the 1910s led to a renewed interest in the imperial legacy – disseminated by the historiography of the Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute (IHGB) – each ideological current reinterpreted the concept in different ways to support specific institutional reforms. The authoritarian perspective sought to reinforce presidential powers; the judicialist approach favored enhancing the role of the Supreme Federal Court; while a moderate strand advocated for the reestablishment of a fourth power in the form of a Council of State. The attempt to revive this fourth power during the 1932-1934 constitutional process ultimately failed, due to opposition from judicialists, who supported the supremacy of the Supreme Court, and militarists, who preferred a National Security Council. The Estado Novo dictatorship (1937-1945) thus emerges as the outcome of a failed reconciliation between norm and exception, liberalism and nationalism, plurality and unity, and between fundamental rights and national security.

Chair - Paulo Henrique Paschoeto Cassimiro (Rio de Janeiro State University) – phpcassimiro@gmail.com

Panel 10 – Biological and Medical Metaphors for History: Body, Health, and Disease

Ohad Ben Shimon (Utrecht University) – o.benshimon@uu.nl

The Organized Body

In their 2000 article “*What Shape Are We In: Organization Theory and the Organized Body*”, organizational theorists Karen Dale and Gibson Burrell give a critical historical account of how the dominant conception of the body – in both biological sciences and organizational theory – has been, and largely remains, that of a bounded, structured, and highly functional entity. This conception takes form in post-revolutionary France, where new public institutions such as universities and hospitals arose, drawing on political-social language to frame themselves as organized, rational, and public-serving bodies. Scientific rationalism and medical teaching, particularly that of French physiologist Xavier Bichat, mirror this logic, emphasizing an anatomical hierarchy in which subsystems are ordered and subordinated.

Organizational theory, as Gareth Morgan’s *Images of Organizations* (1986) has shown, adopts similar biological metaphors, defending its theoretical object as a structured, functional whole. Despite developments in late-20th-century organization theory around boundaryless or porous organizations, these remain embedded in a modernist, rationalist framework. The shift from Fordist to post-Fordist economies, alongside cognitive capitalism and digital labor, facilitates the disappearance of the body as a productive force. Yet, the continued organization of the body – biological, institutional, or theoretical – warrants the fixity of its ontological status.

In my paper I argue that both biology and organizational studies draw on a shared conceptual resource: *the body-as-organized*, to underpin distinct yet aligned formations of power, knowledge, and institutional

legitimacy. I further explore how the concept of *organization* can be conceived as a contingent shaping and forming socio-historical material process rather than a fixed ontological entity.

Sandra Elena Guevara Flores (Autonomous University of Barcelona) – sandraelena.guevara@uab.cat
Medical Linguistics: Relaciones Geográficas and Contact Pathocenosis in New Spain (1521-1580)

From the interaction of Aztec and Iberian medicines during the sixteenth century in America, the conversion medicine was conceived in New Spain (actual Mexico). This medicine and the epidemic diseases that affected the population of the Iberian colony have been widely studied, although contemporary historiography has focused little on understanding the pathocenosis or endemic diseases during the contact period (1521-1580) in the viceroyalty.

This presentation focusses on the pathocenosis of New Spain during the contact period, based on the Relaciones Geográficas. These are 16th-century questionnaires developed by the Consejo de Indias in Seville (Spain) with information which provides an insight into the realm of health and disease in the newly formed society from 1521 to 1580. Through graphemic analysis of the information, the interaction of Aztec and Iberian medical systems in New Spain was reconstructed together with conceptions of diseases that shaped the pathocenosis of the contact period. Finally, this study initiates the field of "Medical Linguistics", which analyses the signs and symbols, through social agents, of medical systems in New Spain during the sixteenth century for gaining insight into the episteme of conversion medicine.

João Pedro Gomes Balanco (University of São Paulo) – jpbalanco@usp.br
"Hygiene" in Dispute: A Concept in Circulation Between France and Brazil at the Turn of the 20th Century

This research aims to reconstruct the sanitary debate, particularly concerning mandatory vaccination, regarding the circulation and importation of the Pasteurian paradigm in the city of Rio de Janeiro during the context of the Vaccine Revolt (1904). We adopt a transnational perspective between France and Brazil. The general hypothesis posits that the concept of hygiene was contested in both the French and Brazilian contexts at the turn of the twentieth century, due to the inclusion – or not – of Pasteurian medicine in its meaning. However, in the French context, the concept of hygiene was rhetorically employed with a positive connotation by the conflicting groups. By contrast, in the specific case of Brazil, the concept of "*hygiene*", institutionalized by the Brazilian government, underwent rhetorical instrumentalization. When appropriated by the opposition, it took on the meaning of criticism toward sanitary measures and resistance to the effects of the Pasteurian Revolution in public health policies. The specific hypothesis is that the Brazilian Positivist Apostolate and Church (IAPB), an association opposing mandatory vaccination, developed an anti-Pasteurian medical doctrine as a means to translate positivism into a Brazilian context rooted in national issues. This allowed it to go beyond merely reproducing the orthodox positivism of Auguste Comte. To investigate the rhetorical dispute and the appropriation and expropriation of terms in the debate, a documentary analysis of primary sources from different perspectives on sanitary measures are being conducted, including French and Brazilian newspapers, speeches, books, and pamphlets.

Alice Hymna Ramnehill (University of Gothenburg) – alice.hymna.ramnehill@lir.gu.se
What Was "Anti" in "Antipsychiatry"? Contesting "Psychiatry" and Socialdemocratic Welfare Regimes by Experiential Truths. Utopias of Care and Belonging in Pockettidningen R 1970-1992

This presentation is about how a Swedish antipsychiatry movement expressed welfare-criticism through giving voice to their testimonies of psychiatry and institutional care. In my dissertation, I investigate how the 1970s antipsychiatric critique of psychiatry in Sweden contested a former collectivistic practice of care by a more individualistic and existential practice and epistemology, based in self-experience and identity-based knowledge. My presentation will discuss the long 1970s and more specifically how "identity" and personal experience became relevant for political mobilization.

A Swedish antipsychiatry movement – the R-movement – contested the concept and practice of "psychiatry" by a therapeutic-political practice that intended to give voice to, and emancipate, people with personal experience of living their lives in closed institutions such as psychiatry, criminal care and abuse care. The R-movement organized themselves through activist journalism where persons with experience of coercive care argued that all closed institutions were examples how the Socialdemocratic welfare regime of the 1930-1970s had failed in giving the most vulnerable persons in society individual rights. In a broader sense these testimonies are also a history of the emergence of more person-centered care in the 1990s.

The question what was "anti" in "antipsychiatry"? evokes a contemporary-historical discussion of the politics of giving voice and invites a discussion of the long 1970s as a temporality where "identity" and "experience" became political categories.

Chair - César López Rodríguez (Autonomous University of Madrid) – cesar.lopez.rodriguez1995@gmail.com

Panel 11 – Climate Change

Anna Friberg (Linköping University) – anna.friberg@liu.se

Anticipated Futures of Climate Change and Claims for Prospective Justice: The Function of Critical Anachronisms

The achievement of justice is traditionally understood as a retrospective act; while it demands present action, it does so with reference to past events. However, this kind of temporalization of justice is insufficient when dealing with climate change which is a complex temporal phenomenon involving both deep time and rapid changes as well future consequences of past events. Hence, climate justice does not only involve reparations or restorations of that which has happened but also considerations of what may come, it requires attention to the future.

Using inspiration from conceptual history and temporality studies, this paper examines language uses from contemporary global youth climate activism to discuss how such justice could be conceptualized. The paper argues that prospective justice can be conceptualized through anticipations that function as critical anachronisms which draw on the temporal modalities of past, present, and future.

Prospective justice emphasizes the complex and contingent relationship between the past, present, and future. While the past and present set the conditions for the future, the future holds presence and therefore demands action in the present in relation to both the past and the future. A critical anachronism is thus a temporal phenomenon that can bend and fold back upon itself; an anticipation of an event can motivate action that averts its existence-to-come. Anticipated futures of climate change and injustice can therefore become a new beginning, one of climate justice.

Juhan Hellerma (University of Tartu / Freie Universität Berlin) – juhan.hellerma@ut.ee

Time Without the Agent: Historical Temporality in the Age of AI and Climate Change

Reinhart Koselleck's classical interpretation posits that modern historical time marks a rupture with ancient and Christian models of temporality, grounded in natural cycles of movement and decay. Unlike these closed processes, the modern conception opens up a future of novelty and transformation, unbounded by natural constraints. At the heart of this temporalized vision is the agent – an actor whose transformative powers enable progression from one historical stage to another. Whether framed as progress, development, or emancipation, this model presupposes a future shaped by human agency.

This paper argues that the rise of digital technologies – especially the integration of AI into everyday life – and the intensifying climate crisis challenge this conception of historical time. On one hand, generative technologies increasingly render human input marginal or superfluous, producing a "de-temporalization" in which change bypasses human action, favoring the immediacy of the instant. On the other hand, human-driven climate change positions humanity as a geological force, operating on time scales that overwhelm political and historical imagination. Reversing climate degradation demands projecting agency into planetary futures that vastly exceed established frameworks of action.

Thus, we find ourselves caught between two opposing temporalities: one radically compressed, the other radically extended – both destabilizing the role of the human agent. Drawing on recent work in the theory of history (e.g., Zoltán Boldizsár Simon, Dipesh Chakrabarty) and sociology (e.g., Hartmut Rosa, Rahel Jaeggi), the paper explores metaphors and concepts that account for this dual temporal predicament.

Zoltán Boldizsár Simon (Bielefeld University), Wilko Graf von Hardenberg (Humboldt University of Berlin) – zoltan.simon@uni-bielefeld.de ; wilko.hardenberg@hu-berlin.de

Anthropogenic Change: A Conceptual History

The growing societal and scholarly awareness about anthropogenic climate change and the Anthropocene predicament has brought about a rapid diffusion of concepts that previously have typically been confined to

the realm of scientific knowledge. In turn, with the emergence of the Anthropocene concept, the scientific vocabulary has witnessed a period of conceptual innovation. Within this cluster of new scientific concepts that quickly gain traction in public discussions and human and social scientific debates, the notion of a specifically “anthropogenic” change plays a pivotal role. But where does the concept come from? What exactly does it mean? And how exactly is it being used in contemporary discourses? To answer these questions, our talk will sketch the history of the concept of “anthropogenic” change by spotlighting three phases in its semantic formation. First, we trace how a specifically “anthropogenic” change came to be conceivable in the first half of the twentieth century in ecosystems thinking. Second, we zoom in on how the concept of “anthropogenic” consolidated in scholarly discourses and transformed into a notion of a broader scope by gaining a new dimension in the climate change discourse of the second half of the twentieth century. Third, we explore the current meaning of “anthropogenic” change within the contemporary frame of the Anthropocene predicament, asking how the concept – as used today in scientific knowledge production – relates semantically to its earlier iterations. Finally, we conclude by addressing more closely the relationship between the concepts of the Anthropocene and anthropogenic change.

Chair - Lotte List (Copenhagen Business School) – lotte.list@outlook.com

Panel 12 - Faces of Modernisation

Hjalmar Falk (University of Gothenburg) – hjalmar.falk@gu.se

‘Bringing New Life to the Great Myth of the State’: Rudolf Kjellén and the European ‘New Right’, ca. 1890-1920

This paper aims to contribute to ongoing debates regarding how to conceptualize intellectual continuities within far-right ideologies over the long term by returning to the time before the emergence of Fascism. It explores this issue through the thought of the Swedish political theorist and politician Rudolf Kjellén (1864-1922), in his time well-received even outside Sweden. Kjellén’s legacy remains highly disputed and the extent to which his work prefigured fascist thought has been debated since the 1930s. The coiner of the term *geopolitik*, Kjellén was a proponent of a social-Darwinist conception of the political and of an organic idea of state and nation. Despite being a self-proclaimed conservative and a right-wing member of parliament, he argued against traditionalism and in favor of industrialization, while describing the way forward as being that of a ‘national socialism’ (being the first to use that term in Swedish in the 1910s). Kjellén has been described as a ‘reactionary modernist’ and likened to Germany’s Conservative Revolutionaries of the interwar era. However, these comparisons can be extended and developed, and a wider European frame allows for a better understanding of the issues driving Kjellén and various right-wing European intellectuals of his generation. I will focus on the philosophy of history underlining the project of Kjellén and related intellectuals, and how the drive to modernization and renewal of the right led to the production of a series of *mixta composita* in response to the challenges of democratization and mobilization of progressive forces in turn of the 20th century Europe.

Mattia Steardo (Fondazione Luigi Einaudi) – mattia.steardo@unito.it

Metaphors of Labour in the Early Modern Hispanic World

In this presentation, I aim to outline a conceptual history of “labour” in the early modern Hispanic world. Beginning with legal debates on empire and *occupatio*, I trace the evolving constellation of meanings attached to labour as it shifted from a foundational concept legitimising Spanish colonisation in the Americas to a central tenet of the political economy-inspired imperial reforms of the late eighteenth century. As a specific notion of labour came to underpin a normative economic worldview – one that increasingly served to justify the political rights of individuals and communities across the Spanish Atlantic – this essay proposes that the Hispanic and Anglo-Saxon cultural spheres shared more in common than is often acknowledged in their respective economic thought. Despite a few notable exceptions, existing scholarship has largely perpetuated an Anglocentric narrative of the emergence of capitalist modernity. Reintegrating the Spanish Atlantic into this broader account makes it possible to foreground the pivotal role of European imperial history in shaping the “appropriative” and “industrious” mentalities that supported the development of the modern economy. By analysing the metaphors and conceptual shifts associated with discourses on “labour” from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century, this study aims to illuminate the intellectual proximity between the Anglo-

American and Hispanic worlds. Emphasising the centrality of a normative concept of “labour” – tied to participation in a commercial society – as a foundational element of capitalist modernity also underscores the urgency of developing new conceptualisations for our own time.

Ruslan Khasanov (PhD Student) – rr.khasanov@gmail.com

Contested Narratives: Comparative Study of Historical Thinking in Russian Conservatism (1860-1905)

In this paper, I would like to propose a classification of historical narratives constructed by Russian conservative ideologists in the second half of the XIX – early XX centuries. There were two sharply contradictory views on history of Russia among conservatives – “positivist” and “ideocratic”. The “positivists” explained peculiarities of Russian history by external-political and geographical reasons. Overall, however, they viewed history as a development of universal civilization, in which there is only one “correct” way of development. “Positivists” managed to combine their “Westernist” civilizationism with nationalism. They were also in favor of industrialization and state-controlled capitalism. In its purest form, the «positivist» view manifested itself in texts written by thinkers associated with M.N. Katkov and his periodicals. K.P. Pobedonostsev created another version of the “positivist” approach that was different from Katkov’s view. Pobedonostsev somewhat moved away from the nationalism and historiographical “Westernism”, while continuing to explain the Russian history using geographical factors. The anti-capitalist «ideocrats», on the contrary, prescribed central importance to «spiritual» factors in the history of Russia. K.N. Leontiev and L.A. Tikhomirov made the largest contribution to formation of the «ideocratic» view in Russian conservatism. “Ideocrats” were convinced that each culture goes its own unique way in the process of development. The source base for proposed paper consists of conservative newspapers, journals and political treatises produced in Romanov Monarchy in the 1860s - early 1900s.

Tjaša Konovšek (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana), Kristina Pahor de Maiti Tekavčič (Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana / University of Ljubljana), Vojko Gorjanc (University of Ljubljana / Institute of Contemporary History, Ljubljana) – Tjasa.konovsek@inz.si ; Kristina.PahordeMaiti@ff.uni-lj.si ; Vojko.Gorjanc@inz.si

Mapping Common Sense: A Digital Humanities Lens on Conceptual History

According to Rosenfeld (2011), “common sense” is often assumed to denote a universal human faculty, consistent across time and space. Our contribution, however, proposes the contrary: like any other concept, “common sense” is historically and culturally contingent. By bringing the concept of common sense to the fore, this paper will map out situations that call for its articulation – i.e., situations involving crisis, uncertainty, and dispute – in which “common sense” reflects a need to re-establish consensus around what is perceived as self-evident or uncontroversial within a given socio-political context, thus discerning between the existing and the newly emerging meanings. The paper will loosely focus on the period of Koselleck’s Sattelzeit and is empirically based on an analysis of periodicals from 1771 to 1914, published in the Slovene language in the Slovene territories of the Austrian part of the Habsburg monarchy. This peripheral position enables the analysis to explore how meanings of “common sense” emerged in dialogue with, and in tension with, the centers of political and intellectual power. The sources are available in the sPeriodika corpus (Dobranič et al., 2023; Dobranič et al., 2024), and the analysis will be performed using the CLARIN.SI-hosted noSketch Engine tool, queried for “common sense.” Initial quantitative analyses of occurrences across time periods will be supplemented by close reading, which is essential for tracing the concept’s semantic dimension in this specific historical context.

Chair - Maurilio Pirone (University of Bologna) – maurilio.pirone2@unibo.it

Panel 13 – Biopolitics and Political Theology

Luigi Pellizzoni (Scuola Normale Superiore, Florence) – luigi.pellizzoni@sns.it

Existential Condition or Governmental Dispositive? Time Heterarchy and Secular Messianism

If one asks what is today’s regime of historicity (Hartog 2012) – the temporal infrastructure of sensemaking – a sense of bewilderment prevails. The three basic architectures of time human cultures have imagined –

cyclical, linear and messianic – seem simultaneously at work. Linear time still constitutes the backbone of the social order, from everyday life to research, from corporate to government decisions. However, rather than ‘progress’, the goal seems more and more the reproduction of given conditions. Eloquent is the shift from openness to circularity in techno-economic imaginary. Yet, the ecological crisis and growing turmoil coming from sacrifice zones (Nixon 2011) where time and life dissipate at growing pace convey also a sense of pending catastrophe, as captured in opposed ways by elite longtermism (MacAskill 2022) and social movement post-apocalypticism (Cassegard, Thörn 2018). Moreover, not only is the trajectory of time blurred and fragmented, but also its rhythm. Geological time is claimed to interfere with that of politics (Chakrabarty 2021). And geological time itself is depicted as a mess of spatially and temporally disconnected processes (Lenton, Latour 2018). I will argue, however, that such heterarchy is not an existential condition but a governmental dispositive in Foucault’s sense: not so much something purposefully designed, as emergent in response to ‘an urgent need’ – to defend a disintegrating social (dis)order. What makes especially devious this dispositive is that it shares with its opponents a same, messianic, temporal structure. The challenge, therefore, is to distinguish two types of secular messianism: utopian / dystopian and, borrowing again from Foucault, heterotopian / heterochronic.

Daniel Rocha (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia) – danielrochabh@gmail.com

The Coming of the Kingdom: Ruptures and Continuities in the Concept of the Kingdom of God in the Dominion Theology of C. Peter Wagner

Dominion Theology has become a subject of increasing scholarly debate, particularly in light of the growing political influence and mobilization of Pentecostal and Charismatic groups in countries such as the United States and Brazil. Among these groups – once widely perceived as politically disengaged and characterized by an intense expectation of the imminent end of the world – the concept of “dominion” has emerged as a theological foundation for projects aimed at Christianizing society. Its proponents advocate a top-down transformation through political and cultural engagement to shape a society rooted in the values of the Kingdom of God. This paper examines the theological and political dimensions of Dominion Theology in the thought of C. Peter Wagner, one of its leading architects within Pentecostalism. The analysis focuses on Wagner’s understanding of the Kingdom of God and its eschatological implications, highlighting how he reinterprets traditional expectations by shifting the emphasis from dispensational premillennialism to a dominion-oriented postmillennial perspective. Adopting a conceptual history approach, the study traces continuities and ruptures between Dominion Theology and classical Pentecostal interpretations of the Kingdom of God and eschatology. The findings suggest that Wagner reframes eschatology not as a passive anticipation of the end times, but as an active, long-term process of societal transformation. Dominionist ideas promoted by Wagner and the New Apostolic Reformation have permeated Pentecostal practices, resulting in a hybrid eschatological framework in which believers pursue political and social action while retaining an apocalyptic worldview.

Hossein Naeim Abadi (Freie Universität Berlin) – naeimabadi@zedat.fu-berlin.de

The Asynchronous Spirit: rūḥ, Ontologization, and the Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen: Conceptual Shifts in Islamic Thought

This paper explores the conceptual history of rūḥ (spirit) in early Islamic thought, tracing its evolution from a politically embedded notion to a metaphysical abstraction. Using Begriffsgeschichte, particularly Koselleck’s approach to conceptual change, it examines shifts in the meaning of rūḥ across Qur’ānic discourse, early exegesis, and later philosophical theology influenced by Hellenistic metaphysics.

The central question is: how did rūḥ—initially entangled with power, vulnerability, and vitality—become depoliticized and ontologized? This transformation reflects broader dynamics of epistemic translation, asymmetrical power, and intellectual hegemony in the early Islamic centuries. In the Qur’ān, rūḥ appears in diverse contexts—divine command (al-rūḥ min amr rabbī), prophetic empowerment, existential awakening—suggesting its linkage with agency and divine sovereignty. By the 9th–10th centuries, under Greek philosophical influence, it was reinterpreted as an immaterial soul, detached from political temporality and corporeal life. This semantic shift marks a paradigmatic moment of conceptual transformation.

The paper makes two interventions: first, it re-reads rūḥ not via doctrinal theology or abstract metaphysics, but through conceptual history, foregrounding tensions between synchrony and asynchrony in its semantic layers. Second, it reflects on the fate of political concepts in religious traditions undergoing epistemic migration across cultures and empires. Methodologically, the project combines historical semantics

and philology with postcolonial theory and critical philosophy of religion. By framing rūḥ as a site of contestation in early Islamic intellectual history, it contributes to the Asynchronous Histories Summer School's goal of examining non-European conceptual trajectories shaped by imperial asymmetries and cross-cultural translation.

Endre Sashalmi (University of Pécs) – endresashalmi@gmail.com

Time, History, Eschatology: Three Keys to the Idea of "Russia – the Third Rome"

The idea of "Russia – the Third Rome", appearing in the letter of a monk, Filofei, in response to a contemporary prediction concerning the coming of the end of the world in 1524, had long been regarded as the official ideology of Muscovite rulers. This view has been discarded in recent historiography, and the idea now is seen as an *eschatological interpretation of History* defining Russia's role. *Time*, namely, *Muscovite computation of time* (Muscovy followed the Byzantine tradition, counting time not from Christ's birth but from the Creation, supposedly happening 5508 years before the Incarnation), and the *notion of divine time* ("With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.") played crucial roles in its emergence. Similarly to two 15th-century *historical events*, the *Council of Florence* (1439) and the *fall of Constantinople to the Ottomans* (1453), which were linked in causal relation, and to a *biblical prophecy* (Daniel 2:41-42.) As the end of the world, imminent for Muscovites after 1453 – they expected it to come in the year 7000 (1492 according to Western chronology) due to their computation of time and Christian numerology – did not happen, Christian interpretation of History, based on the sequence of empires, produced the above idea, which later was to flourish among the Old Believers. The impact of the change of computation of time and calendar by Peter I in 1699 will also be discussed in the paper.

Chair - **Sandro Mezzadra (University of Bologna)** – sandro.mezzadra@unibo.it

Panel 14 – Time and History in Ancient Philosophy 2/Hellenistic Period

Ancient philosophers, both Greek and Roman, approached the concept of history in three distinct ways: through images that sought to capture the – mostly circular – movement of historical time; in the form of paradigmatic, often idealized, examples; and as the reception of the thought of their predecessors. This two-part panel proposal aims to explore some representative cases of these three ancient approaches to investigating the relationship between the present, past, and future of human life.

Leonardo Mazzanti (Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich) – leonardomazzanti02@gmail.com

Providence and the Theology of Time: Chrysippus' Vision of Cosmic History

This paper interprets the only explicit fragment in which Chrysippus affirms the Stoic doctrine of *palingenesis*, arguing that it must be understood within the theological and dialectical framework of his treatise *Peri Pronoias*. Through a close analysis of the passage, I give further support to the standard view that Chrysippus defends the most radical version of eternal recurrence: the exact repetition of everything, down to the smallest accidental detail. I propose that this extreme position responds to contemporary critiques of providence, and must therefore be read in its polemical context. For Chrysippus, any deviation, however slight, in the renewed cosmos would undermine the coherence and completeness of the divine plan. Since fate and providence are one and the same, strict recurrence is required to preserve their universal reach. In Chrysippus' view, not only is everything repeated, but everything is good, meaningful, and oriented toward human benefit – even the existence of fleas or mice. The necessity of exact recurrence thus serves both a theological and ethical function: it ensures the goodness, intelligibility, and providential unity of the cosmos. In a system where theology crowns physics, *palingenesis* is not merely a cosmological thesis – it becomes a cornerstone of Stoic theology, and a consequence of divine providence itself.

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The Elusive 'Present': Rethinking the Present Time and the Present Tense in Ancient Greek Grammatical Theory

Ancient grammarians place ἐνεστώς, the present tense, at the head of every verbal paradigm. This paper focuses on a grammatical scholion (*Sch. In Dion Thrax* 249.1–12), which insists that a genuine present

does not exist, in agreement with certain unnamed philosophers. Because a verb denotes action or passion, it must relate to time; but, the scholion observes, every action is either already accomplished or still to come. Crucially, the text equates time itself with motion. Time is generated by the revolving heavens – and since the cosmos never ceases to move, no moment can come to rest. In an ever-turning universe, a self-contained “now” never crystallizes.

Why, then, do grammarians keep it? The same scholion explains that, for pedagogical order, the discipline invents “a razor-thin instant” and calls it ἐνεστώς, just as it chooses the nominative singular as the anchor of noun declension. The “present” is thus a fictional methodological placeholder – a point from which the full set of inflections can be derived – rather than a temporal slice found in experience or in the real world. Its value is interpretative and context-dependent: what defines ἐνεστώς is the way it views an action – as unbounded, unfolding, or habitual – not the clock that it supposedly measures.

This position stands diametrically opposed to presentism: far from claiming that only the present is real, the scholion assumes that the present can never be isolated outside the grammarian’s diagram. Reading the scholia alongside other grammatical testimonia and recent aspect-oriented scholarship, the article shows that the explicit three-time taxonomy masks an implicit semantics centered on imperfective viewpoint. Recognizing ἐνεστώς as a didactic fiction clarifies its use in historical narrative, gnomic truths, and open-ended imperatives, and cautions against projecting modern tense categories uncritically onto ancient descriptive frameworks.

Valerio Ricciardi (PhD, University of Durham) – valerio.ricciardi@studio.unibo.it
Historical Examples and Imitation in Cicero’s Practical Philosophy

My presentation will focus on the role of imitation and historical examples in Cicero’s practical philosophy. Politically, Cicero’s constitutional thought is informed by Roman history and his ideal constitution is presented as a restoration and imitation of the Roman constitution that was in force in the middle of the fourth century. Similarly, the statesman is expected to act as a role model (*exemplum*) that his fellow citizens can imitate. Ethically, individuals are recommended to select a suitable model to imitate – including outstanding statesmen of the past (e.g. Scipio, Laelius, Crassus etc.) – as a part of their moral growth. By a cross-examination of Cicero’s *rhētorica*, I will advance the hypothesis that the idea of promoting virtue by imitation can be explained as an application of pedagogical and stylistic teachings widely featured in the rhetorical tradition that originated from Isocrates, who emphasized the role of historical examples in oratory and moral education, to the practical sphere.

Teresa Torcello (University of Bologna) – teresa.torcello2@unibo.it
Translating Plato in the Late Roman Republic: Historical Distance and Philosophical Layers

Understanding how ancient thinkers navigated the historical distance between themselves and their philosophical predecessors sheds light on the ways they constructed and reimagined images of past times and their intellectual legacies. This paper examines this dynamic through the lens of Latin translations of Plato, which reveal a complex interplay between temporal distance (the historical gap between Plato and his Roman readers) and cross-linguistic transition (from Greek into Latin). The study will focus on a specific passage from the concluding section of the *Phaedrus*, in which Socrates delivers his appraisal of the young Isocrates (Pl. *Phaedr.* 278e–279b). This passage is quoted by Cicero in the prologue to the *Orator* (*orat.* 41), where it is recontextualized and employed for purposes that diverge markedly from Plato’s original intent. The paper concludes by considering how the historical distance between source and target text shaped the translation of certain philosophical terms – terms that Cicero renders in light of the meanings they had acquired through Stoic reinterpretation. In doing so, the analysis sheds light on the layered reception of Platonic thought in late Republican Rome and on the philosophical transformations that translation itself can enact across time.

Chair - Carlotta Capuccino (University of Bologna) – carlotta.capuccino2@unibo.it

Panel 15 – Dichotomies of the Cardinal Points. West/East, North/South

Maurilio Pirone (University of Bologna) – maurilio.pirone2@unibo.it

West of What / What West? The Evolution of Spatial Dichotomies in Globalization

Although some perspectives on globalization emphasize the role of connectivity and flows in unifying the global market, this does not necessarily result in a homogeneous geography. Over time, several conceptual dichotomies have been employed to address not only spatial coordinates but also imbalances of power, cultural differences, and political alliances.

While the distinction between the (global) North and South was widely adopted at the beginning of the new century, the polarization between East and West has recently gained predominance. Far from being a novel development, this dichotomy has a long-standing history within European culture. In my presentation, I will investigate why these concepts have been reactivated and what their specific characteristics are in the current conjuncture.

In the first part of my presentation, I will analyze some historical patterns of East/West and North/South polarization. Subsequently, I will offer insights into the contemporary construction of narratives about the West.

I will argue that the resurgence of these dichotomies is closely linked to recent geopolitical tensions and the emergence of a global war regime. In this context, I contend that such dichotomies function less as descriptive tools and more as forms of discursive power that can be wielded for domination, but which can also be subverted and reappropriated as pathways to liberation.

Monika Orechova (Vilnius University) – monika.orechova@fsf.vu.lt

The Conceptual Development of Higher Education Internationalisation in Lithuania and Estonia from 1990 to 2020

The proposed paper presents the results of the research on the development of the concept of higher education internationalisation in Eastern Europe (Lithuania and Estonia) from 1990 to 2020. By comparing the semantic fields of the concept of internationalisation in different periods, we show which concepts constitute the semantic field of internationalisation and how it changes. The results of the study show that the concept of internationalisation entered the discourse of the region at a time when Eastern Europe was conceptually re-incorporated in the common European discourse. During this period, the pursuit of quality and efficiency also began to emerge in the discourse on higher education. Higher education internationalisation is, thus, primarily conceptualized as part of the quality discourse. This later leads to a situation where internationalisation is operationalized as a measure of quality and a means to achieve it, while quality in turn presupposes internationalisation. Such positive interpretation of internationalisation echoes the positive interpretation of the normalized West, especially when “international” in the discourse of Eastern European higher education almost exclusively means “Western” or “European”. Although the current conceptualization of internationalisation in the region is less Western-oriented, its historical development shows that internationalisation in Eastern Europe is not just a higher education trend. The concept also encompasses the legacy of the 1990s, which links it to internal aspirations and external expectations that, after the transition period, the demi-orientalized Eastern Europe will become properly European, i.e., similar to Western Europe.

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Human Perfectibility Versus the Universalisation of Europe: Garlieb Merkel's Call for Freedom During the Napoleonic Wars

Amidst the Napoleonic Wars, Garlieb Merkel – a journalist from the Baltic provinces of the Russian Empire who planned to reside permanently in Berlin – published a treatise *Is the Continuous Progress of Mankind a Delusion?* (*Ist das stete Fortschreiten der Menschheit ein Wahn?* 1810). In the treatise, he defended the idea of the continuous advancement of humankind which relied on human perfectibility. Without explicitly naming Napoleon, Merkel's treatise focused on highlighting the devastating impact of universal monarchy on the future of Europe. He believed that universal monarchy would lead to the universalisation of Europe which would inevitably result in the decay of European culture. Merkel argued that the Europe's strength lay in the interrelatedness of its diverse cultures, as the proximity of different peoples demanded close communication and, thus, hastened progress. His attempts to defend Europe against universalisation led him to support national consolidation.

This paper examines Merkel's vision for Europe, his quest for a positive outlook during wartime, and his efforts to foster unity and patriotism in two distinct contexts: among the German peoples and in the multinational Russian Empire. It discusses how Merkel's "semi-peripheral" perspective on Europe influenced his understanding of the European culture. Particular attention is given to how Merkel's opinion of the freedom of press changed during his campaigns to foster national consolidation.

Chair - Giorgio Grappi (University of Bologna) - giorgio.grappi@unibo.it

Panel 16 – Metaphors of Ruin and Crisis

César López Rodríguez (Autonomous University of Madrid) - cesar.lopez.rodriguez1995@gmail.com

In the Ruins of Empire: Wasteland Politics

Among the most iconic literary symbols of the 20th century and its catastrophes, the metaphor (the concept, ultimately) of the desert stands out—forebodingly introduced by F. Nietzsche in the final moments of the preceding century: “*The desert grows... woe to him who harbors deserts!*” (*Die Wüste wächst: weh dem, der Wüsten birgt!*). T.S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* (1922) eminently and exemplarily incorporates and develops this metaphorical constellation to abyssal extremes. The text has been regarded as “the oracular testimony of the 20th century” (W.S. Poole), a kind of “prophecy of devastation” filled with intense and persistent “macabre imagery” (E. Terblanche). For some, the poem constitutes the most terrifying testimony of a terrifying century (R. Bush). For others, it rather represents “the emblem of the collapse of contemporary civilization” (V. Patea). Bridging literary studies with political history, this paper will explore the politics of the poem and its effectual history, considering its emergence during the collapse of empires in the turbulent interwar period. Drawing primarily on the poem, the aim is thus to probe the conceptual history of the desert as metaphor within the realms of contemporary literature and philosophy.

Pablo Sánchez León (University of the Basque Country) - psleon@fcs.unl.pt

Imperial Debris: On the Semantics of “Ruin” in Early Modern Hispanic Culture

It is well known that the Spanish Habsburg monarchy experienced a process of imperial rise and decline, but data about this issue is better known than the experience as it was collectively lived and culturally framed. The way in which the intellectuals and ideologues of the Catholic Monarchy dealt with the sensation and projection of imperial decline distinguished between decadence and ruin as two different phenomena. Taking advantage of the literature of recent years on “ruination,” this paper offers the results of a lexicographic study on the uses of the imagination and the meanings of the field of ruin (*ruina*, *arruinar*, etc.) through the seventeenth and eighteenth, seeking to make sense of the expectation, in an early modern imperial community, of total decomposition, in both a biological, anthropological, demographic, and civilizational sense. This research is part of a broader project currently in its beginnings on conceptions and experiences of time in imperial cultures between the early modern and contemporary ages.

Andrea Ampollini (University of Urbino Carlo Bo) - ampo.ia@icloud.com

The Fall of Rome as a Paradigm of Crisis: Italian Intellectuals in the Aftermath of the Great War

The fall of the Roman Empire has long functioned as a powerful metaphor within Western historical and philosophical thought. As Santo Mazzarino observed, “the problem of the death of Rome was raised before Rome died,” and subsequently became a *Leitmotiv* invoked in times of crisis and uncertainty (Mazzarino, 2008: 27; cf. Demandt, 2013). Following the First World War, this image gained extraordinary prominence, permeating the works of leading intellectuals such as Oswald Spengler, Michajl Rostovtzeff, José Ortega y Gasset, and Arnold J. Toynbee – haunted by the specter of civilizational collapse and united by the conviction, to use Pierre Chaunu's words, that “*La décadence, c'est Rome*” (1981: 165). While recent scholarship has highlighted the role of Roman decline in shaping interwar discourses on the *finis Europae* (Demandt, 1997; Marcone, 2005; Pellizzari, 2014), little attention has been paid to the specific Italian reception. This paper aims to address that gap by exploring how key Italian intellectuals – such as Guglielmo Ferrero (1918; 1926), Francesco Saverio Nitti (1921; 1962), Adriano Tilgher (1921; 1923a; 1923b), and Julius Evola (1934) – engaged with the trope of Rome's fall in the aftermath of the Great War. Drawing on Reinhart Koselleck's

Begriffsgeschichte and Hans Blumenberg's metaphorology, the paper will devote particular attention to four dimensions: the relationship between the *Menetekel* of Roman decline and interwar philosophies of history; the use of symbolic figures such as the 'barbarian' and 'Caesar'; the semantic shift in the concepts of crisis and revolution, and their metaphorical substratum; the entanglements between Italian and broader European perspectives.

Chair - Gennaro Imbriano (University of Bologna) – gennaro.imbriano@unibo.it

Panel 17 – Political Iconology

Brigitta Schvéd (Ludovika University of Public Service, Budapest / University of Pécs) –
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Visualising Power: The Political Iconography of the Balance of Power in Early Eighteenth-Century English Political Media

From the seventeenth century onwards, an increasingly vibrant political discourse on the idea of political balance began to take shape across Europe. Rooted in both continental and English political thought and practice, this discourse gained particular significance in the eighteenth century with the emergence of the concept of the balance of power, which became central to European – especially English (from 1707 onwards, British) – diplomacy, particularly after the Peace of Westphalia (1648) and the development of the modern state system. The doctrine of political balance aimed to prevent the rise of unchallengeable supremacy by any one state or coalition, thereby preserving equilibrium in the international order.

In my paper, I intend to investigate how this concept was politicised and visualised in English political media during the decades surrounding the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–1714) and the Treaty of Utrecht (1713–1714). I specifically focus on contemporary English media outputs – particularly visual materials such as graphic satire and emblematic imagery – that were often closely connected to parliamentary rhetoric and public debate. My analysis combines political iconography and visual rhetorical analysis with a conceptual investigation of temporality. I shall examine how visual metaphors of political balance not only expressed partisan positions, but also engaged with historical time – reflecting on past conflicts, evoking precedents, and framing both foreign and domestic policy within temporal narratives of continuity or rupture. Drawing on methods from conceptual history and political iconology, I argue that visual culture actively contributed to the conceptualisation and public circulation of the balance of power in early eighteenth-century England.

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Saturnophobia as Temporal Metaphor: Warburg's Nachleben Between Reformation and Revolution

Aby Warburg's essay on astrology in the "Age of Luther" is a cornerstone of political iconology, analyzing how texts and images of Saturnophobia shaped Reformation debates. Warburg employs his seminal concept of *Nachleben* – the persistent, often disruptive and anachronistic survival of ancient motifs – to reveal how astrological debates simultaneously reactivated classical expressive forms and functioned as what he termed a "scientific investigation into the servitude of superstitious modern man." Engaging with this conference's focus on temporal metaphors, we propose revisiting this essay to unfold Saturnophobia's historical significance within Warburg's own "Age" (1918), mapping its ties to Europe's postwar social history and bourgeois anxieties about revolution. Our methodological framework combines three complementary approaches. First, Warburg's political iconology: Dürer's and Lichtenberger's engravings as contested arenas of ideological struggle. His intellectual biography: linking his writing to war trauma and his 1918 mental collapse. Finally, a Marxist historiography counterpoint (via Engels and Bloch readings) that reframes Warburg's Saturnophobia as a missed encounter with revolutionary temporality in the Peasants' War, 1524, and interwar Germany, 1918–1930. Thus, we not only challenge traditional interpretations of the essay as a "history of reason" but also rethink contemporary crises (e.g., the Anthropocene) through Saturnophobia as a temporal metaphor – alternately a fatalistic naturalization or a call for radical social transformation.

Miranda Bonfil (Freie Universität Berlin) – m.martinez.bonfil@fu-berlin.de
Visualizing the End: Apocalyptic Iconography in a Colonial Setting

To establish a system of colonial domination in the American territories, conquering space alone was not enough—time itself had to be reshaped. Given the central role of the promise of eternal salvation following the End of Time and the Last Judgment, eschatology became a key element in early evangelization efforts in 16th-century New Spain. However, due to linguistic limitations, the transmission of the temporal structure of the Christian narrative depended heavily on pictorial materials. Through carefully crafted images in churches and convents, Indigenous audiences were introduced to the concept of the End of the World as their own world was vanishing. Building on the idea that the eschatological temporal structure forms part of a broader theological-political agenda, this study compares two different strategies for introducing this temporal framework in a New World setting. Focusing on two mural cycles—the sotocoro of the Franciscan convent in Tecamachalco, Puebla, and the open chapel of the Augustinian convent in Actopan, Hidalgo—this analysis highlights how each monastic order emphasized different aspects of the events related to the End of Time to engage their audiences. Both, however, signal a rearticulation of the apocalyptic legacy and the European iconographic tradition in support of colonial pedagogy and emotional governance. By centering on visual sources anchored in the theological concept of the End of Time, this exploration offers a way to approach pre-modern contexts in which political conflict was inseparable from religious discourse and visual culture prevailed over written forms.

Chair - Matteo Pasetti (University of Bologna) – matteo.pasetti2@unibo.it

Panel 18 – Semantics and Pragmatics of Political Concepts

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Extractivism in Latin America: A Conceptual History

Since colonial times, Latin America has been a source of natural resources for colonial and industrialized powers. Starting with precious metals, "colonial goods" (coffee, sugar, chocolate, and tobacco), and industrial metals during the XV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, and XIX centuries, to oil, lithium and many other goods in the XX and XXI centuries, these products are an essential part of the region's economy and culture. Despite this long history, the concept of extractivism is relatively recent and can be related in Latin America to the development theory of the 1960s and 1970s. During this time, extractivism became a negative concept, as most economists thought industrialization was the way out of the region's underdevelopment.

When globalization started at the end of the XX century, the negative view of extractivism had to be changed, so many countries saw it as a legitimate way to gain more resources for wealth distribution. Furthermore, the concept became common in academia at the beginning of the 21st century, but it remains with a negative connotation.

Thus, this paper seeks to analyze the history of the extractivism concept in Latin America, starting from the development theories of the 1960s to its socialization in academia at the beginning of the 21st century. To achieve this goal, a selection of authors from the development theories and the XXI century will be analyzed to find how the concept has changed in the last 60 years. It is important to mention that this research arose from my participation in the CONCEPTA Iberoamerica Summer School in Conceptual History last year.

Antero Holmila (University of Jyväskylä) – antero.holmila@jyu.fi
Concepts in the Cold: Finlandization, Détente, and the Emotional Grammar of the Cold War

I will explore how the Cold War was not just a geopolitical condition but a semantic regime – a world ordered through competing visions of political futures, shaped by spatial and emotional metaphors. At the center of my inquiry are the concepts of *Détente* and *Finlandization* – terms that once framed the 1970s as cautious optimism, a moment when world turned from monochrome to technicolour, but became retroactively laden with irony, critique, and ambivalence.

Since the late 1960s, Finlandization became embedded in the emotional and rhetorical grammar of Cold War discourse – particularly in the West, where it functioned as both a cautionary tale and a spatialized fear

of Soviet influence. By tracing its semantic shifts in political discourse, journalism, and academic debates in Finland and beyond, my paper shows how Finlandization emerged as a paradoxical metaphor of temporality, a Cold War era “chronotope”: a model of “peaceful coexistence” and “trust”, simultaneously denoting act of survival and political paralysis.

In doing so, the paper contributes to the history of concepts by reading Finlandization in the context of détente as a time concept – one whose hopeful connotations (“trust”, “relaxation”, “collaboration”) sat uneasily with the darker undercurrents of the 1970s, characterized by general disillusionment, stagflation, and increasing loss of ideological clarity. Thus, Finlandization – much like *Détente* – was, at once, a strategy for buying time, a placeholder for neutrality, and a vehicle for melancholic realism in an era of ideological fatigue.

Lucas Barcos Rodrigues (University of São Paulo) – barcos97lbr@gmail.com

Swinish Multitude: The Political Life of a Metaphor in Eighteenth-Century Britain

In 1790, Edmund Burke notoriously referred to the supporters of the French Revolution as a “swinish multitude” in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*. Far from silencing dissent, this metaphor ignited a visual and conceptual counteroffensive. This paper examines how the figure of the pig – already entrenched in English moral and political iconography as a symbol of violence, disorder, and greed – was reappropriated by radical writers and artists who embraced and inverted Burke’s insult. Through pamphlets, satirical prints, and polemical texts, these authors reimagined the “swinish multitude” not as a threat to order, but as a legitimate expression of political agency and popular sovereignty.

Drawing on the works of Fisher, *Politics and porcine representation* (1999), and Herzog, *Poisoning the Mind of the Lower Orders* (1988), the paper traces the long-standing associations of the pig in English political culture, and analyzes how its semantic field was transformed during the revolutionary decade. By situating this case within broader questions of metaphor, visual representation, and the temporality of political discourse, the paper explores how concepts detach from their original contexts and acquire new historical lives. The ironic embrace of the porcine image reveals the subversive potential of aesthetic and metaphorical strategies in political struggles – and underscores the role of visual and textual media in shaping collective imaginaries of politics, authority, and radicalism.

This contribution speaks to ongoing discussions in conceptual history, visual studies, and critical theories of time, emphasizing the political afterlife of metaphors as dynamic sites of contestation and meaning-making.

Chair - Filippo Triola (University of Bologna) – filippo.triola2@unibo.it

Panel 19 – Periodising and visualising History

Janne Holmén (Uppsala University) – janne.holmen@edu.uu.se

The Cognitive History of Historical Concepts: Visual Tools of Chronology and Taxonomies of Periodization in Swedish School Textbooks 1649-1820

Cognitive anthropologists have found that humans tend to structure their knowledge in hierarchies of concepts, typically containing a maximum of five to seven terms at each level. The categorization of time is no exception; since ancient times, history has been divided into three to six ages, or into a succession of four great monarchies. The latter categorization was inspired by the prophecy in the Book of Daniel. Although the monarchies included varied, Protestant Europe generally followed Melancthon’s categorization into Assyria, Persia, Greece and Rome. The fourth monarchy was supposed to end with the second arrival of Christ. Since this had not yet occurred in the early 1700s, schoolboys were then still taught that they lived in the Roman monarchy. This presentation will combine methods from conceptual and cognitive history in examining visual and mnemonic tools, as well as concepts for periodization, used in Swedish trivial schools and gymnasia. It will investigate how older religious conceptions of human history were replaced by new systems for structuring historical knowledge. The period begins with the introduction of history to the curriculum in 1649 and ends with the grammar school reform of 1820. It covers the shift from foreign textbook authors to a national history writing, and investigates the introduction of key concepts for categorizing time inspired by Enlightenment and Romanticist views of history.

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Rock, Paper, Scissors: Trimmed and Reaffirmed History, Between the Museum and the Narrative

In his article, Cristóbal Bize Vivanco explores how the concept of the museum is in tension with the notions of history, heritage, and memory. To address this issue, he draws on Friedrich Nietzsche's three historical categories: monumental, antiquarian, and critical. Monumental history, tied to official narratives and national museums, seeks to perpetuate a glorious past as a foundation for identity. Antiquarian history preserves the past solely for its age, without critical reflection, while critical history aims to question and "condemn" the past in order to free the present. Authors such as Guillermo Bustos, Walter Benjamin, and Manuel Moreno Fraginals complement this view by criticizing how national historical metanarratives have been constructed by dominant sectors to uphold political and economic power. Fraginals warns that official history has been "filtered" to avoid critique, turning it into an ideological tool.

Finally, the paper reflects on the role of museums as devices that reproduce these narratives through their collections and museographic discourse. Special attention is given to the use of pre-Columbian antiquities in shaping national identity following a European model, and how this narrative has been promoted by the state in Latin American countries, despite their institutional instability.

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On the Colours of History: Why Rome is Red, Greece Green, and Germany Yellow

Almost eighty years after Newton published his *Opticks* in 1704, but before Goethe followed with his treatise *Zur Farbenlehre* in 1820, the Protestant theologian and philologist Friedrich Carl Fulda published his book on colours. Whereas the two others addressed questions of natural philosophy, Fulda's small publication was a book on historiography. In 1782, Fulda had published his *Geschichtscharte*, a map of universal or, in the idiom of the day, "synchronistic" history, measuring approximately 2x3 meters and printed on nine posters, to be assembled into one single table. One year later, he published a long-awaited commentary to his incomprehensible, hence unsellable table entitled *Überblick der Weltgeschichten zur Erläuterung der Geschichtscharte*. To my knowledge, this was the first explanation of the use of colours in visualisations of history: why the Romans are red, the Greeks green, and the Germans yellow. At the same time multi-colour diagrams of history were published across Europe, such as Joseph Priestley's *A New Chart of History* (1769) and Johann Christoph Gatterer's *Synopsis historiae universalis: sex tabulis* (1767). In the talk, I will use this material to discuss the use of colours to represent historical times and narratives, in order to flesh out underlying systems and assumptions linking the history of historiography to the history of optics.

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(Hi)Story and Time in Maps in Edo Japan (1603-1868): the Case of Tōkaidō Bunken Zu (Sectional Map of the Tōkaidō)

This paper focuses on the commercial map *Tōkaidō bunken zu* (Sectional map of the Tōkaidō road) published in 1690 and widely reproduced throughout the 18th century. It represents scenes of the contemporary Tōkaidō with historical images of *utamakura* (places of lyrical interest). In the first half of the seventeenth century, the military authority that governed Edo-period Japan (1603-1868) implemented a political system based on social and geographical immobility. However, the system of travel bans was circumvented both physically and 'virtually'. Publishing houses distributed travel-related items that popularised *meisho* ('famous places') and commercial maps often designed for armchair travel.

While administrative maps are celebrations of stability, focusing on the immutable aspects of the landscape, commercial maps represented the experience of travel as it was actually lived in time. They also brought the past back to life, popularising and 'democratising' scenery that had previously been the preserve of elite poetry and art. We argue that this map encoded time as well as space, both through "the code of *tense*" that is its temporal topology, what the map points at, by referencing past, present and future, and through the synchronic moments of the life on the Tōkaidō that it is showing us. The history of its publication adds another dimension to the (hi)story written in it: its production and consumption spans over a century and includes the production of pocket versions, linked to an expansion of the map's intended users. The map therefore didn't only encode time, but was, itself, in motion.

Chair - Willibald Steinmetz (Bielefeld University) – willibald.steinmetz@uni-bielefeld.de

Panel 20 – Histories of Concepts 1/ Crisis and Revolution

Justus Nipperdey (Saarland University, Saarbrücken) – j.nipperdey@mx.uni-saarland.de

Revolution: Rise and Fall of a Historical Metaphor

In historiography, revolutions do not require angry masses, smoking guns or fleeing rulers. Rather, the term revolution has often been used in a metaphorical sense referring to momentous shifts in (world) history that cannot be located in any single event. The industrial revolution, the scientific revolution or the agricultural revolution are just the most famous cases of this widespread practice. Metaphorical revolutions are prime examples of chronopolitics. By employing an imagery of violent disruption, they structure time into a before and an after. Once a metaphorical revolution has won recognition, a pre- and post-period are created by default.

Based on a systematic survey of the emergence and usage of the term revolution as a metaphor in historiography, the paper will propose three arguments. The first pertains to the historical trajectory: Starting in the late nineteenth century, metaphorical revolutions became increasingly popular, peaking in the third quarter of the twentieth century. They have, however, lost relevance in recent decades. Secondly, national historiographies in Europe and beyond adopted the practice unevenly. In some countries, such as the United States, metaphorical revolutions became highly popular while historians in other countries apparently shied away from this terminology and imagery. Thirdly, metaphorical revolutions were usually coined for changes that were thought to be fundamental. In most cases, they did not simply divide two periods of history, but differentiated the present world from a totally different past. Metaphorical revolutions thus became markers of the onset of modernity. This resulted in intertwining their fortunes with those of the concept of modernity. The declining status of the latter explains much of the weakening appeal of metaphorical revolutions on a global scale.

Paulo Henrique Paschoeto Cassimiro (Rio de Janeiro State University) – phpcassimiro@gmail.com

Revolution and Reaction: The Historical Semantics of Antithetical Concepts and the Catholic Right's Reception of Fascism in Brazil (1930-1946)

This paper examines the historical semantics of the antithetical concepts *revolution* and *reaction*, focusing on their reinterpretation by the Brazilian Catholic right between 1930 and 1946. Engaging with Reinhart Koselleck's theory of asymmetric counter-concepts, the study highlights how recent critiques have challenged the fixity of such binary oppositions, emphasizing their historical variability and political pragmatism.

Analyzing the reception of fascism by Brazilian Catholic intellectuals, particularly within the Ação Integralista Brasileira and the journal *A Ordem*, the paper shows how *reaction* was reframed not as a mere return to the past, but as a regenerative political force. Fascism was presented as a "Christian revolution," offering a means to overcome the perceived decadence of liberal modernity and to reintegrate spiritual and political life. This semantic shift enabled a convergence between fascist mobilization and Catholic counter-revolutionary ideals, forming what the article terms a "reactionary revolution."

The study argues that this reconfiguration of conceptual oppositions reveals the strategic reworking of political languages in moments of ideological crisis. Rather than stable conceptual pairs, *revolution* and *reaction* functioned as flexible tools within a shared antagonism toward liberalism and socialism. The article contributes to the field of conceptual history by demonstrating how semantic shifts in key political concepts are shaped by – and shape – conflicts over political identity and action.

Charlotte Fraser (University of Sussex) – Charlotte.Fraser@sussex.ac.uk

What Crisis Means Now: Metaphors of Decline and Return in the United Kingdom's 'Cost of Living Crisis' (2021-)

This paper takes as its starting point a piece of graffiti that appeared in the early days of the UK's 'cost of living crisis' (2021-). This graffiti depicted the then-Chancellor, Rishi Sunak, gripping a slender white utility candle. The image, which critiqued the Chancellor's inadequate response to rising energy prices, was accompanied by a small text: 'I'm giving/ Every household/ A candle/ For warmth/ And light.'

I read this vignette as a measure for crisis, by which I mean a claim that the scenario it invokes – cold homes and callous leaders – illustrates a 'distortio[n]' or deviation[n] from a proper or more correct historical

progression' (Roitman 42). This builds on scholarship on the concept of crisis (Hall and Massey; Koselleck; Vigh). But my intervention is to suggest that the nature of this 'deviation' is not given: that, like the 'time of history' that you invoke in your CfP, crisis can also connote a halt, an acceleration, a return, or a decline – temporalities that determine the politics of the present.

In this paper, therefore, I argue that the metaphor of the candle figures crisis in two different but compatible ways: as an image of decline, and as an image of return. To develop this analysis, I revisit Walter Benjamin's writings on the 'eternal return' and use them to historicise the more recent concept of 'polycrisis', which I construct with reference to recent political discourse. In doing so, I show how this modest metaphor sharpens our sense of what crisis means today.

Chair - Paulo Henrique Paschoeto Cassimiro (Rio de Janeiro State University) – phpcassimiro@gmail.com

Panel 21 – Culture Wars, Religious Conflict, and Conceptual Change

This panel examines the relation between conceptual change and culture wars, i.e. those sustained competitions between social movements concerned, among other issues, with religious-secular boundaries. Culture wars often pit multiple groups against each other on a horizontal social plane. We examine the appropriation, development and deployment of concepts both for understanding the struggle itself and for improving the position of one's own camp within it. To address this, we seek a productive encounter between intellectual and conceptual history and historical sociology. The papers of this panel consider conceptual change across the globe where culture wars shaped the change itself.

Sarah Washbrook (University of Southern Denmark) – sarahwashbrook@gmail.com

Customary Uses or the Use and Abuse of Essentialism? The Concept of "Usos y Costumbres" and the Political (Re)Use of Indigenous Tradition in Mexico Since 1990

The concept of "*usos y costumbres*" and the political (re)use of indigenous tradition in Mexico since 1990" considers the conceptual changes undergone by the concept "*usos y costumbres*". In Mexico, "*usos y costumbres*" was originally a colonial concept that legitimized "traditional" practices of governance and dispute resolution within the Indian republics, providing that they did not challenge the hegemony of Catholicism or Crown rule. Since the 1990s, "*usos y costumbres*" has been progressively institutionalized by the Mexican state to address the historical marginalization of native peoples in the pluricultural nation. Whereas, what once constituted "*usos y costumbres*" was decided by Spanish friars, it is now certified by Mexican anthropologists. Nevertheless, and despite justified claims of continuity (or "gatopardismo"), the conceptual meaning and political use of "*usos y costumbres*" has changed in a context of culture wars, political violence and conflicts over religion and tradition. This presentation will briefly look at the colonial roots of the concept, then examine its use in southern Mexico since the 1990s, before focusing on the Tzeltal town of Oxchuc in the state of Chiapas, an important case study. Oxchuc played a significant role in the development of Protestant evangelism, native language literacy and the discipline of anthropology in twentieth century Mexico, has been the site of sustained political and religious violence since the 1940s, and became the first (and to date only) municipality in the state to elect officials via "*usos y costumbres*" in 2019.

Anders Berg-Sørensen (University of Copenhagen) – abs@ifs.ku.dk

Existential Threats, Illiberalism of Fear, and the European Culture Wars of Liberalism

The paper will explore the use of the language of "existential threats". There is implied political thinking in contemporary European political contestations invoking European civilization and culture. The thematic focus will be political contestations of what European far-right politicians describe as European core values, "God, Homeland, Family." They claim that Europe is a Christian civilization in need of defense against the Muslim threat, they call for a strong patriotism of the European nation-states and they call for the defense of the traditional family against what is called "woke-ism". These together form at the same time a position in the political contestation of what is considered a too permissive liberal culture. This thematic focus of the paper will structure the morphological analysis of the European culture wars of liberalism and the political dynamics of illiberalism rejecting and reacting against liberalism.

Hugo Hogenbirk (University of Groningen) – h.d.hogenbirk@gmail.com

From Dutch Pillarization to Cold (Culture) War: Wereldbeschouwing and Liberalism

Wereldbeschouwing and liberalism” traces the shifting allegiance the word “*wereldbeschouwing*” could count on from liberals in Dutch politics. The paper proposes to identify three periods in Dutch liberal use of worldview. From 1850’s up until the 1890’s during which liberals introduce worldview into politics as an essential term to understand their own project, as a binary opposition of modernity with tradition. Then, from the 1917 till the 1960’s, where they resist the label worldview and then from the 1960’s till the current day, where worldview is again (somewhat) embraced by liberals, but, where it denotes a way to organize a plurality of worldviews. This middle period coincides with Dutch pillarization. *Wereldbeschouwing* characterized the substrate underlying each pillar, in this way organising the power struggle between liberals, socialists, protestants and Catholics in the Netherlands. This has two results; (a) Dutch politics from 1917 onwards uses worldview almost exclusively in a pluralistic sense (despite a different movement occurring for the German *Weltanschauung* at the same time), and (b) Liberals in their rejection of pillarization, become bitter in their resistance to the label “worldview” as a descriptor of their political position.

Todd Weir (University of Groningen) – t.h.weir@rug.nl

From German Culture Wars to European Struggle of Worldview

The paper examines how the position of the National Socialist Party within the German culture wars of the interwar period shaped its own definition and politics of *Weltanschauung*. It then examines how the party used state power to monopolize use of worldview, as part of its efforts to coordinate German society, only to turn the “*Kampf der Weltanschauungen*” into its mode of understanding European politics during the war. Finally, the paper explores the efforts of American cold-war intellectuals to denigrate *Weltanschauung* as a philosophical project, in their efforts to found a political consensus in postwar Western Europe around pluralism and pragmatism.

Chair - Victor Cova (University of Groningen) – v.s.cova@rug.nl

Panel 22 – Technology, Virtual Reality, and Temporal Acceleration

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Virtual Time Travel? Temporal Concepts in History-Related Immersive VR Applications

Immersive virtual reality (VR) applications that reconstruct historical settings and are typically experienced via head-mounted displays are frequently described through the metaphor of time travel (Bunnenberg, 2018; Smirnov, 2024). Offering a high degree of presence (Slater, 2018) through detailed graphics, 360-degree environments, suppression of the physical surroundings, and layered soundscapes (Tang & Wei, 2022), these experiences allow users to “enter” a past era. For instance, *Sniper Elite VR* (Rebellion, n.d.) places players in 1940s Italy as partisans resisting fascism, while *Assassin’s Creed Nexus VR* (Ubisoft, n.d.) enables users to traverse multiple historical epochs, from Renaissance Florence to Revolutionary Boston.

Through virtual embodiment (Ahn, 2021), users adopt the ego-perspective of historical actors. However, the time within such simulations often adheres less to historical logic and more to narrative and gameplay mechanics. Time may pause, accelerate, loop, or fragment into flashbacks, creating a quasi-historical temporal regime that simulates, but does not reproduce, historical temporality. Such VR representations can be interpreted as forms of “past futures” (Koselleck, 1979) – pasts reimaged in the present for the purposes of histotainment (Meyer, 2009), thus producing simulations that never historically existed.

This paper examines how immersive VR media represent historical time and how these representations may shape users’ historical thinking (Bräuer, 2021) and historical consciousness (Thünemann & Wagner, 2024). Drawing on epistemological reflections on virtuality (Rieger et al., 2021) and methodological tools from digital public history (Lewers, 2024), this contribution seeks to explore how temporality is constructed, aestheticized, and politicized in history-related VR experiences.

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The History of “Futureproof” as a Metaphor: A Term Embroiled with Technology and Temporality from 1980-Now

In 2019, technology journalist Kevin Roose published *Futureproof: 9 rules for humans in the age of automation*. His key message is: read this book about artificial intelligence, and it will protect you in future job markets disrupted by automation. ‘If you’ve ever felt like the world was zooming past you,’ he writes, ‘or worried that you have no chance of keeping up with technological change, my hope is to convince you otherwise. I want to help you keep your job.’¹

Like so much writing about technology, Roose’s book is infected by the idea of the future. However, in this context, what exactly does it mean to futureproof? Is it something like water-proofing? What does it mean to futureproof *yourself*, rather than a building or a business? In trying to “proof” or protect against the future, does that mean we inevitably imagine the future as hostile? Something to be warded off and kept out?

The metaphor of future-proofing is co-occurrent with a spiking of late-20th-century fears about the rapid obsolescence of technology. The OED dates the earliest uses of “futureproof” to the 1980s, citing the following as an early use of the term in 1988: ‘If users know they will have higher bandwidths from day one, they can futureproof their OSCA implementations’.² In this paper, I explore the history of “futureproofing” as a metaphor, exploring the term’s use in writing about technology, engineering, architecture, and business. I argue that the term shifts from mainly technical usage around mitigation (of natural disasters, product obsolescence, etc.) to the self-help usage seen in Roose’s book – where futureproofing is offered as a spiritual salve to soothe anxieties about the future.

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Pushing the Crisis Button: Synchronization in the Time of Corona

Naming or conceptualising a phenomenon as a crisis can be likened to pushing a button – triggering a chain of social and political consequences. (Jordheim 2025) A crisis declaration often heightens temporal synchronisation, aligning disparate temporal experiences into a shared rhythm, pace, speed and sense of urgency. (Jordheim & Wigen 2018; Jordheim & Ytreberg 2021) This process typically privileges short-term perspectives and a heightened focus on the present. (see also Rosa 2013, Hartog 2013) The proposed paper seeks to answer whether this kind of temporal synchronisation occurs in crisis governance? If so, how, why, and with what implications?

We investigate these questions by examining the mechanisms of synchronisation in Finland’s policy and governance responses during the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on situational reports, pre-parliamentary policy documents, and parliamentary debates, we empirically map how the temporal space of crisis was constructed, contested, and ultimately dismantled. Employing a conceptual history approach, the article foregrounds the temporal dynamics embedded in crisis governance. Special attention is given to the role of situational outlooks and situational speech as key mechanisms of temporal alignment. In doing so, the paper sheds new light on how temporal frameworks shape – and are shaped by – governance practices in times of crisis. (Based on an upcoming paper by Elina Hakoniemi, Demos Helsinki & Risto Turunen, University of Tampere.)

Chair - Giorgio Grappi (University of Bologna) – giorgio.grappi@unibo.it

Panel 23 – Power and State in Central and Eastern Europe in the Long-Nineteenth Century

This panel seeks to shed light on the regional specificities of political power concepts in Central and Eastern Europe during the long nineteenth century. It features three papers, each offering a comparative perspective on the region’s conceptual history with focus on Czech, Polish, Russian and Slovak discourses. Together, the papers from various perspectives explore ideas of political power – particularly overarching notions such as democracy, independence, and nationhood – within predominantly rural societies undergoing the early stages of economic modernization.

¹ Kevin Roose, *Futureproof: 9 Rules for Humans in the Age of Automation* (Random House, 2021), p. 25.

² “Future-proof, V.” Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, December 2024, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/8155914115>.

Importantly, all the countries examined were embedded in imperial frameworks, marked by complex dynamics between imperial centers and their more or less integrated peripheries. These conditions gave rise to political phenomena such as legal bilingualism, linguistic fragmentation, political exile, and national revivals, all of which acted as centrifugal forces. Such factors significantly influenced on the emergence and development of competing, uneven conceptions of political power during the turbulent decades of the nineteenth century.

Piotr Kuligowski (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw) – pkuligowski@ihpan.edu.pl

Non-Universal Democracies: The Emergence of Gminowładztwo in Poland and Narodovlastie in Russia in the 19th Century

This paper argues that the 19th century witnessed the emergence of locally grounded concepts of democracy in various European contexts that diverged significantly from the Western European model often assumed to be universal. Focusing on Poland and Russia, it examines how indigenous democratic ideas took shape in response to distinct historical, social, and philosophical preconditions. In Poland, the concept of *gminowładztwo* (communocracy) emerged in the first half of the 19th century, embodying a dual promise of national independence and peasant emancipation. A key figure in developing this idea was the Polish historian Joachim Lelewel, who formulated an original vision of the distant domestic past in which peasant communities played a decisive role in socio-political life. In Russia, the notion of *narodovlastie* (people's rule) appeared across revolutionary, conservative, and liberal discourses, eventually becoming integrated into imperial ideology. The concept thus featured both in the rhetoric of the Russian Decembrists and in the ideology of Sergey Uvarov, the minister of education under Nicholas I. The paper contends that both concepts were rooted in specific visions of the people—*gmin* (or, more often, *lud*) in Poland and *narod* in Russia—each imagined as destined to attain more prominent status. The development of these concepts was shaped by differing philosophical traditions and configurations of political power in both countries. In Poland, *gminowładztwo* was grounded in the legacy of the early modern *monarchia mixta* and decentralized political power, while in Russia, *narodovlastie* evolved within the context of absolutist tsarist rule. These factors—including predominantly peasant-based societies and distinct power structures—gave rise to alternative, non-universal visions of democracy and the political discourses that sustained them.

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Thinking of State Independence Differently: Conceptual Dissonance and the Limits of Hôtel Lambert's Cooperation with the Slovak National Movement

This paper explores the ideological and conceptual misalignments that limited the effectiveness of the Hôtel Lambert's political outreach among the Slavic populations of the Habsburg Monarchy, with particular focus on the Slovak national movement in the mid-19th century. The so-called Hôtel Lambert—the monarchist-constitutional wing of the Polish Great Emigration, led by Prince Adam Jerzy Czartoryski—devoted all its efforts after 1831 to preparing the geopolitical conditions favourable to the potential restoration of an independent Polish state. Although the Slavic movements that began to assert themselves politically in Central and Southeastern Europe in the 1830s might have seemed like natural allies for Polish efforts to restore an independent state—especially given their resistance to “foreign” monarchs—many of these emerging national movements, including the Slovaks, operated with distinct concepts of “statehood” and “independence.” These concepts were shaped by their socio-political marginalization, linguistic awakening, and the broader imperial framework in which they existed. Drawing on political correspondence, programmatic writings, and the responses of Slovak intellectuals, this paper argues that the Hôtel Lambert's inability to meaningfully engage with Slovak aspirations stemmed not only from strategic or geopolitical limitations—already noted in previous research—but also from a deeper conceptual dissonance regarding fundamental political categories. By examining this case, the paper contributes to a broader understanding of how incompatible political languages and expectations can hinder transnational cooperation within émigré activism and Central European politics.

Marcin Jarzabek (Jagiellonian University in Krakow) – marcin.jarzabek@uj.edu.pl

The Concept of Independence in Polish and Czech Political Discourse Before 1918: Two Paths to the Same Aim

The paper aims to present and compare the concept of state independence in Polish and Czech political discourse in the 19th century. Neither the Poles nor the Czechs possessed independent statehood before WWI,

and both had a strong memory of their past statehoods: the Bohemian Kingdom and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. However, the meaning and idea of national rights were expressed in significantly different ways. In Poland, the term 'independence' – born at the moment of agony of the Polish-Lithuanian Republic in the 1790s – since the November Uprising (1830-31) and Polish romanticism became one of the key and most often used concepts within Polish socio-political thought. In the Czech Lands, on the other hand, it was barely possible to express the idea of a Czech state without the Habsburg rule (even by the severe critics of the Dual Monarchy such as T.G. Masaryk). However, Czech aspirations for their own political independence were expressed in the language of the historical state rights of the Czech Lands that are deeply rooted in history ("We were before Austria, we will be after Austria" – as expressed by František Palacký). Therefore, I argue that a similar idea of national sovereignty and the concept of independence were expressed in two different manners. Polish "independence" was almost always seen as a revolutionary prospect, undermining the current political order. Czech "state rights" could have similarly revolutionary effects, but they clearly used a more retrospective, legalistic form of framing them.

Chair - **Leonardo Mazzanti (Ludwig-Maximilians-University Munich)** – leonardomazzanti02@gmail.com

Panel 24 – Regimes of Historicity

Alexei Kazakov (University of Ottawa) – akaza070@uottawa.ca

François Hartog's "Regimes of Historicity", Between Heuristic Metaphor and Metahistorical Concept: a Historical Contextualisation and Conceptual Clarification

Since the publication of an English-language translation of French historian François Hartog's seminal *Régimes d'historicité* in 2016, the notion of a "regime of historicity" has enjoyed a widespread reception in the anglophone discourse. However, this reception has most often been limited to an engagement with the sole text itself, neglecting both its situation within the deeper tradition of French historiography since the 1970s as well as the historiographical debates that constituted a significant part of the book's francophone reception since its original publication in 2003. This talk aims to outline the most important elements within this French reception of Hartog's work for the benefit of non-francophone scholars. In doing so, I will also carry out a conceptual clarification of the notion of a "regime of historicity" which I believe will help contribute to its more responsible usage.

This conceptual clarification will revolve around the many metaphors deployed by Hartog to elucidate his notion, most notably those of a political regime, a "*régime moteur*" ("engine speed" as expressed in RPM), and an architectural order (with respect to the expression "order of time"). By fleshing out these metaphors via reference to a key text in the historical contextualization of Hartog's book (namely Krzysztof Pomian's *L'ordre du temps*), I will emphasize an element in the theorisation of history that has frequently been absent from this French tradition, namely the question of the relation between social "regimes of historicity" and the individual's own sense of historicity, which never fully aligns with the social vision.

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Facing Presentism: "Intellectual Democracy" and the Hermeneutics of Historicity in Le Débat (1980-2020)

Founded by Pierre Nora in the midst of a sea change in the French intellectual and ideological landscape, the journal *Le Débat* (1980-2020) stands out as one of the most important laboratories of contemporary thought. The journal based its editorial project on the notion of «intellectual democracy», thus providing a younger intellectual generation with a pluralist forum for social and political ideas and a new style of intellectual engagement in the public sphere, and eventually secured a strategic position within the cultural field.

However, another dimension has yet to be explored in order to fully gauge the place of the journal within the intellectual context of its time. This paper seeks to retrace and discuss the place and role of history in *Le Débat's* conception of an «intellectual democracy», taking the periodical's subtitle – *Histoire, Politique, Société* – as its point of departure. Aiming to serve as a critical observer of what its editor Marcel Gauchet defines as a «new age of historical consciousness», the journal anticipated and tackled themes as diverse as the crisis of future-oriented conceptions of history, the centrality of the present as well as the growing importance of memory and commemorations in shaping the political temporality of Western societies. Not only then does this conception and practice of history – at once *conceptual*, *political* and *contemporary* – reflect a

major shift in the dominant theoretical paradigms of humanities, but it also inspires and defines *Le Débat*'s distinctive interpretation of the ideological and intellectual repercussions of the late-modern regime of historicity.

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The Many Faces of Presentism: Regimes of Historicity in Historical Films

When the so-called “historical” pictures are more than decorative romance or lifestyle fantasies based on period costumes and settings, they tend to set up, voluntarily or not, different types of relations between the historical past they represent and the present of the audiences. In some movies heroic and mythological features tend to prevail; in others, the past is used as a critical genealogy of present-day negative political phenomena; or sometimes the past is refurbished as a critical, satirical mirror of recent institutions or morals the audience can easily recognize. There are politically revisionist films that rewrite the past as a pure fantasy of alternative history; some others focus mostly on ambitious docu-fictional recoveries of a supposed truth of that era; finally, the goal of a consistent part of historical cinema is to create a feel-good moral distance from an allegedly dark past of superstition and oppression that can be judged in contrast with the implicitly more enlightened modern ideas and sensibilities.

My talk will investigate the historicity regimes of historical films, their intersections and interweavings, as well as the normative implications of these artistic and discursive strategies of constructing temporalities. It will analyse several types of presentism in cinema – whether political or apolitical –, themselves historically situated in the contexts of their making. And it will examine the ideological stakes – whether legitimatory, ornamental or critical – of the production of historical distance, of anachronisms, presentisms, or reciprocal interpellations between the multiple pasts and presents.

Rodrigo Turin (Federal University of the State of Rio de Janeiro) – rodrigoturin@gmail.com

Potential Regimes of Historicity for Unpredictable Times

The paper aims to analyze how our experiences of time are changing in response to climate change, focusing on two key dimensions. The first dimension considers the everyday perceptions of time linked to new forms of governance that have emerged in recent decades to address the unpredictability of the future. The second dimension explores how new experiences resulting from climate change, along with other factors, can be understood through a new kind of historical consciousness. By analyzing concepts such as precaution, preemption, and preparedness – developed in various contexts to cope with the new unpredictability of the future – we aim to connect these ideas to modern philosophies of history, like accelerationism and longtermism. Thus, the goal is to conduct a conceptual history of the present with an emphasis on climate change, while also relating this to what we refer to as “potential regimes of historicity”.

Chair - **Marco Guerrieri (University of Naples Federico II)** – marco.guerrieri@unina.it

Panel 25 – Metaphorology and Conceptual History

Timo Pankakoski (University of Helsinki) – timo.pankakoski@helsinki.fi ; timo.pankakoski@utu.fi

Functional Political Metaphorology: Genealogy, Key Principles, and Added Utility

This paper suggests a functionalist-relational approach to metaphors in intellectual history and political thought. Metaphor scholarship arguably suffers from a substantivistic bias: scholars focus on metaphors' source domains and classify metaphors accordingly, identifying e.g. “light metaphors” in philosophy or “mechanical metaphors” in politics. This motivates writings histories of single metaphor substances diachronically and quasi-universalistically. What, however, would follow from rethinking metaphors functionally, focusing on their synchronic argumentative functions? My initiative contributes to a larger shift of emphasis from cognition, semantics, and substance, to pragmatics and uses, including increased attention to metaphors' entailments (Kövecses), metaphor scenarios (Musolff), and argumentative functions/purposes (Charteris-Black). However, to understand functions in thought and derive lessons for metaphorology, we must revisit a strand of theorizing where functions feature explicitly – from Kant's observations on ideas and analogies to Ernst Cassirer's theory of functional concepts, Hans Blumenberg's metaphorology and epochal

theory, de Saussure's relational semantics, Koselleck's conceptual history, and the interaction/tension theories of metaphor (I. A. Richards, Max Black, Paul Ricoeur, Eva Kittay). Revisiting these accumulating discussions, I posit, enables us to reconsider the position of reading metaphors in the broader endeavor of intellectual history. The analysis implies a novel functional-relational rather than substantial notion of 1) concepts/metaphors, 2) similarity, 3) historical (dis-)continuity of metaphors, 4) division of labor between alternative metaphors, 5) mixed metaphors, and 6) how writing about metaphors should be organized. The proposed functional approach emerges as a cross-cutting perspective that harmonizes with many conceptual-history viewpoints and contributes to the debates on the concept/metaphor interface.

Misel Jabin (École Normale Supérieure de Lyon) – misel.jabin@ens-lyon.fr
The Clothing Metaphor in the Platonic Anthropology and Cosmology

Inspired by H. Blumenberg's work on metaphorology, according to which thought is often expressed just as complexly by abstract concepts as by metaphors or images, the aim of this paper is to examine the history and conceptual implications of the clothing metaphor used to account for the relationship between the soul and the body in Platonism. Inspired by Orphic-Pythagorean doctrines and by Empedocles³, Plato represents the body as a garment for the soul. Most of the time, the function of the garment in this metaphor is that of an element that veils, obscures and conceals the fundamental cognitive or affective activity of the soul, or even its true nature. This metaphor became a recurring theme and a philosophical commonplace, commented on and taken up by the Platonic and Neo-Platonic philosophies. We propose to study the constitution of this commonplace, while carefully analysing the way in which each doctrine thematises this *topos* in a specific way.

While Plato depicts the human body as a succession of enveloping layers that obscure thought⁴ and prevent the naked soul from being judged fairly after death⁵, the most complex clothing metaphor has a cosmological function and concerns the soul of the world⁶, the immaterial envelope woven throughout the body of the world and the ordering, causal, motor and cognitive principle of the unified *kosmos*. Plotinus, using the image of envelopment rather than the term *khiton*, takes up this image of the body as the garment of the soul, from which the soul must free itself in order to begin the ascent to the first principle⁷. Beyond this commonplace, it serves to understand the problem of incorporation: the soul is linked to the body and must deal with it by essence. Porphyry and Proclus, in order to refine dualism and drawing inspiration from Platonism but also from a Gnostic reading of *Genesis* 3:21, refer to the body as a "tunic that envelops the soul"⁸, which must be removed. The metaphor becomes more complex, since it now refers to the soul's external garments (the body) but also to its internal garments (sensation, imagination, irrationality, passions), and acquires a religious function, since access to the sanctuaries must be accompanied by the stripping off of our tunics of skins⁹. Finally, the term "tunic" refers not only to the human body but also to other superior forms of physicality under the theme of the cosmic vehicles of the soul¹⁰.

Sarah Bonfim (Unicamp, São Paulo) – sarah.bonfim06@gmail.com
Hugging Their Chains: Mary Wollstonecraft's Metaphors of Dependence and the Temporal Imagery of Subjugation

When does one become aware of their own dependence? In Mary Wollstonecraft's case, this turning point occurs in response to the portrait of tyranny painted by John Locke. Confronted with this philosophical image, Wollstonecraft resorts to fiction writing as a medium to process and articulate her concerns. This paper examines her early fictional works, written between 1786 and 1788, to trace the genesis of her political thought. Although the theme of female dependence becomes central in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), this analysis argues that the metaphorical and narrative tools she uses to explore this condition are already at play in her formative texts. These works reveal an incipient yet profound reflection on temporality, authority, and the embodied experience of subjugation. By focusing on how Wollstonecraft metaphorizes dependence through affective imagery – such as the figure of the spaniel or the chain – this paper aims to contribute to

3 Fr. 126 DK "σάρκων ... χιτῶν".

4 Plato, *Timaeus* 73d5-7, 74d6-7, 75e8-76a2, 76c7, *Phaedo* 87b5 sq.

5 Cf the eschatological myth of the *Gorgias* 523c4-6, d2-4. The theme of the soul's purification and liberation from its body is transcribed in sartorial terms that refer to the individual characteristics that can cloud the judgment of souls, such as the beauty of bodies, their lineage and their wealth.

6 Plato, *Timaeus* 34b3-4.

7 Plotinus, I, 6.

8 Porphyry, *De Abst.*, 2.46; *De Abst.*, 1.31.3-4.

9 Porphyry, *De Abst.*, 2.46.1.

10 Proclus, *El. Theol.*, prop. 209; *Theol. Plat.*, 3.19.3-15.

broader discussions on how metaphors construct historical consciousness and political subjectivity in Enlightenment thought.

Chair - Falko Schmieder (Leibniz Centre for Literary and Cultural Research Berlin) – schmieder@zfl-berlin.org

Panel 26 – Historical Materialism/1

Lotte List (Copenhagen Business School) – lotte.list@outlook.com

Marx Between Philosophy of History and Critical Historiography

A classical critique of Marx has it that his theory of capitalism rested on a teleological view of history: according to this interpretation, Marx was a utopian who believed that the conflictual nature of capitalism would eventually bring about its end and pave the way for humanity's reconciliation in the new era of communism. This critique may have found its most prominent proponent in Karl Löwith, yet it has remained a recurrent objection to Marxist thought. Drawing on the work of Massimiliano Tomba on historical temporality and historiography in Marx, this paper argues that while a certain rhetorics of determinism did play a role in the writings of the young Marx, he gradually revised his youthful philosophy of history into a critical historiography in the later works. Marx's conception and use of the notion of history thus changed throughout his writings, resurfacing as a central theoretical problem at critical stages of theorizing. In *Capital*, he came to employ a critical *rehistorization* against the romantic 'Robinsonades' of political economy, and in textual fragments from his final years, we find considerations on multiple temporalities. Insofar as this late Marx has a universal concept of 'world history', this appears as a product of the capitalist world market, not as a teleological endpoint, and it is never total or uncontested by other possible histories.

Chiara De Cosmo (University of Parthenope, Naples) – chiara.decosmo@virgilio.it

Stratigraphy and Historiography in Late Marx's Work: On the Drafts of the Letter to Vera Zasulič

The aim of my intervention is to analyse the stratigraphic historiographical model which can be located within Marx's drafts of the letter to Vera Zasulič, in order to shed light on its intrinsically political orientation. Whereas Marx's approach to history in these drafts has been widely discussed (see, for example, Burgio 2000; Tomba 2013; Pradella 2014; Basso 2021), my attempt is to stress a stratigraphical reading of Marx's mature theory of history, where not only sedimentations of different epochs coexists at the same time, giving life to original spatial and temporal configurations, but also unveil themselves as *traces* whose interpretation could disclose to the historian their contradicting latencies and potentialities. Starting from a geological metaphor used by Marx in a letter to Engels (25 March 1868), my talk will go through the 1881's drafts and illustrate the articulation of historical layers that Marx was able to pinpoint considering the form of Russian commune. In these letters, Marx outlines an articulated metaphoric weave which builds a constellation of figures (the geologist; the philologist) able to shed light on different levels of the task of the historian. By taking seriously this constellation, I would like to show how the socialist potentialities pinpointed by Marx in the Russian *obščina* challenge every deterministic idea of progress as well as "regressive" conceptions of socialism itself. This analysis involves the firm recognition of the very political dimension inscribed within Marx's historiography and its relevance to root concretely the possibilities of revolution within present contradictions.

Manuel Disegni (University of Turin) – manuel.disegni@unito.it

Karl Marx's Baptism and His Dialectical Conception of Historical Time

I suggest a new path for investigating the influence of Marx's Jewish background on his thought. Unlike previous research, I propose to relate the materialist conception of history not to the doctrinal content of Judaism, but rather to the historical experience of the Jewish minority in mid-19th-century Germany. I argue that the emergence out of the bosom of bourgeois society of a new and at the same time ancestral phenomenon such as antisemitism should be counted among the problems that have contributed to shaping the dialectical conception of historical time that informs Marx's social criticism. At first, I present the affair of Marx's baptism, which was both a free choice and compulsory, as paradigmatic for his conception of bourgeois freedom as a form of compulsion. I then examine Marx's engagement with the so called Jewish question, which frames

antisemitism not only as a relic of the past but also as a symptom of modernity's contradictions. Finally, I situate the development of Marx's concepts of history and revolution within this framework. Drawing on Walter Benjamin's interpretation of historical materialism, I show that the enigmatically ancient and at the same time modern essence of antisemitism provides a paradigm for Marx's understanding of social oppression as a phenomenon which is much older than world market and the steam loom, and yet needs to be investigated in the light of its specifically capitalistic form. Accordingly, revolution is conceived as the overcoming of both bourgeois, capitalist domination, and the much longer "prehistory of human society".

Chair - Sandro Mezzadra (University of Bologna) - sandro.mezzadra@unibo.it

Panel 27 – Emotions and Temporality

Nathália Sanglard (Rio de Janeiro State University) - nathaliasanglard@gmail.com

Feeling Time: Memory, Affect, and Temporality in Annie Ernaux's Shame

This paper aims to reflect on the relationship between time and affect, with a particular focus on shame, using Annie Ernaux's *Shame* as the primary object of analysis. Widely recognized for articulating historical temporality with her biographical trajectory as a class defector, Ernaux incorporates historical tensions and sociological categories, making time a protagonist in her literary project. In this presentation, I argue, first, that the complexity of time in Ernaux's work cannot be fully understood without considering affects, as it is through sensitive manifestations that her narratives structure and shape ways of inhabiting the present, past, and future. Her oeuvre seeks to render the passage of time perceptible, expressing it through forms that make visible, throughout its course, the sensations, impressions, memory traces, and marks inscribed on the body. Subsequently, I examine how, in *Shame*, the author-narrator revisits the scene in which her father attempted to kill her mother, framing it as a turning point in her perception of social division and as an event that inaugurates a temporal rupture. I contend that, in narrating this experience of social humiliation, the author-narrator not only draws a linear division in her past – between a before and after the scene – but also endows time with a different texture. Like a filter, shame blurred the young Ernaux's projections of the future and continues to resonate in the narrator's present. Thus, I aim to analyze how the author-narrator navigates through metaphors, intimate imagery, and collective symbols to comprehend a temporality governed by shame.

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Future Faith: Emotions, Knowledge Practices, and Temporalities in the Making of the Great Future Crisis Among Swedish Youth, c. 1977-1981

At the tail end of the 1970s, academics, bureaucrats, teachers, and politicians raised alarms: Swedish youth were turning pessimistic. They seemed to have lost what was called future faith (*framtidstro*) and no longer believed in a bright future for the nation and the world. All the crises of the decade – youth unemployment, deindustrialisation, world poverty, environmental degradation, and nuclear war – coalesced, but the willpower to address it no longer appeared to exist. According to different kinds of experts as well as politicians from across the political spectrum, the solution to the problems lay in the feelings and the actions of Swedish youth, and there was therefore a need to manage these future moods and to reconstruct belief in progress. This paper explores the concept of future faith and its implications for future making and societal and educational debates in the years around 1980. The paper hereby intervenes in scholarly discussions on temporalities (Koselleck), presentism (Hartog), and unprecedented change (Simon), showing how educationalists, intellectuals, and politicians took concern in youth's unbelief in progress and their turn to apocalyptic imagery. Moreover, the paper is a call to, in line with recent scholarship, investigate the connections between temporalities and emotions.

Clover Reshad (The New School for Social Research, New York) - reshc244@newschool.edu

The Unhappy Poor: The Politics of Resentment in the Classical World

Though scholars like Wendy Brown, Kathrine Cramer, and Francis Fukuyama have argued that resentment is one of the paramount threats to our modern democracies, the ancient Greeks chastised this emotion for the

very opposite reason. They routinely associated resentment with democracy, especially the radically egalitarian form that this regime had assumed in Athens by the fifth century BC.¹¹ Indeed, the philosophers invoked this concept to demean the abilities of the poor and caution against the most dangerous kinds of democracies. The key problem with resentment, as they saw it, was that it levels out distinctions among citizens. They argued that the poor's manifest resentment of superiority reveals a base motivation behind their demands, that is, the desire to drag better men down to their level. Yet in so doing, these staunch critics of democracy highlight a radical potential for this emotion. That is, anyone who acted as if they were superior to the ordinary free citizen became an object of resentment, a feeling that put them in their place and challenged any particular claim to rule. In short, I argue that the Greeks recognized that democracy depends on resentment, a relentlessly equalizing emotion. Still, elite disdain of lower-class resentment seems to have prevailed in conditioning the significance of this concept. Contemporary scholars routinely define resentment as a pathological feeling that betrays a lack of political subjectivity. But perhaps resentment is a neglected ingredient in our democracy today. After all, why shouldn't the poor regard the rich with resentment?

Fatemeh Faroughi (University of Debrecen) – fatemeh.faroughi@gmail.com

Metaphors and Expressing Emotions: How Feelings Are Expressed by the Gen-Z

Metaphors as a powerful and effective linguistic tool have been employed by humans throughout history. They are also employed by individuals to show emotions and even their ideological frameworks. This paper will focus on the exploration of the intersection between metaphorical language, emotional behaviour and expression and ideologies of the Gen-Z, who use a unique and specific language, different than their parents. Language as an evolving phenomenon has the ability to stretch and flex to fit the needs of its users, however, with globalisation, extensive use of technology and the immense impact of social media on the modern lifestyle, the Gen-Z around the world have created and use metaphors that are unknown to the previous generation. For instance, metaphors such as “roasting someone's hair”, “rizz” or “skibidi” are alien words and phrases to parents who are considered immigrant users of technology compared to their children who are native users. By drawing on Lackoff and Johnson's theories and cross-linguistic analysis of Kovecses, this paper will investigate how metaphors are not simply linguistic devices but essential tools for expressing emotions for the young generation yet alien to those parents who are not tech-savvy and unfamiliar with this new language of their children, who are usually bilingual speakers of their mother tongue and English.

Chair - Giorgia Lugani (University of Cambridge) – gl573@cam.ac.uk

Panel 28 – Beyond Sankofa: Images and Metaphors of Historical Times in 20th Century West Africa

Picture a bird with an egg on its back, stretching its long neck to reach it. This is how *Sankofa* looks. A symbol created by the Akan of what is today Ghana, Sankofa literally means ‘return (san) to go (ko) and fetch (fa) (it)’. Grounded in the precolonial system of Adinkra symbols, Sankofa has acquired global reach and prominence. Its circulation within the African American diaspora and inscription within debates on the history and legacies of slavery enshrined Sankofa as a powerful metaphor for the value of the past, and the necessity not to forget. By virtue of its position as West Africa's most famous and influential visual representation of the sense and meaning of history, Sankofa hides as much as it reveals. It simultaneously obscures alternative ways in which Africans have interrogated and represented their past, while also raising urgent questions on how to reconstruct and interrogate them. What is place and role of images (broadly construed) in the articulation of West African historical consciousness and cultures? Which discursive, linguistic and conceptual horizons articulate the relationship between past, present and future? How and why do temporal images acquire political implications in West African history?

The panel addresses these questions by looking at different geographical sites (Accra; Northern Ghana; Nigeria). While the focus is on the 20th century, all the papers explore images, concepts and discourses that produce historical meaning across a longer time-span. Indeed, the case studies illuminate how Africans have constructed distinctive epistemic orientations from the combination of indigenous and foreign elements, and used them to come to terms and conceptualise the rise and fall of precolonial polities, slavery and colonialism,

¹¹ Originating from the French, *re-sentir*, to re-feel, the term resentment only entered our lexicon in the late sixteenth century. Yet a variety of Greek terms – *agonactor*, *misos*, *phthonos* – are translated as resentment today.

and postcolonial futures. Combining distant and close reading with visual studies and ethnographic practice, the papers tend to a wide and diverse choir of voices and characters, and in so doing aim to widen the canon of the history of concepts. We take as our starting point a plurality of images and discourses: from ordinary people's reactions to historical photographs of economic activity to the writings of Marxist historians and the literary construction of a slave castle, we excavate West African temporal lifeworlds beyond Sankofa.

Focusing on Northern Ghana, the first contribution takes photographs as an entry point to simultaneously reconstruct the different temporalities through which ordinary people remember the past, and weaves a methodological reflection on the place of images in historical anthropology. The second contribution reconstructs how Nigerian historians have interpreted and mobilised the concept of 'crisis' from the 1950s to the present. Specifically, the paper charts the evolution of metaphors adopted by nationalist and Marxist historians to challenge received periodisations and capture the continuities and discontinuities in historical experience. The third paper focuses on an unpublished text by Ghana's first president Kwame Nkrumah. The literary description of his arrival at the castle that, initially built for the slave trade, served as the seat of the postcolonial government, indexes in architectural discourse the theorisation of decolonisation's temporalities.

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Exploring Temporalities Through Photographic Elicitation: Colonial Photography and Ghanaian Market Traders

This paper offers a reflection on the potential of photographic elicitation as a methodological tool to generate dialogue across different temporalities—between the temporality embedded in the image itself and that constructed, narrated, and interpreted by those engaging with it. Beyond this dialogic dimension, the paper also seeks to explore the methodological and epistemological implications of photographic elicitation within historical research. In what ways does this approach enable access to new meanings, or allow for the re-signification of historical sources? What are its epistemic possibilities and limitations? Drawing on fieldwork conducted in West Africa, and specifically in Northern Ghana, the paper examines the interaction between colonial photographic archives and the contemporary readings of these images by research participants—primarily female market traders. The analysis seeks to highlight how photographic elicitation can open new perspectives on memory, history, visual repatriation, and the politics of representation.

Gerardo Serra (The University of Manchester) – gerardo.serra@manchester.ac.uk

"To the Castle": Kwame Nkrumah's Architectural Temporalities

The paper focuses on a short unpublished text by Kwame Nkrumah, the man who led Ghana to independence from British rule and a seminal thinker on Pan-Africanism and African socialism. The text, titled 'To the Castle', should have been the introductory chapter in *Africa Must Unite*, Nkrumah's most systematic plea for a Union of African States. I argue that this text provides a unique entry point to observe the interaction of spatial imaginaries, architectural tropes and temporalities underpinning Nkrumah's political thought.

The text describes a specific, and seemingly prosaic, event: on 12th January 1958 (less than 1 year after independence), Nkrumah moved to Osu (formerly Christianborg) Castle in Accra. Built by Denmark-Norway in the 17th century, the castle was used primarily as a slave fort (as well as a trade post for commerce in gold and ivory), and later as the seat of colonial and postcolonial governments.

I suggest that in this text Nkrumah did not simply treat his move to Osu as a metaphor for the end of the oppression represented by the Castle. Instead, I argue that Nkrumah mobilised the Castle as a catalyst for a more nuanced and elusive reflection on 'multiple temporalities'. The resulting 'architectural temporalities' deployed descriptions of the Castle's emptiness to simultaneously index the kairotic nature of the achievement of independence, the deliberate attempts by the colonial power to erase traces of its presence, and the elusiveness and distinctiveness of postcolonial 'horizons of expectations'.

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A Conceptual History of Crisis in Nigerian Historiography, 1956-2021

This article explores the conceptual history of crisis in Nigerian historiography from 1956 to 2021. Through examination of the Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria, keynote addresses and other scholarly writings, we analyze how Nigerian historians deployed and transformed this concept. Initially characterizing historical phenomena like precolonial state formation and anti-colonial resistance, crisis later became reflexive as historians diagnosed their discipline's declining relevance and critiqued postcolonial politics. This shift was accompanied by a transformation from aquatic to medical and economic metaphors. The evolution reveals a

paradox: while crisis enabled Nigerian historians to articulate diverse critiques and reimagine their public roles, it simultaneously reinforced the nation as the primary frame of reference, both enabling and constraining historiographical imagination.

Commentary - **Frederik Schröer (Freie Universität Berlin)** – frederikschroeer@gmail.com

Chair - **Gerardo Serra (The University of Manchester)** – gerardo.serra@manchester.ac.uk

Panel 29 – Intellectual History Perspectives on Historical Time/1

Sergio Alejandro Ferro Peláez (PhD, National University of Colombia) – sergioferrop@gmail.com

Notes on Time: From Dante to Norbert Elias. Approach to Cognitive Sociology

This paper addresses time as a relevant concept for sociology of knowledge. For the above, we will understand the concept of time as an intellectual synthesis that has been built through the accumulation of a cultural and practical heritage and human efforts in broad temporal terms. In this way, we will take a particular look at the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries as relevant historical periods of study to explain the concept of time from the theoretical perspective of the German sociologist, Norbert Elias. The understanding of time as an intellectual exercise goes through collective processes of symbolization and institutionalization in which human beings achieve orientation mechanisms, which are necessary to organize and coordinate actions with other individuals. Therefore, we understand the concept of time beyond the philosophical traditions that understand it as something innate or as something external to the individual, which is recurrent within the classical dichotomies of social theory as individual-society or subject and object.

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Agitated Monotony: A Tocquevillian Account of the End of History

As Alexis de Tocqueville wrote in the 19th century, modern societies are agitated and monotonous at the same time. On the surface everything is in constant motion, people and ideas keep perpetually changing, while the pattern of changes is always the same, making the overall picture mechanical and boring. Although this description seems largely outdated from our present perspective shaped by technological and political unpredictability, the paper argues that its core insight remains valid. Current developments in technology only respond to long-standing cultural and economic ambitions; the problems of “infocracy” seem curiously similar to those of ancient democracy as described by Plato; while the naïve belief in AI as an omnipotent agent reproduces the religious expectations of previous ages.

Using a Tocquevillian term to reformulate the traditional concept of the end of history in a way that takes into account the apparent instability of our present situation also suggests that the French author had an overarching if implicit theory of the former, for which the paper argues by referring to corresponding passages not only in his published works but even more so in his letters and private conversations.

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History as a Churinga: Claude Lévi-Strauss's Image of Historical Time

The following paper, combining anthropological and philosophical approaches, aims to analyse the images of history that Lévi-Strauss contrasts with Western teleological metaphysics. I will start with a metaphor that Lévi-Strauss considers paradigmatic of the relationship between synchrony and diachrony, which is that of the *churinga*, a sacred object among the Arrernte people (central Australia), whose artistic decoration represents the entirety of the mythical past of this population. In the chapter ‘Time Regained’ of *The Wild Thought* (1962), Lévi-Strauss analyses the cult of the *churinga* by comparing it to modern civilisation's use of archives as an instrument to maintain the present in a concrete relationship with the past. Firstly, Lévi-Strauss opposes this metaphor of time to two other historical paradigms: Comte's model of progress and Roberthson-Smith's model of sacrifice. In the following chapter of *The Wild Thought* (‘History and Dialectics’), the argument develops into a critique of Sartre, through another metaphorical distinction relating to two opposite attitudes towards history: that between ‘cold societies’ and ‘hot societies’. First, I will clarify the cosmological meaning of the *churinga* as a metaphor for the articulation between past, present and future. Next, I will discuss the

debate with antagonistic images of history, focusing on the critical interpretation of the French Revolution as a myth. Finally, I will use this example to criticise the traditional interpretation of Lévi-Strauss' structural anthropology as an antithesis to history, showing its subtle correlation between structure and event, in all its epistemological, political and metaphysical consequences.

Marco Barbieri (University of Modena and Reggio Emilia) – marco.barbieri7@phd-drest.eu

World History as the Image of History: On Georg Simmel's Perspective

Historiographical research can hardly function without representations of its material (deeds, changes). An equivalent yet distinct problem arises for the philosophy of history. Here, the goal is to depict a singular image: that of world history, which is meant to encompass many pictures to form a cohesive mosaic – one that is meaningful and, at least in the classical version of the philosophies of history, endowed with a teleology.

The possibility or impossibility of a comprehensive image of history corresponds to the possibility or impossibility of the philosophy of history as such. We intend to revise George Simmel's writings on the topic (especially, but not exclusively, *The Problems of the Philosophy of History*) to find some clarification. Overall, he describes a plasticity that is inherent to the elements of our knowledge. Moreover, if «historical time is solely the form of reality», then any historical comprehension must occur within and *as* form. Simmel's method of philosophizing (and doing sociology) attests to this, as it is rich with images (from the poor to the metropolis, from jewels and fashion to the window and the bridge) that become epistemological tools for grasping the dynamic nature of reality that would otherwise be lost; they are not concepts, but they are necessary to infuse life into theoretical concepts. We argue that there is a highly original approach here, one that offers many elements for imagining new versions of the philosophy of history.

Chair - Britta Hochkirchen (Freie Universität Berlin / Friedrich Schiller University Jena) –

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Panel 30 – Histories of Concepts 2/ Democracy

Pasi Ihalainen (University of Jyväskylä) – pasi.t.ihalainen@jyu.fi

Cold War Ideological Divides and the Concept of "Parliamentary Democracy" A Comparative Text-Mining Analysis of Controlled Democracy in Northwest European Parliaments, 1945-68

This paper investigates how the concept of 'democracy' was ideologically contested and redefined in Northwest European parliamentary debates between 1945 and 1968, a period marked by Cold War tensions and rhetorical polarization. Using text-mining techniques—including word embeddings, collocation analysis, co-occurrence patterns, and frequency metrics—the study opens by illustrating preceding trends with 'democratic government' emerging as a discursive alternative to 'representative government' around 1910 and 'parliamentary democracy' becoming a dominant framework in response to the rise of totalitarianism during the interwar years.

The analysis reveals how 'democracy' was frequently qualified by 'parliamentarism' and the rising term 'representative democracy' as a distinctly parliamentary, rather than purely academic, label for Western democratic systems after the Second World War, contrasted with the 'people's democracies' of the Eastern Bloc. The study also explores how ideological vocabularies—centred on 'liberalism,' 'capitalism,' 'socialism,' and 'communism,' and to a lesser extent 'conservatism'—shaped 'democracy' during this period.

Focusing primarily on the British, French, and German parliaments, the paper also incorporates comparative insights from the conferences of the Inter-Parliamentary Union and the Danish, Dutch, Finnish, Irish, Norwegian, and Swedish contexts. It further examines how discursive shifts in the understanding of 'representative democracy' in relation to the notion of popular sovereignty anticipated broader challenges to parliamentary systems that intensified after 1968. The findings are situated within the broader historiographical debates on "constrained democracy," drawing on the work of Martin Conway, Jan-Werner Müller, and Pepijn Corduwener.

Hugo Bonin (University of Jyväskylä) – hugo.cg.bonin@gmail.com
Liberal Democracy: Genealogy of a Conceptual Apparatus

This paper investigates the conceptual history of “liberal democracy” in Britain and France across the twentieth century, tracing how a once marginal and often oxymoronic phrase came to dominate contemporary political discourse. While today “liberal democracy” is treated as a settled regime type – often viewed as the normative endpoint of modern politics – this study reveals its emergence as a historically contingent and politically constructed category. Rather than assuming a stable fusion of liberal and democratic traditions, I examine the semantic labor, political struggles, and rhetorical shifts that gradually rendered the term coherent, legitimate, and widely adoptable.

Adopting a nominalist and semasiological approach, the paper reconstructs the uses of “liberal democracy” in parliamentary debates, political theory, and public discourse from the aftermath of World War I to the early 2000s. It demonstrates that liberal democracy only became a self-evident reference point late in the century – particularly in the context of Cold War geopolitics, the crisis of postwar political legitimacy, and the intellectual reconfigurations of the 1970s and 1980s.

By shifting attention from institutional developments to conceptual articulation, the paper contributes to ongoing debates within the history of concepts about the political work performed by normative vocabularies. It argues that understanding the rise of “liberal democracy” as a hegemonic ideal is essential for interrogating its limits today – and for imagining democratic futures not bound by its historical compromises.

Mariana Perry (San Sebastián University, Chile) – marianaperryf@gmail.com

From the Revolutionary Future to the Democratic Present: Transformations in the Temporal Perception of Chilean Socialist Renovation

Following the military coup in Chile, the left initiated significant processes of political reconfiguration. Faced with the defeat of the political project embodied in the Chilean path to socialism and the experience of violence established in Chile, left-leaning intellectuals in exile questioned the essential pillars of their political being and action. A substantial segment of Chilean socialists in the diaspora shaped a process subsequently known as “socialist renovation,” the central tenets of which involved a resignification of the concept of democracy and a departure from the Marxist-Leninist framework.

This entailed a reconsideration of temporal perception. The future promised by socialist emancipation, which had been perceived as accelerated by the revolution initiated in 1970, was suspended. Confronted with the horror of the experience of violence, revolution lost its legitimacy as the means to achieve that future. In its place, the urgency of a return to democracy was prioritized as a moderating space to safeguard human rights. The future-oriented perspective was replaced by the demand for present liberty and a reinterpretation of the past, which underscored the centrality of the democratic achievements attained by the popular movement.

The present paper seeks to elucidate the theoretical and political shifts inherent in the socialist renovation undertaken by Chileans in exile and how the change in the temporal perception of political subjects intervened in the reformulation of the Chilean socialist project at the end of the century.

Chair - **Jani Marjanen (University of Helsinki) – jani.marjanen@helsinki.fi**

Panel 31 – The 20th Century in Basic Concepts: Encyclopedia of Historical Semantics in Germany. Approaches, Contributions, Challenges

For over 15 years, conceptual historians have debated the need and challenges of a successor project to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* to chronicle the 20th century history of concepts in Germany. Since 2022, a joint project now works to create such a lexicon, headed by the ZfL Berlin in cooperation with the ZZF Potsdam and the Leibniz Institute for the German Language (IDS) in Mannheim. While the project builds upon the Koselleckian approach of the GG, the editors decided to divert from it in keyways, e.g. by paying more attention to pragmatics and everyday language use in specific communicative situations, or by making use of the possibilities of exploring large corpora via distant reading tools. Importantly, they also refrained from presupposing a fixed set of development categories or a new *Sattelzeit* hypothesis, instead conceiving of the history of basic concepts in the 20th century as multifariously fractured and contradictory. With the first set of

articles now published, we will examine the challenges of analysing historical semantics in the 20th century and ask to what extent this open-ended approach has revealed common threads. Which overarching trends can be gleaned from the conceptual histories published in the lexicon up until now? How do they confirm, contradict or nuance earlier assumptions about conceptual change in the 20th century? What insights do they provide for political, social, and cultural history and their turning points? Which common theoretical and methodological challenges did the authors and editors face? In this panel, three project members will discuss these questions, drawing on both their own contributions and other articles that have already been published or are currently in preparation.

Rüdiger Graf (Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam) – graf@zzf-potsdam.de
What Happened to the Horizon of Expectation in Contemporary History?

In his studies in conceptual history, Reinhart Koselleck argued that the idea of an open future emerged in the *Sattelzeit* as people's expectations diverged from their space of experience. Koselleck formulated this thesis at a time when many intellectuals questioned if this quintessentially modern conceptualization of time was still valid. The presentation will re-evaluate these sweeping theses concerning a change of temporal regimes or regimes of historicity in the final decades of the 20th century, looking at the conceptual histories of older concepts ordering historical time (crisis, future and utopia) as well as those that gained currency only in that period (prognosis, risk, prevention, and precaution).

Falko Schmieder (Leibniz Centre for Literary and Cultural Research Berlin) – schmieder@zfl-berlin.org
The 20th Century in Basic Concepts: A Dictionary of Historical Semantics in Germany

The article discusses the lexicon's approach and its implementation in the practical work on the first articles. It gives a first impression of overarching semantic trends and caesuras that have emerged from the articles published so far and draws a preliminary comparison with Koselleck's GG. Particular attention will be paid to various dimensions of the temporality of concepts.

Simon Specht (Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam) – simon.specht@zzf-potsdam.de
Basic Concepts Between Reflexive Self-Positioning and Pragmatic Use: The Case of "progress" in the 20th Century

The presentation will discuss the speaker's research on the concept of 'Fortschritt' ('progress'). As a central temporal concept tied to the idea of modernity, 'progress' was, on the one hand, an important reference point for reflections on one's own place in historical time. On the other hand, it was also significant in a much more pragmatic use, as attributions as to what constituted 'progress' and who could claim to stand for it structured political and social conflicts. The contribution will present central dynamics of the concept's history in the 20th century, between renunciation, retention and reappropriation. In doing so, it will reflect on broader methodological challenges, namely the balance between distant and close reading approaches, and between representing the diversity of a concept's use and generalizing about its long-term trajectories.

Chair - **Todd Weir (University of Groningen)** – t.h.weir@rug.nl

Panel 32 – Historical Materialism/2

Mikkel Flohr (Roskilde University) – mflohr@ruc.dk
History, Critique, Politics: Towards a Materialist Approach to the History of Ideas

The proposed paper is a reflection on and contribution to the development of a distinctly Marxist approach to the history of ideas, focusing in particular on the history of political thought. It commences with an outline of the relevance of historical materialism to the study of the history of ideas and interrogates the reasons for its historical marginalization within the discipline, namely Quentin Skinner and the so-called Cambridge School. It then introduces and engages one of the most successful attempts at constructing a Marxist approach to the history of ideas in dialogue with the Cambridge School, namely Ellen Meiksins Wood's "social history of political theory." However, the paper identifies a number of contradictions in her approach and show how they can be resolved via a return to and elaboration of Marx's historical materialism. The paper concludes by

outlining the contours of a novel materialist approach to the history of ideas, combining Marx's historical materialism with Wood's social history of political theory.

Gennaro Imbriano (University of Bologna) – gennaro.imbriano@unibo.it

Giovanni Arrighi on Time and History

In my contribution, I would like to offer some reflections from the Italian sociologist, economist and philosopher Giovanni Arrighi, with particular reference to his theory of the succession of global accumulation cycles and his theory of hegemonic transitions. Using Arrighi's categories, the present world could be interpreted as a symptom of the crisis of the global hegemony of the United States of America and the problematic condition of the hegemonic transition. As Arrighi predicted, each transitional phase could involve war and increasing financial and military tension among competing regional powers: from the transition a multipolar world of peace can emerge, but also a new "systemic chaos".

Chiara Musolino (University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne) – chiara.musolino@yahoo.com

Beyond Linear Time: Ernst Bloch on the Persistence of the Past and the Heritage of the Present

What kind of temporality can account for periods of crisis, unfinished histories, and latent possibilities? This paper examines Ernst Bloch's response to this question, developed in the context of the political and intellectual crises of the 1930s. While Bloch is often read as a philosopher of the *not-yet*, privileging the future as the central temporal horizon, his conception of time rests on a more complex theory of historical persistence and non-synchronicity, in which other temporal dimensions play a decisive role.

Two key notions are central to this inquiry: the "past that does not pass" and the "heritage of the present". Far from opposing one another, they articulate a layered temporality in which historical residues remain active in the present, not as memory, but as unrealized potential. The present is not a discrete moment but a site structured by inherited tensions and incomplete processes.

The paper examines how this temporal logic is developed in Bloch's writings, especially in *Heritage of Our Times* (1935), where Bloch's temporal logic emerges from his analysis of the political and social realities of the time. To exemplify this, it turns to Bloch's interpretation of modernist art, particularly Expressionism, as a form through which temporal tensions are rendered visible.

In conclusion, it is suggested that Bloch's conception of time is not only of theoretical significance but also offers a powerful lens for understanding how unresolved pasts continue to shape the present. His reflections remain relevant in a time of renewed historical ruptures.

Chair - **Lotte List (Copenhagen Business School)** – lotte.list@outlook.com

Panel 33 – Literary and Cultural Perspectives

Alisa Shablovskaia (University of Oslo) – alisa.shablovskaia@ikos.uio.no

Concept-Characters and National Pasts in Contemporary Iranian Fiction

This paper explores the use of concept-characters in two contemporary Iranian novels – *Another Day of Shura* by Fariba Vafi (2020) and *Martyr!* by Kaveh Akbar (2024) – as a means of rethinking the entangled legacies of Iran's twentieth century. We approach the protagonists – Shura, a woman trapped in a stifling marriage and haunted by the ideals inherited from her Leftist father, and Cyrus Shams, a grieving poet and former addict obsessed with martyrdom – as literary embodiments of two central Iranian political-theological concepts: *shura* (consultation) and *shahadat* (martyrdom). Shura's narrative interrogates the burden of reason as a gendered tool of legitimacy, rooted in the classical Islamic discourse on consultation, and exposes its emotional and moral emptiness in everyday life. Cyrus, by contrast, grapples with the Islamic Republic's instrumentalization of martyrdom, attempting to reclaim its meaning through a personal "book of martyrs" that confronts the national trauma of the Iran-Iraq War and the idealized culture of grief it helped produce. Through these concept-led characters and their familial pasts, both authors respond to two defining ruptures in Iranian modernity: the failure of the Iranian Left and the birth of the Islamic Republic. By embedding these ideas in the inner lives of their protagonists, the novels dislodge the political concepts from state-centered narratives and invite a more intimate, critical engagement with Iran's historical imaginaries. This paper argues that

fiction becomes a conceptual arena in which temporal and ideological closure is resisted through personal transformation.

Ana Bigotte Vieira (New University Lisbon) – anabigottevieira@gmail.com

On the Concept of Dance in the 20th Century Portugal

In which ways does dance help us to analyze and reinvent historical narratives of the lived experience of the 20th century?

I would like to present an ongoing project on the history of the concept of dance in the 20th century. Situated in the Portuguese context, this research analyzes how dance practices were inscribed throughout key moments of the century and how discourses on dance/movement both ratify and co-constitute the lived experience of those moments. I am particularly interested in how dance synthesized the “spirit of time” and how figures such as Isadora Duncan epitomize “modernity” and “acceleration”.

This research builds on archival work on 20th-century Portuguese dance, coordinated by me and choreographer João dos Santos Martins since 2016, recently presented at the Gulbenkian Foundation (see [Dance Not Dance](#)). It interrogates collected documents and maps the semantic field of dance-related terms in key historical periods: the Roaring Twenties, the Long Sixties, and the Eighties. The project engages with Performance and Dance Studies and is developed through a feminist epistemological lens, drawing on Joan W. Scott (1986). Methodologically, it builds on Reinhart Koselleck’s *History of Concepts*.

Although centered on Portuguese material, the project extends beyond national borders. It explores the cosmopolitan nature of dance through contexts such as Lisbon, Mindelo, and Luanda, considering diverse agents and cross-cultural exchanges. These settings highlight Portugal’s complex position—shaped by dictatorship, imperialism, anti-colonial struggle, revolution, and EEC membership—within global histories of leisure culture.

Cecilia Tossounian (University of San Andrés, Argentina) – cecitoss@gmail.com

Universal Beauty Contested: Miss Universe Beauty Contests During the 1930s

In the early twentieth century, the Miss Universe beauty pageants became a highly symbolic global event. By inviting women from both the Western and increasingly non-Western worlds, the contests aimed to select the most beautiful women on earth. The first contest, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1930, saw Miss Brazil crowned the winner. Subsequent events were held in 1932 and 1935, when the judges selected Miss Turkey and Miss Egypt as the winners, respectively. The pageant was then suspended until the end of World War II.

Despite growing interest in beauty and aesthetics as dimensions of cultural globalization during the 19th and early 20th centuries, the impact of the proliferation of beauty ideals on universal standards during this period remains an overlooked topic. This paper examines press coverage of beauty contests to analyze how white European standards of beauty were transformed by the incorporation of other notions of beauty embodied by contestants from the Global South. Rather than viewing the concept of universal beauty as a Eurocentric idea spread mainly through imperial imposition or Western cultural expansion, this paper explores the global changes and local circumstances that contributed to its redefinition. More specifically, it argues that Miss Universe contests played an important role in broadening the concept of universal beauty by incorporating regions outside of Europe and the US that claimed their own notions of beauty as a means of asserting geopolitical power.

Farha Noor (Freie Universität Berlin) – farhanoor3@gmail.com

The Ghosts of Modernity: Temporality, Materiality and Haunting in South Asia

This paper explores the material deliberations on temporality as manifested in literary, cultural, and cinematic representations of ghosts in colonial and postcolonial Bengal/South Asia. The Bengali word *bhūta* and its varying connotations – the *past*, *being/becoming*, the *ghost* – suggest an intricate relationship between history and time. Drawing on literary and historical scholarship, the paper highlights the recurring motif of spectrality’s engagement with transforming material cultures. Modern ghosts in Bengal display an increasing obsession with gems, jewellery, food and buildings. While earlier images of ghosts show the supernatural’s affinity with ‘natural’ matter, as seen in their perching on trees and travelling with humans/animals, the late modern projection of ghosts exhibits an attraction to emergent technologies and materially designated spaces like buses, trains, markets, and offices. The paper contends that the ghosts’ shifting material desires along with frequent tropes of return-rebirth reveal an entangled relationship between temporalities and feelings. It argues

for a collaborative approach to conceptual history, material history, and history of the senses. The haunt/ontological trajectories of the ghost as metaphor articulate historical conceptualisation beyond the depiction of modernity as an “era of science”, through narratives of savouring, feeling, witnessing, and *haunting*. Simultaneously, the material proliferation of ghost stories in this period of intense transitions significantly contributed towards narrativizing history. Analysing studies on material cultures, developments in conceptual history, and a range of Bengali modern ghost stories and films, this contribution examines the artistic and literary representations of ghosts and their material entanglements in depictions of temporality across post/-colonial Bengali imagination.

Chair - Teresa Torcello (University of Bologna) – teresa.torcello2@unibo.it

Panel 34 – Constitutions and Empire in the Nineteenth Century

Cosmin Mihut (“Alexandru Ioan Cuza” University of Iași) – mihut.cosmin@yahoo.com

Negotiating Modernity: Wallachia’s Constitutional Framework and the Limits of Russian-Imposed Reform (1829-1837)

This paper examines the nature and limitations of the reformist project initiated in Wallachia under Russian imperial supervision during the administration of General Pavel Kiselev (1829–1834) and its legacy in the years that followed. While the Organic Regulation of 1831 was conceived as an instrument of imperial control – designed to modernize governance, codify laws, and rationalize administration – it also created political spaces that Wallachian elites appropriated to challenge foreign tutelage. Far from being passive subjects of empire, Wallachia’s political actors navigated, adapted, and contested the frameworks imposed upon them, transforming the tools of imperial governance into instruments of emerging national autonomy.

The constitutional crisis of 1836–1837 marked a pivotal turning point, exposing the contradictions of Kiselev’s reforms and the limits of imposed constitutional modernization. The controversy over the “additional article” to the Organic Regulation, which entrenched foreign control, catalyzed a shift from institutional compliance to constitutional critique. The emerging “national party,” led by figures such as Ion Cămpineanu, mobilized legal discourse, public rhetoric, and diplomatic engagement to challenge Russian oversight and assert Wallachia’s right to self-government. This moment also reveals the complex interplay of internal reform and external influence, as Wallachian elites absorbed and reinterpreted French liberal ideals, leveraged British diplomatic support, and reframed national aspirations within the language of legality and constitutionalism. This nuances our understanding of 19th-century modernization in Eastern Europe and challenges binary narratives of domination versus resistance. It demonstrates that the transition to modern governance did not always follow Western templates, nor did it require full sovereignty. Instead, Wallachia’s path was shaped by creative appropriations of imperial frameworks, the strategic deployment of transnational ideas, and the gradual construction of a national discourse grounded in legality, not rebellion. Ultimately, this case invites us to think more critically about how small states navigate great-power politics – not only by resisting or submitting, but by transforming the tools of domination into instruments of future autonomy.

Jani Marjanen (University of Helsinki) – jani.marjanen@helsinki.fi

In Absence of Representation: Foreign Models, Conceptual Innovation, and the Emerging Public Sphere in Finland, 1809-1863

The post-Napoleonic Europe of the Holy Alliance was a continent characterized by imperial dependencies. The political map of Europe was made of a number of units with quite different statuses, ranging from imperial powers and nation states to states within a personal union, grand duchies, *Länder*, provinces, principalities and so forth. Although these units usually had a recently drafted written constitution and a representative assembly of some sort, this was not always the case. In Finland, a grand duchy within the Russian empire since 1809, the Diet was not convened between 1809 and 1863. Taking the contemporary notion of the age of constitutions as the point of departure, we study how the absence of representation and written constitution was dealt with in the Finnish context. As opposed to previous research, we showcase how the emerging press in Finland wrote about representative assemblies and constitutions in other countries in Europe and beyond. An analysis of the Finnish newspaper texts shows how foreign examples provided a kind of contemporaneity

of the non-contemporaneous, where the lack of representation was concretely felt in Finland, but ideas of representation and constitution were still present in the domestic press.

Wiktor Marzec (University of Warsaw) – wh.marzec@uw.edu.pl

Constitutional Concepts in the Kingdom of Poland in the Imperial Context (1815-31)

A major shift within Russian imperial governance happened with the recognition of the diet of newly annexed Finland in 1809 (also called *sejm* in Russian) and the adoption of the 1815 Constitution in Congress Poland. Apart from the integration of the Finnish and Polish institutions, major milestones here included the establishment of the Permanent Council as a deliberative body in 1801, the establishment of the State Council as a consultative legislative body in 1810, the Decembrist Uprising of 1825 that made oppositional ideas of parliament prominent, and the November Uprising in Poland in 1830–1831. These events were connected through figures like Adam Jerzy Czartoryski, Nikolai Nikolaevich Novosil'tsev, and Mikhail Mikhailovich Speranskii, who played pivotal roles in shaping concepts of parliament that resonated with or were inspired by the Polish Sejm model. The current paper discusses how the educated public of the Kingdom of Poland, sporting cherished republican tradition and the single actual representative body of the Empire after 1815 understood and conceptualized parliament and constitution. The basis for this study are mostly parliamentary debates from the Kingdom of Poland, supplemented by early opinion journals such as *Pamiętnik Warszawski*, *Dziennik Nauk i Umiejętności*, *Orzeł Biały* and *Tygodnik Polski i Zagraniczny*). A scrutiny of these debates will help locate the entangled debate in the Kingdom within broader imperial, European and global conceptual history, as well as contribute to the discussions of a liberalizing and/or bureaucratizing empire.

Commentary - **Joanna Innes (University of Oxford)** – joanna.innes@history.ox.ac.uk

Chair - **Joanna Innes (University of Oxford)** – joanna.innes@history.ox.ac.uk

Panel 35 – Intellectual History Perspectives on Historical Time /2

Gianpaolo Cherchi (Phd, University of Sassari) – cherchigianpaolo@gmail.com

Images of Plural Temporality in Ernesto de Martino

Ernesto de Martino's work is strongly focused on history and its conditions of possibility. Struggling with Croce's idea of history, which excluded primitives since they resort to magic and do not possess the necessary consciousness and reflectivity for a rational approach to life, the ethnographer rejects the divide between reason and non-reason and identifies in magical practices the origin of the Self from which the history of Western civilization begins. In the precarity of presence humans experience what he calls "*dehistorification*", a risk of losing the Self, which is together a loss of history and, especially, a loss of community. Politically and culturally influenced by Gramsci, de Martino decided to study the religious aspects of popular world, interpreting the folklore (i.e. Tarantism, Lament) not only as a form of resistance of lower and subaltern classes against the hegemonic culture but, above all, as a way to react to this *dehistorification* risk. The conditions of possibility of history are therefore expressed by the concept of "*ethos of transcendence of life into value*": it conveys the effort for overcoming what life is as a merely biological fact into a culturally and historically enhanced notion of life. This paper aims to show how in de Martino's perspective emerges the image of plural temporality, since he rejects the paradigm of a straightforward linearity and depicts a branched-out and stratified development of history, where its various stages do not follow one another in a consequential order but they intersect like surfaces on the same plane.

Augusto Petter (Central European University, Budapest) – augusto.petter@sciencespo.fr

Beyond the Time Wall: Ernst Jünger and the Temporal Limits of Humanity

This paper explores the way in which Ernst Jünger approaches historical time in his post-war essays *Über die Linie* (1951), *Das Sanduhrbuch* (1954) and *An der Zeitmauer* (1959), and his novel *Heliopolis* (1949). His essays, I argue, present an increasing critique of linear-historicist temporality over the course of the 1950s, while he is gradually moving away from ultranationalism. He then abandons nationalist narratives in favour of historical times defined by holistic, astrological, and elemental features. By 1959, Jünger had developed methods of

reckoning with these new temporalities to reconcile technological time with Gaia's time, human history and earth's history. His quest begins at the point of crisis, when human civilisation witnesses an epochal crossing, depicted by him first as a door, then a line and finally a wall. Jünger's wall metaphor resembles a fiery barrier ignited by civilisation's destructive power. In fictional works such as *Heliopolis*, Jünger imagines a world beyond the time wall. There, the reader is confronted with a post-catastrophic scenario, which, having passed an ontological threshold, humanity arrives at the limits of technological rationality (nihilism and Prometheanism) and the exhaustion of the Gaia-human relation. Finally, I explore Jünger's temporal metaphors through their consonance with his contemporaries' ideas of *Katechon* (Schmitt) and *das prometheische Gefälle* (Anders). In doing so, this paper aims to learn from their efforts -while confronting their reactionary limitations- to cope with catastrophic times and apocalyptic possibilities from the universal empty time of so-called modernity, and to facilitate modes of planetary thinking.

Aleksandra Tobiasz (Institute of Civilisation and Culture, Ljubljana) – Aleksandra.Tobiasz@alumni.eui.eu
Central European Diaristic Chronotope: Edvard Kocbek's Diary

In the presentation I would like to analyze concepts of time reconfigured in the diaristic writing of Slovenian writer Edvard Kocbek. I will refer to Walter Benjamin's different conceptualisations of time both within historicism (universal history) and historical materialism. While the first one is founded on the empty and homogenous linear vision of time filled with historical progress, the second one accentuates temporal "constellations" and the present moment, the role of which is not a mere transition but a gateway undermining and shattering the historical continuum. Whereas the first vision of history intends to introduce the distance between the present and the past ("once upon a time"), the latter one attempts to bridge this distance and approach the past by experiencing it in the present moment. The view of the historical process as discontinuous and in some way comprised in the present moment which, by halting the time, could allow one to experience the past in its fragments is centred on *Kairos*, individual time of consciousness which also underlies the diaristic practice. Keeping a diary means taking notes always in the present moment. This temporal dimension unique for a journal (its chronotope?) allows its author to shatter the continuity of time and focus on his experiences of being in the world as comprised in the present *hic et nunc* but concurrently extended towards the past (by rereading the entries of the bygone selves) and towards the future image of the self.

Alessio Giovagnoni (University of Bologna) – alessio.giovagnoni2@unibo.it
Furio Jesi and the Spartacist Revolt: Politicization, Manipulation and the Suspension of Historical Time

The paper aims to reconstruct the analysis of the Spartacist insurrection that took place in Berlin in 1919, elaborated by the mythologist Furio Jesi in the book *Spartakus: The Symbolism of the Revolt* (1969). While the intent of Jesi's work is to trace a phenomenology of political uprisings, my essay seeks to place, using the semantics of time and the tools of Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte*, specific attention to the mythical-temporal dynamics at work within the insurrection and which determine precise configurations of temporality. My paper will highlight how Jesi resemantizes the idea of "bourgeois time" by understanding it as an eternal present and the result of a manipulation operated by the ruling class. At the same time, the essay will emphasize the difference put forth by the author between revolt and revolution, which is grounded in a different experience of time. While the concept of revolution is derived from Marxian semantics and understood as a strategy cast in history, that of revolt takes on the meaning of a sudden suspension of the historical *continuum* that allows the "vision" of a remote future. Ultimately, the paper will try to show how revolt can be configured as a strategy of power aimed at disrupting revolutionary planning and producing a "discharge" of the tensions accumulated in society. In this sense it takes on the appearance of the Bakhtin's carnival, an overthrowing moment of the legal and hierarchical order that, by producing a semblance of liberation, is functional to the restoration of the bourgeois time.

Chair - Piotr Kuligowski (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw) – pkuligowski@ihpan.edu.pl

Christian Hoekema (Ghent University) – Christian.Hoekema@ugent.be

Between Pedantry and Cultivation: Erudition in the Sattelzeit

While the intellectual history of ‘erudition’ is well-established for the early-modern period, not least through the Cambridge School, its fate during the Sattelzeit remains underexplored.. This paper contends that ‘erudition’ during this period – typically regarded as merely in decline – was instead reconfigured, subject to both contestation and quiet persistence within broader civilising projects. Drawing on standard *Begriffsgeschichte* methods (e.g. scrutinizing lexis and encyclopedic entries) and based on ongoing doctoral research into the history of nineteenth-century philology, the paper traces how ‘erudition’ came to mediate between diverging models of scholarly authority. Etymologically grounded in *ex-rudis* – the act of drawing forth from a raw, uncultivated state – ‘erudition’ historically connoted both personal refinement and cultural cultivation. In the Sattelzeit, this moral-temporal charge was neither simply discarded nor preserved intact. Instead, ‘erudition’ began to circulate among adjacent ideals such as *Bildung* and *Kultur*, retaining its civilising valence while adapting to new epistemic and institutional conditions. Criticised as pedantic or inert from the Enlightenment onward, it was refunctionalized by historicist scholars as a *temporal tool*: a disciplined means of accessing and reconstructing historical difference. This repositioning, it will be shown, endowed ‘erudition’ with aesthetic depth. No longer merely the accumulation of factual knowledge, it came to signal a perceptual and affective attunement to the formal alterity of the past – a cultivated sensibility distinct from the already emergent progressivist notion of science. As such, ‘erudition’ in this period offers a case of how conceptual and aesthetic registers intertwine in the formation of temporal consciousness.

Mario Domínguez Castro (Adolfo Ibáñez University, Chile) – mdominguezc@alumnos.uai.cl

The Meanings of Teaching in Contexts of Educational Transformation in Democratic Governments (1961-1973) and Dictatorship (1973-1990) in Chile

This research addresses the reforms that brought about significant changes in teaching in Chile and sought to achieve what was called the “professionalization” of teaching: the reform initiated in the 1960s that culminated in 1973 under Frei Montalva and Allende, and subsequently, the series of changes implemented by the dictatorship of Augusto Pinochet between 1974 and 1989.

To describe the meanings that the state attributed to teaching, we analyzed the conceptual field of each period. To this end, we used documents that were highly relevant and widely used by the governments in power at the time, such as decrees and laws relating to the regulation of teaching, its content, and conditions of practice, as well as the general guidelines provided by the Chilean Ministry of Education through its official means of communication with schools and teachers. For the exploratory analysis of the documentary sources, we used computational text mining techniques at three levels: 1) to identify variations over time in the selected terms, in this case “teachers,” “instructors,” “professors,” and “professionals,” measuring their centrality in the analyzed texts; 2) relating these words to those terms most closely related to them in the texts (placement analysis) belonging to the periods analyzed; and 3) analyzing the latent factors contained in the texts to describe the trends and emphases of the governments in power.

Mihaela Popescu (Politehnica University of Timișoara) – mihaela.popescu@upt.ro

Accelerated Futures: Time, Technology, and the Transformation of Foreign Language Learning

This paper examines how the experience and conceptualization of time in foreign language learning and teaching has been profoundly transformed by the sociotechnical dynamics of late modernity. Drawing on the temporal frameworks of R. Koselleck and H. Rosa it argues that the traditional, gradual temporality of language acquisition, once aligned with immersion, repetition, and reflection, has been replaced by an ethos of acceleration. Digital platforms, AI tutors, and gamified apps promise rapid fluency, fragmenting the learning process into short bursts of measurable progress while restructuring pedagogical expectations and institutional timelines.

The paper situates this transformation within the broader history of temporal regimes, showing how the divergence between Koselleck’s *space of experience* and *horizon of expectation* is increasingly widened by technological pressures. Learners and teachers alike are caught in desynchronized cycles of productivity and linguistic development, generating a new form of temporal alienation within the educational field. The analysis reflects on the metaphors of speed, efficiency, and immediacy that dominate contemporary language

discourse and explores how these metaphors reconfigure not only learning strategies but also the very meaning of linguistic competence.

Ultimately, the paper argues for a *chronopedagogical* rethinking of language education; one that acknowledges the temporal depth necessary for intercultural understanding, memory formation, and sustainable proficiency.

Chair - Jorge Chaloub (Federal University of Rio de Janeiro) – jchaloub84@gmail.com

Panel 37 – Liberty as Independence: Perspectives on Conceptual History and Political Thought

The conceptual pair of liberty and freedom is among the most controversial political concepts. Few authors – in the West – would be disputing the value of liberty, but just therefore the controversies on its content and significance are intense. Isaiah Berlin's classical division between negative and positive liberty (1958) still largely dominates the academic discussion.

Quentin Skinner has since 1980s sketched a third alternative that has given a new turn to the debate. Using parliamentary language, he has moved an amendment that both disputes the value of Berlin's dichotomy and opens up new perspectives to the debate by reactivating an older concept. In *Liberty before Liberalism* (1998) Skinner speaks of a neo-Roman concept of liberty, in order to mark a difference to the established terminus of republican liberty. An inspiration for Skinner for looking at the origins of the concept in the Roman law was Philip Pettit's book *Republicanism* (1997). The contrast between Pettit and Skinner is most visible in the antonym: while Pettit saw his republican concept of liberty as "non-domination", for Skinner the counter-concept of liberty was dependence from arbitrary power. The debates since then have gone in several rounds, including a secondary literature on the reception of Skinner's, Pettit's and other theorists' work (see e.g. Dawson and van Dign eds. *Rethinking Liberty before Liberalism* (2022)).

Quentin Skinner's new monograph *Liberty as Independence. The making and unmaking of a political ideal* (CUP 2025)¹² gives a new turn to the debate. Whereas Skinner previously focused on the period of the English Revolution, the timeline in the new book goes from the Glorious Revolution (1688/1689) to the French Revolution (1789 onwards). He deals with different types of rhetorical *topoi*, around which the debates on freedom and liberty in that periods were conducted: official documents, debates among scholars and political actors, fictional literature as well as reconsiders the views of major political thinkers of the period, such as David Hume and Edmund Burke.

Our panel will focus on the content and significance of Skinner's new book of for conceptual history and political theory of liberty or freedom from different perspectives, such as

- The validity and weight of Skinner's approach and interpretation rethinking of the conceptual history of liberty in the period of his study
- Expressions of liberty as independence after the French Revolution, from nineteenth to twenty-first century
- Liberty as independence in the continental European political thought, from Immanuel Kant via Max Weber to the contemporary thinkers
- The relationships between liberty and rhetoric in Skinner's work
- Does the contrast between the rhetoric of acclamation and rhetoric of deliberation correspond to that freedom from interference and freedom from dependence
- Thematic applications of liberty as independence, for example in the parliamentary procedures and practices or regarding the academic freedom
- Alternative visions of political liberty not discussed in detail by Skinner

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Rhetoric and Liberty in Quentin Skinner's Thought

Among Skinner's major contributions is his recovery of two key traditions in the history of political thought: the neo-Roman idea of liberty as independence (a tradition whose genealogy and significance he has brought further to light in his recent work *Liberty as Independence*) and the rhetorical tradition, especially in its Ciceronian and Renaissance forms. These two dimensions converge in important ways. As Kari Palonen has

¹² See <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/liberty-as-independence/3309A4BD2E0FDC722DF8CEDC05C7E0A2>.

noted, rhetorical practices such as arguing *in utramque partem* and the use of *paradiastole* enable the questioning of all forms of authority, so as the supposed neutrality of reason- and consensus-based political theories. However, Skinner's account overlooks a crucial aspect of the classical tradition – namely, the efforts of figures such as Aristotle, and above all Cicero, to reconcile rhetoric with philosophy. In this tradition, rhetoric is not merely a sophistic technique 'to do things with words', but a means of shaping political life by appealing to hearts while also seeking truth and plausibility. This omission affects his account of the link between rhetoric and liberty. Classical and humanist thinkers saw a key threat to republican liberty in the demagogic degeneration of public discourse: when political speech becomes purely instrumental and loses its reflective, truth-seeking character, the republic risks sliding into tyranny. Thus, while compelling, Skinner's account of rhetoric remains partial – shaped by a Machiavellian reinterpretation that intensifies the contingent and conflictual dimension of politics, but severs it from theoretical reflection, thereby running the risk of losing the philosophical depth needed to sustain its critical potential.

Anna Björk (Demos Helsinki) – anna.bjork@demoshelsinki.fi
AI, liberty, agency? A Composition of Perspectives

The political potential of digital technologies is one of the major drivers of the contemporary geopolitical, social, environmental and economic developments at the moment. Contemporary research across fields deals with topics such as global and European digital politics, the social, political and economic impacts of AI, or technology regulation and governance (e.g. Coeckelbergh, 2020, 2021; Ulnicane and Erkkilä, 2023). From the perspective of a research agenda inspired by conceptual history and the history of ideas, the intersection of digital technologies and politics opens up the opportunity to ask, what kind of conceptual shifts are emerging from this nexus, including how are political key concepts used in pivotal debates on the regulation and governance of digital technology such as AI? This paper is embedded in an ongoing research project on social contracts and technology, and develops it from the perspective of liberty and agency. It especially engages with debates on AI as a driver of social and political change, asking what kind of conditions for liberty and agency do the expectations (fears, hopes, and neutral approaches alike) for AI set up, and how does this resonate with the current power political climate.

Kari Palonen (University of Jyväskylä) – kari.i.palonen@jyu.fi
Freedom as Independence in Max Weber's Russian Writings of 1906

With his book *Liberty as Independence* Quentin Skinner has expanded his long-term project of recovering liberty as from dependence on arbitrary powers. He challenges us to reconsider the concept also in the continental European political thought, which I shall do for Max Weber's writings, by reconsidering my previous interpretations on his work on freedom (see my articles on the topic in *Political Theory* in 1999 and *Max Weber Studies* 2016).

The concept of freedom (*Freiheit*) is omnipresent in already Weber's early work on ancient and medieval legal history and on the agricultural workers east of Elbe. He frequently uses an old German counter-concept to freedom, *Hörigkeit*, which corresponds to Skinner's discussion on slavery and serfdom as from of dependence.

In this paper I shall focus on Weber's long 'journalistic' analysis of the Russian Revolution of 1905. Weber admired the work of the 'revolutionaries' but was highly sceptical on their chances. Not only a premodern *Hörigkeit* remained strong in Russia but the Czarist reforms were attempts to modernise it in bureaucratising terms. Both the leading Liberals and the Marxists in Russia were bound to a vision in history not supporting the political liberty of individuals, human rights and democracy, as Weber said but had a high esteem for the local *semstvos*, which were, however, marginalised in the revolution. In Weber's pessimistic projections of the fate of revolution and of Russia in general, we can identify a vision of liberty as independence, clearly present in his later writings on parliamentarism and democracy.

Cristiana Senigaglia (University of Passau) – senigaglia@gmx.de
The Theme of Liberty as Independence in Hegel's Philosophy of Right

A significant part of Skinner's book is dedicated to the epoch of the American and the French Revolution, and at the same time the whole work highlights the topic of freedom as independence starting from the era of the Roman Republic and stressing its meaning for the Modern Age. These themes also play a significant role in Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, which is published in 1821 and still relates to the issues of the post-revolutionary

time. In his effort of coping the general with the particular will, the respect for the individual with the idea of an independent and overarching state, Hegel faces questions which concern the issue of individual freedom as independence, and especially the concept of “persona”, present in the Roman Law, the unequivocal refusal of slavery, the conception of a Constitution and of a parliamentary representation. Although these issues are connected with a strong idea of community and with some traditional forms of power, they simultaneously confirm the attention for individual freedom and the aim of expressing an independent will, and they raise the question of a dutiful political commitment as citizens within the state.

Chair - Jussi Kurunmäki (University of Jyväskylä) - jussi.kurunmaki@gmail.com

Panel 38 – Postcolonial Perspectives in Visual and Performing Arts

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The Escape at the Time of the Cultural Genocide: The Rejection of Assimilation in the Films of Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States

The escape of many children from residential schools financed by governments of British origin and run by Christian churches between the end of the 19th and 20th centuries became a metaphor for opposition and rejection within the framework of a dialectical mechanism. On the one hand, there is the adult oppressor and perpetrator, and on the other, there is the child oppressed and victimised. The child runs away, the adult chases him. The child belongs to a minority ethnic group, the adult belongs to the dominant ethnic group. This is the basic pattern of escape at the time of the cultural genocide in Australia, Canada, the United States and New Zealand.

After the end of the Anglo-Saxon model of forced cultural assimilation, the question arises of whether to start a path towards reconciliation between oppressors and oppressed. The films, cartoons and short films offer images on the memory of the crimes suffered by minorities in the context of cultural genocide. The power of escape narration can play a key role in a transitional justice process.

Four audiovisual works – *Rabbit-Proof Fence* for Australia, *Secret Path* for Canada, *Ghosts* for the United States and *Cousins* for New Zealand – deal with the meaning of escape. The strength of the narration of these escapes, analyzed and treated in a diachronic, comparative and interdisciplinary perspective, can represent an important contribution within a path towards reconciliation between natives and non-natives or, when the path is not undertaken, in keeping a flame of hope for the future.

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Ambiguities of African Art: Museums, Colonial Libraries, and Contemporary Reconfigurations

This paper explores the historical conceptualization of African art through the intersection of Mudimbe's (2019) notion of the “colonial library,” Lafont's (2023) critiques of aestheticization and colonial visibility, and debates within the Anthropology of Art. These anthropological approaches have long questioned the applicability and construction of the category African art, highlighting tensions between aesthetic judgments, ethnographic displays, and colonial taxonomies. Building on this theoretical framework, the research conducts a comparative analysis of exhibitions and collections in four institutions—the São Paulo Museum of Art (MASP), the National Museum of African Art (Washington, D.C.), the Musée du quai Branly (Paris), and the Museum of Black Civilizations (Dakar). The study investigates how these museums contribute to reshaping the meanings of African art in the global cultural imaginary. The central hypothesis is that African art objects remain entangled in conceptual ambiguities inherited from colonial knowledge systems and visual regimes. These ambiguities, however, are not passive remnants. Contemporary African artists reappropriate them, transforming institutional constraints into critical platforms to address silencing, memory, and strategies of repair. Through an interdisciplinary approach situated at the convergence of art history, museum studies, postcolonial theory, and anthropology, this ongoing research sheds light on both the exclusions that have historically framed African art and its contemporary reconfigurations within and beyond institutional spaces. Ultimately, the paper contributes to broader discussions on how historical times are visualized and contested through artistic practices and curatorial narratives.

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History Against Hegemonic, Imperialist Discourse: Wael Shawky's Drama 1882 and the Questioning of Historical Truth

This proposal examines the use of reenactment – the repetition of past historical events – as a way for contemporary art to reflect on history and time. It will focus on reenactment as a counterhegemonic strategy against the imperialist narrative of history, as its inherent political potential is being used by artists as a counter-power or counter-memory (Bénichou, 2020, p. 358).

The presented case study is Egyptian artist Wael Shawky's project "Drama 1882" (2024) for the 60th Venice Biennale's Egyptian Pavillon. This artwork, mixing opera with performance, shows the reenactment of historical events – the Urabi revolution during British colonial rule in Egypt (1879-1882) – as a re-staging of history, in an act of contestation of the official narrative. Specifically, it explores the role of constructed historical events that legitimized British colonialism in Egypt – a process defined by the artist as a "political theatre" (Shawky in Braho, 2024) – thereby questioning history's truthfulness.

This proposal emerges from the current debate on art and history, drawing on Mark Godfrey's concept of "artist as historian" (Godfrey, 2007) to Eva Kernbauer's analysis of "art as historiography" (Kernbauer, 2020). The artwork will be interpreted through the lens of the philosophical and political debate on the concept of hegemony, drawing on the thought of Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Judith Butler.

Finally, this proposal aims to show "Drama 1882" as an artistic reenactment of history, as it re-presents and re-performs history, questioning the historiographic project and the influence of hegemonic discourse in the way history is narrated.

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Post-Imperial Imaginations: The Concept of Silk Road in Post-WWII Japanese Visual Culture

The concept of "Silk Road" is a chronotope associated with premodern trade and cultural connectivity across the Eurasian continent, specifically between the ancient empires of Rome and China. It implies a temporality of *longue-durée*, but historians have shed light on its modern production within the Great Game competition for Central Asian resources. Most of this research has centered on European sources and on the agency of imperial centers. In this paper, I will instead look at the reconception of the idea of Silk Road within postwar Japanese visual culture, to show how the concept was redeployed in a cultural context that was conceived as marginal to the imagined centers of the Silk Road. The analysis of visual sources will suggest ways in which this geopolitical chronotope becomes part of cultural memory. The paper will analyze the artistic production of painter Hirayama Ikuo, and its broader connection with a visual imaginary of the Silk Road spread in postwar Japan through art exhibitions, TV documentaries, and connected with practices of preservation of Buddhist cultural heritage. The aestheticization and spiritualization of the concept of Silk Road operated in postwar Japan will provide a case study to apply Laura Doyle's concept of "Inter-imperiality" in combination with Barak Kushner's imperial aftermath. In so doing, the paper will provide a postcolonial reading of the concept of history implied in the Japanese visual reimagination of "Silk Road" from its Eurocentric origins, which nevertheless considers the legacy of empire in the East Asian context.

Chair - **Chiara Tartarini (University of Bologna)** – chiara.tartarini@unibo.it

Panel 39 – Comparative Histories of Worldview

This panel offers a comparative study of the concept of worldview (originally *Weltanschauung*) in different linguistic, national and transnational contexts from the 19th to the 21st century. Papers examine divergent uses being made of this term. In the USA, for example, institutes have been founded to promote "Chris an worldview," whereas European states, by contrast, are now using worldview to regulate and educate about religion. In Latin America, meanwhile, courts have ruled that Indigenous groups have a right to territory based on its importance for the survival of their cosmovision. This panel will include investigations of *mirovozzrenie*, *cosmovisión* and *levensbeschouwing* in particular.

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World-Experience and Worldview in the Russian Discourse Space

The paper will consider *mirovozzrenie* – the Russian equivalent of the German compound “*Weltanschauung*”. The paper traces the discursive contexts and social dynamics that were mobilized through the use of this term in the Russian Empire and later in the Soviet Union.

Mirovozzrenie initially acquired a disciplinary function and became part of the canon of bourgeois virtues. To a regimen political of purity there was also added a requirement of mental hygiene: the member of the intelligentsia was expected to possess a *worldview* that was “defined,” “elaborated,” “coherent,” “viable,” “clear,” “stable,” “original,” “independent,” and “morally elevated.” The worldview thus became a measure of bourgeois self-optimization – a marker not only of intellectual capacity but of ethical refinement. This normative imperative did not vanish after the October Revolution of 1917. Although the Marxist worldview was now elevated to the sole legitimate explanation of the world, the standards to which it was held changed little. It too was expected to be coherent, viable, clear, and fully developed – only now under new ideological auspices. Officially, it was of course declared necessary to educate workers and peasants into becoming “New People” – a process that consisted, not least, in transferring to them the possession of a proper worldview. In practice, however, the term – despite its ideological universalization – remained firmly in the hands of those who had long held exclusive authority over its use: the intelligentsia.

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Levensbeschouwing in Dutch-Speaking Belgium: From an Identity Marker of Secular Humanist Groups to Inclusive Terminology for Confessional and Non-Confessional Groups

The paper will explore the emergence of the concept of *levensbeschouwing* in Flanders in the early 1970s. In this period, secular groups began to advocate for the governmental recognition and funding of the *vrijzinnig laïciserende levensbeschouwing* (the secular laic worldview). The paper explores the relationship of this development to governmental confessional arrangements. The introduction of *levensbeschouwing* gradually changed the secular laic into a religion-related non-confessional group, culminating in formal recognition and subvention in 2002. These developments were informed by the push for recognition of religious groups that saw substantial growth due to immigration – muslim and orthodox christians respectively – and the development of the government-funded cultural sphere in Belgium from the 1970s onwards. All this was rooted in the idea of equal treatment of philosophical, political and linguistic groups as a consequence of societal and political tendencies of the me.

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From “Cosmovisión” to “Cosmovision” Via the Rise of Indigenism

The paper explores the translation of *Weltanschauung* into Spanish as « *cosmovisión* ». This translation was executed in the 1920s in Argentina, probably by members of the German community. Until the 1940s, it circulates mostly in Germanophile circles through its associations with German vitalist philosophies and the rise of fascism. From the 1950s onwards, however, it becomes increasingly associated with Indigenous people in Mexico, first as objects of study, and later as legal, political and religious actors. This association has produced such a semantic shift that the Spanish « *cosmovisión* » has entered the English language as « *cosmovision* » since the 1980s, where it is usually defined as a specific sort of worldview (the main English translation of *Weltanschauung* in English) or spirituality. This paper will follow this trajectory, emphasising the move from political life to academic knowledge-production and back to political and religious life across the 20th century.

Commentary - Alexandre Dupeyrix (University of Paris VIII) – alexandre.dupeyrix@univ-paris8.fr

The respondent for the papers is Alexandre Dupeyrix who recently published a book length discussion of the history of the term worldview (*Visions du monde; Histoire d’un concept, enjeux contemporains*, 2025).

Chair - Todd Weir (University of Groningen) – t.h.weir@rug.nl

Panel 40 – Histories of Concepts 4/Nation

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On the Concept of National Economy [Volkswirtschaft]: A Historical and Conceptual Appraisal

The presentation examines the conceptual genesis of *Volkswirtschaft* in the German-speaking world between the early nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, adopting Koselleck's approach. The temporalization of the concept of "economy", evolving from domestic management to a dynamic national process, is characteristic of industrial modernity. In contrast to Adam Smith's universalist economics, Friedrich List (*Das nationale System der politischen Ökonomie*, 1841) theorizes "*Volkswirtschaft*" as a protectionist system for national development. The German Historical School (Schmoller, Bücher) further refines this historical approach. The analysis of these authors will show that the nexus between "economy" and "nation" emerges only when the growth of the productive forces intersects with the rise of the administrative state and national sentiments.

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History, Colonial Heritage and the Problems of Statehood in the German Democratic Republic

This paper will investigate SED's handling of German colonial heritage by examining the GDR's actions and arguments for or against restitution of cultural artefacts. The mapping of various cases in which the East German government requested, declined, or conducted restitution aims to bring clarity to the SED's understanding of statehood (*Staatsverständnis*) and its conception of history. The SED's *Staatsverständnis* forms one of the methodological underpinnings of this study since that framed and guided its actions as well as its conceptualization of the past. The SED's Marxist-Leninist ideology made history a central component of the party's understanding of statehood and nationhood. Moreover, in announcing itself to be an anti-imperial organization embodying historical progress, that simultaneously was a self-declared successor state to Prussia, the SED had to engage with the remnants of German imperialism. The party's engagement with this legacy exposes an ambivalent and complex relationship. Phenomena such as decolonization and détente laid bare the inconsistencies of SED's cultural policy objective to embody both a revolutionary Marxist-Leninist anti-imperial nation and a traditional *Kulturnation*. This was made particularly evident by the SED's handling of restitution issues. Since the SED simultaneously wanted to uphold its anti-imperial image by showing goodwill to the Third World, as well as display large museum collections containing objects of colonial provenance a dilemma appeared. This paradox forced the SED to make priorities which exposed its ambivalent relationship to history. Moreover, it suggests that Eurocentric notions of cultural progress still loomed in the East German workers' state.

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The Problem of History in the Works of Zygmunt Wasilewski (1865-1948)

Zygmunt Wasilewski (1865–1948) was one of the co-founders of the Polish nationalist movement at the turn of the 20th century and a key figure in formulating its philosophical foundations. Primarily a literary critic, publicist, and organiser of intellectual life on the Polish right until 1939, he played a central role in shaping right-wing discourse. Between 1918 and 1925, he served as editor of 'Gazeta Warszawska' (The Warsaw Gazette), one of Poland's most influential daily newspapers, and from 1925 to 1939, he edited 'Myśl Narodowa' (The National Thought), a philosophical and cultural journal whose mission was to unite the right-wing intelligentsia within a shared axiological framework. Wasilewski's legacy is best understood through his role as a theorist of nation and culture – two interwoven themes that consistently permeated his writings. The proposed paper aims to position the problem of history within the broader spectrum of his intellectual concerns. Firstly, I intend to present him as both a historian and a historiosopher of his own political milieu, exploring his self-construction as a 'witness to history' (and, from this position, a mentor to the younger generation), as well as a mythographer of nationalist thought – that is, a creator of the symbolic system which shaped his political community's imagination. Subsequently, I will address the problem of history in his theory of the nation – on the one hand, his understanding of 'historical tradition', and on the other, of 'historical culture'. The final issue to be discussed is that of 'creativity', which Wasilewski placed at the heart of his concept of history. In conclusion, I will consider whether he may be regarded as a neo-Romantic philosopher of history.

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