

ARTICLE

THE LATIN AMERICAN REINVENTION OF CONCEPTUAL HISTORY

*Contributions to a Global
Conceptual History*

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This article detaches some elements that are the primary marks of research on conceptual history today. To do so, it sheds light on the reception and reinterpretation of Begriffsgeschichte in the work of some key Brazilian, Mexican, and Argentinean intellectuals. Then, after asserting that the global and self-reflective shifts which are observable in North-Atlantic conceptual history have in many aspects also taken shape in the Portuguese and Spanish-speaking parts of the American continent, it is argued that what helps explain the success of Reinhart Koselleck's epistemology in such peripheral areas of the globe is his theorizing about the propensity of the historically vanquished bringing innovative insights into historical thinking. Subsequently, by recalling that Latin America has a longstanding tradition of reflecting on the epistemic advantages of the historically oppressed, an investigation is put forward to delve into the strengths and fragilities of this trend. Finally, by claiming that the methodological tools of a global history of metahistorical concepts could work as a strategy to balance what is identified as the a-historical shortcomings of such debates, a plea is made for a South-based analytical pattern that could work as an alternative for approaching the history of Latin-American and other peripheral traditions of historical thought.

*conceptual history – Latin America – historiography – theory of
history – metahistory*

ARTIGO

A REINVENÇÃO LATINO-AMERICANA DA HISTÓRIA DOS CONCEITOS

Subsídios para uma História Conceitual Global

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Este artigo analisa algumas das principais características da pesquisa contemporânea em história dos conceitos. O texto destaca, em especial, a recepção e a reinterpretação da *Begriffsgeschichte* na obra de intelectuais brasileiros, mexicanos e argentinos. Argumenta-se que as transformações globais e autorreflexivas observadas na história conceitual do Atlântico Norte também encontraram expressão nas regiões de língua portuguesa e espanhola das Américas. Defende-se que o êxito da epistemologia de Reinhart Koselleck nesses contextos periféricos pode ser explicado, em grande parte, por sua ênfase na capacidade dos historicamente vencidos de produzir percepções inovadoras sobre o passado. Em seguida, o artigo relembra que a América Latina possui uma tradição consolidada de valorização das vantagens epistêmicas associadas às experiências dos oprimidos. Propõe-se, assim, uma investigação crítica sobre as potencialidades e os limites dessa perspectiva. Por fim, sugere-se que as ferramentas metodológicas de uma história global dos conceitos meta-históricos podem oferecer caminhos para superar as tendências a-históricas desses debates, favorecendo a construção de um padrão analítico enraizado no Sul e voltado à compreensão das dinâmicas intelectuais latino-americanas e de outras tradições periféricas do pensamento histórico.

História dos conceitos – América Latina – historiografia – teoria da história – meta-história – Reinhart Koselleck

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

This article is the result of discussions initiated in 2019, within the framework of our participation in the international project Core Concepts of Historical Thinking (CORE), based at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland, and developed in collaboration with scholars from several continents. Funded by the Fundacja na rzecz Nauki Polskiej (FNP) between 2019 and 2021, the project continued a trajectory of research previously established by Professor Ulrich Timme Kragh, the initiator of both CORE and the NAMO – Narrative Modes of Historical Discourse in Asia project, which was funded by the European Research Council (ERC) beginning in 2014.

Together, the NAMO and CORE projects brought together more than seventy researchers from over twenty countries, affiliated with dozens of universities, including institutions in Europe, Asia, North America, Oceania, and Latin America. A significant part of this collaborative network was documented and subsequently made available through the AsianTheory.org portal, created by Kragh to disseminate the results of seminars, workshops, interviews, and publications associated with the projects.

As already indicated by its title, the CORE Project set out to bring together multilingual, comparative, and self-reflexive investigations into the fundamental concepts of historical thinking. Like other participants from very different academic backgrounds, we were invited to reflect on the theoretical, methodological, and practical foundations of a possible global history of meta-historical concepts — taking into account, in particular, our position as Brazilian and Latin American scholars and the peripheral status of our historiographical traditions within the global epistemic order.¹ Over time, the project expanded and, with additional support from the European Research Council, gradually took on the features of a dictionary of temporal concepts with a strongly global scope. This increase in scale, combined with technological and budgetary constraints, made the execution of the project increasingly difficult.

This broader context helps explain the intentionally speculative tone of many of the arguments advanced here, in keeping with the exploratory, experimental, and pioneering character of the projects from which they emerged. The text should therefore be read as a preliminary study of Brazil's contribution to a “hyper-dictionary” of global concepts of time. As professors and researchers in Theory of History, we sought strategically to avoid being stigmatized as specialists solely in “Brazil” or “Latin America,” in order not to speak only from our autochthonous experience. Our aim was instead to propose interpretive keys to emerging problems in global and comparative conceptual history, especially along paths that might bring into dialogue morphologically similar yet historically distinct experiences, such as those of Russia, India, China, and Poland. The strategy was thus to contribute to a global conceptual history oriented toward laterality and competitiveness, producing a kind of “theory” of the project itself.

¹ A FAPESP fellowship (18/19087-2), specifically designed to support cooperation agreements with the European Research Council, also enabled Thiago Nicodemo to spend several months in Poland as a visiting professor at Adam Mickiewicz University (AMU). The project was entitled “Core Concepts of Historical Thinking (CORE): Development of the Romance Languages Working Group of the Dictionary of Historical Concepts”.

Thus, just as occurred with the “hyper-dictionary,” our own endeavor unfortunately also remained incomplete, leaving behind the unfinished legacy of an attempt that will certainly not be the last of its kind. We nevertheless believe that this initiative may serve as a point of reference for researchers interested in pursuing similar paths. We therefore emphasize the need to relativize the present text within its context of production and in light of the unfinished character of the initiative. Any simplifications, inaccuracies, or generalizations found throughout the article remain, of course, entirely the responsibility of the authors.

CONCEPTUAL HISTORY TODAY PLURALISM AND SELF-REFLECTIVITY

In case a few words could summarize some of the most promising pathways taken by historiography in the last few years, there is no doubt that concepts like *global*, *transnational*, and *cross-cultural* would emerge as catchwords pointing towards a growing international trend. Transcending national borders, abandoning *methodological nationalism*, and overcoming epistemological ethnocentrism are almost mandatory stances that became an essential part of contemporary historical thinking. Among other methods and theoretical assumptions, conceptual history arises in this scenario of a crescent request for pluralism due to its well-known capacity of making historians adopt a self-critical posture vis-à-vis the traditional epistemological stances of the historical discipline. First conceived in Germany as a nationally oriented project, *Begriffsgeschichte* has largely followed the transnational roads undertaken by historical thinking in the last few decades. This move beyond the nation has brought about the relevance of the trans-regional, trans-local, and transcultural levels of conceptual exchanges while putting forward an understanding of space and time as interrelated.²

Without excluding the nation as a crucial factor in human history, research on conceptual history has dramatically advanced in situating the translations and appropriations of relevant concepts at a global scale by considering the historical relevance of entanglements and networks beyond the layers of space of the modern national states. While becoming aware of the borderless entanglements intrinsic to the circulation of knowledge, practitioners of transnational conceptual history began considering the relations of power as well that stem from the need for communication across linguistic boundaries. As a consequence, most globally oriented conceptual historians do not conceive anymore the spreading of concepts worldwide as a synonym of the *Westernization* of ideas, but as the product of the numerous linguistic entanglements that constitute the mutuality of influence between the Westerns and non Westerns, the colonial powers, and their colonies. Hence, with this move beyond ethnocentrism, conceptual history has certainly enriched the semantics of international historical studies while opening historical thinking to contributions

² From the extensive literature on this “global turn” in historiography, it is possible to detach the good summary sketched by Sebastian Conrad’s *What is Global History?* (2016). For a specific discussion on the shortcomings of methodological nationalism in research on conceptual history, see Jani Marjanen’s “Transnational Conceptual History, Methodological Nationalism and Europe” in *Conceptual History in the European Space* (2017).

ranging much broader than Europe or the West.³

To the same extent, conceptual history has greatly advanced the metahistorical critique so characteristic of the work of Reinhart Koselleck (1923-2006), the leading proponent of *Begriffsgeschichte* in the European world. While dealing with the problems inherent to historical knowledge, conceptual historians have moved into the theoretical vocabulary of historical thinking, and conceptual history has expanded its traditional focus on the socio-political realm of the human experience. Far from being an unprecedented task, Koselleck himself spoke of converting source concepts into analytical concepts as an essential foundation for conceptual history (Pernau; Sachsenmaier 2016, 19). Furthermore, aside from the problematic debates on the language issue,⁴ it is possible to argue that this reconciliation of the particularity of conceptual uses within a specific tradition with the Universalist reach of analytical concepts has been working as a crucial step in offering historical knowledge a more expansive repertoire of shared responses to the socio-political, cultural, and environmental issues currently affecting the global community. Likewise, this closer walk with the history of historiography serves as an argument for rendering conceptual history with more complex regard to theories of temporality and space-time.⁵

Be that as it may, it would be misleading to regard this leaning towards pluralism and self-reflectivity in conceptual history and historiography as an act of goodwill initiated by some central-Western scholars. Instead, attention should also be paid to the anticolonial critiques of historical thinking that, at least since the nineteenth century, stem from the Global South. Likewise, it is not possible to conceive the theoretical gains brought about by conceptual history as another European import, whose incorporation by numerous *epistemic peripheries*⁶ led to a

³ Margrit Pernau and Dominic Sachsenmaier raise these arguments in the introduction of *Global Conceptual History: a Reader* (2016), which brings about a collection of key texts and summarizes many of the trends mentioned above in global conceptual history. The works of Hagen Schulz-Forberg should also be mentioned, particularly his edition of *A Global Conceptual History of Asia, 1860-1940* (2014). Although limited to the European case, Willibald Steinmetz, Michael Freeden, and Javier Fernández-Sebastián compile relevant positions on the theory and practice of transnational conceptual history in *Conceptual History in the European Space* (2017).

⁴ Koselleck himself was skeptical about the possibility of conceptual historians adopting a multi-lingual comparative outlook. In sum, he argued, together with Ulrich Spree and Willibald Steinmetz, that there is no “metalanguage” that can enable cross-border comparisons and convey the linguistic differences into mutual understanding (“Drei bürgerliche Welten? Zur vergleichenden Semantik der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft in Deutschland, England und Frankreich, in *Begriffsgeschichten* (2006). Yet, this position became less prevalent. Today, with numerous digital resources and forms of transnational cooperation not available in Koselleck’s lifetime, several names attempt to counter the monopoly of European languages in the field and theorize the possibilities of a multi-lingual approach to conceptual history. For a summary of recent discussions on conceptual history’s trans-linguistic issues, see László Kontler’s “Concepts, Contests and Contexts: Conceptual History and the Problem of Translatability” in *Conceptual History in the European Space* (2017).

⁵ Hagen Schultz-Forberg (2013) suggests, for example, the complementation of Koselleck’s theory of “temporal layers” (*Zeitschichten*) with a theory of “spatial layers” (*Raumschichten*). This spatial shift would offer a possibility of overcoming the linear-vs.-circular logic, which is dear to the modern regime of historicity while focusing instead on the multiple understandings of the past-present-future relations that stem from the intersections between time and space in diverse cultural realities.

⁶ Our use of this term owes to Ewa Domańska’s (2021) plea for an overcoming of traditional center periphery framings that would focus solely on Western Europe and US-American privileges against knowledge building institutions of the Global South. Instead, the concept of epistemic peripheries urges for a “double decolonization” process, which problematizes as well internal asymmetries in knowledge “involving the decolonization of small research centers, museums, and cultural centers that are perceived as peripheral in relation to flagship academic centers such as São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, or Warsaw and Kraków.

one-sided move beyond ethnocentrism in historiography and historical theory. On the contrary, as demonstrated by various studies, while resisting and dealing with the effects of colonialism, historiographies from the Global South have often had to develop ways of interpreting time that, in the need of coming to terms with the “waiting room” of European philosophies of history, gave birth to multiple temporalities and various approaches to non-linear expressions of historical time.⁷

A region that well exemplifies this inclination of historical thinking from the Global South towards temporal diversity is Latin America.⁸ In countries such as Mexico, Peru, and Brazil, for instance, reflections on the nature of historical knowledge of a mestizo kind exist since the colonial period, and they have often resulted in a reordering of the dynamics of time that contradict the reduction of historical thinking to a “poisoned gift” of European colonialism (Thurner 2015, 27). The various traditions of historical thought that emerged in the New World since the pre-colonial period and from the sixteenth century onwards ranged from locally based interpretations of the meaning of world history until the forming of very complex modes of understanding the intersections between the layers of time and space.⁹ Given this longstanding propensity to interpret time as percolating and multi-layered, it is hardly surprising that conceptual history found one of its most fertile soils in the Spanish and Portuguese-speaking countries existing down the Rio Grande frontier. Thus, in a broad sense, it is fair to say that when conceptual history first arrived in the region during the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s the intellectual conditions were already given in Latin America to a hearty welcome to the theoretical methodological tools offered by this branch of historical studies championed so far by European historiography.

However, since there already existed a well-established tradition of pluralist thinking in the region, what explains this additional incorporation of conceptual history in late twentieth-century Latin-American historical thought? Here, a clue is provided by having a closer look at conceptual history’s theoretical toolbox. About this topic, Frank Ankersmit notices, for example, that in opposition to “History” (German, *Geschichte*) conceived as a “singular collective” (German, *Kollektivsingular*), Koselleck’s notion of the “layers of time” (German, *Zeitschichten*) invites for an understanding of the past as consisting of a multiplicity of temporal layers coexisting more or less peaceably next to each

⁷ In the last several years, many scholars have shed light on the polychronic character of historiographical traditions from the Global South. Some references to these works appear throughout the following pages. Yet, it is possible to find a good summary and examples of the conceptual expression of this temporal diversity in historical thought, critical theory, and the social sciences from the Global South in Dilip M. Menon’s *Changing Theory: Concepts from the Global South* (2022).

⁸ From Arturo Ardao (1912-2003) until Walter Mignolo and Mauricio Tenorio-Trillo numerous scholars highlight the disputed uses of “Latin America” as a concept since its coming in the nineteenth century. Among other arguments, it has been claimed that its use today should be cautious, given that it excludes, for example, Afro-American and indigenous populations. Aware of these limitations, we follow Gabriela de Lima Grecco and Sven Schuster’s recent suggestion of applying the concept of Latin America “not as a homogenizing and culturalist category, but rather to indicate the region’s many similarities in terms of political, economic, and social structures” in “Decolonizing Global History? A Latin American Perspective” (2020).

⁹ Among the vast amount of English-language literature on the time-framing varieties existing in Latin American historiography, we highlight the works by José Rabasa, *Tell Me the Story of How I Conquered You: Elsewheres and Ethnocide in the Colonial Mesoamerican World* (2011); Mark Thurner, *History’s Peru: The Poetics of Colonial and Postcolonial Historiography* (2012); and Javier Sanjinés, *Embers of the Past: Essays in Times of Decolonization* (2013). In addition, Spanish and Portuguese works on this same topic are mentioned in subsequent parts of this article.

other.

Thus, different from an interpretation of history as a unitary whole, what may be referred to as the ontological dimension of Koselleck's theory has, on the one hand, the capacity of "cutting vertically through geological time" to point to a multiplicity of layers of time coinciding with each other in various rhythms and speeds (Ankersmit 2021, 43). Nevertheless, on the other hand, Koselleck's epistemology — his "threshold period" (German, *Sattelzeit*) hypothesis and doctrine of the "point of view" (German, *Sehepunkt*) — has its roots in the same European historical thought against which his ontology rises. For Ankersmit, it is the ontological perspective of the German historian that is in line with a multipolar view on history which does not depart anymore from a Eurocentric perception of time but from a variety of past-present-future configurations (Ankersmit 2021, 57-58). Hence, by following this argument it would be possible to conclude that it was due to the pluralizing capacity to his ontology, but not to his epistemology, that Koselleck's thought became so widespread in Latin America and in other so-called world peripheries.

From a logical point of view, Ankersmit's position indeed makes sense. Nonetheless, for dealing with the pure aspect of the historian's work, his argument fails to grasp how conceptual history was appropriated in various forms that contradict this a priori separation between ontology and epistemology in Koselleck's thinking. Here, a contrasting example is once again provided by the Latin-American case. A careful look at the history of the reception of conceptual history in the region is demonstrative of how, not so much his theory of the layers of time (i.e., his ontology), but the epistemological aspect of Koselleck's thought played a decisive role in complexifying historical thinking beyond the limitations of a Eurocentric regard on historical time.

As the following pages intend to explore, a better look at the Latin-American reinterpretation of Koselleck can help shed new light on an aspect of his theory not always visible in discussions about the reception of conceptual history in the Global South,¹⁰ namely, his reflections on how the "vanquished" (German, *Besiegter*) are those better suited to proceed with innovative insights into historical thinking. Not coincidentally, Latin America has a long-term tradition of theorizing about the *epistemic advantages* of the historically oppressed. By critically accounting for the history of this trend, our subsequent sections sustain that, due to several methodological flaws, after reaching its peak in decolonial discussions, Latin-American debates on epistemic advantages have often fallen into a series of a-historical pitfalls. Thus, we suggest that the latter could be countered by the methodological tools of what will be termed here as a global history of historical thinking's metahistorical concepts. Finally, after detailing our proposal, a plea is made for a South-oriented pattern of comparison, which, based on an analysis of such vital concepts, could work as an alternative for reapproaching this tradition and putting Latin America in closer touch with other peripheral traditions of historical thought.

¹⁰ Roberto Breña recently detailed the reception of *Begriffsgeschichte* in Latin America while departing from "a critical stance toward some aspects of conceptual history as it has arrived and has been adopted by some Latin American academics during the last years" (Tensions and Challenges of Intellectual History in Contemporary Latin America, *Contributions to the History of Concepts* (2021). Although considering the importance of such efforts, we assume a different position while focusing on what Breña recognizes as the "appropriations, alterations, distortions, and contributions" that are natural consequences of this reception process.

REDEMOCRATIZATION AND HISTORIOGRAPHICAL RENEWAL IN LATIN AMERICA DEBATES AND INFLUENCES SINCE THE 1980S

The 1980s was a decade of political turmoil in almost entire Latin America, as the civil military dictatorships that controlled several countries of the region at least since the 1950s began enduring a process of exhaustion. In this period, many sectors of the Brazilian, Argentinean, Uruguayan, Bolivian, and Chilean civil societies started pleading for democracy.¹¹ In the wake of this epochal change, different social movements sought to redefine the public sphere by resonating the voices of groups for long silenced under the aegis of political authoritarianism. These claims contributed to the downfall of numerous military regimes, and they culminated in the drafting of new constitutions and the forming of democratic institutions.

Such events marked the types of criticism, approaches, and debates that flourished in Portuguese and Spanish speaking academia during the last decades of the twentieth century. In the case of historical thought, historians faced the challenge of reinventing national identities considering this feeling of enthusiasm that affected the resurgence of democracy and active forms of citizenship in Latin America. As much as this was a process of rethinking the contours of the nation-states, it was also a chance to reach an agreement with the national traumas that went from overcoming the recent authoritarian pasts to the need of integrating the native indigenous peoples and the African American in these recently born democratic societies. Therefore, it is not surprising that these were topics that played a crucial role in most Latin-American metahistorical debates of the 1980s, 1990s, and 2000s (see, for example, Aguirre Rojas 2002; Horowitz 2011; Eakin 2011).

However, it is important recalling that during the 1980s, Latin-American historiography met an unprecedented level of institutional professionalization and international exchanges. Consequently, theoretical, and methodological requirements were increasingly needed for the approval of graduate studies in universities. This growth of specialized research was accompanied by the influence of Marxism and the Annales School. If the former gained new life with the fall of the region's anti-communist authoritarian regimes, the latter walked side by side with a *cultural turn* that took shape in Latin America's historical thinking of that period. From the 1980s onwards, a series of works focused on cultural practices, demography, mentalities, and private life was produced by Spanish and Portuguese-speaking historians. As it had already happened from the 1930s until the 1960s, the influence of these intellectual schools reinforced a trend of criticizing the meaning of modernity and the rhetoric that, at least since the nineteenth century, identified Portuguese and Spanish-speaking nations as backward (Malerba 2009, 49-118; Sabato 2015, 135-145; Vilaboy 2003, 179-180).

¹¹ Mexico did not see the emergence of a civil-military dictatorship in these molds. Still, a process similar to other places in Latin America occurred in Mexico from the 1980s onwards, with the specialization and professionalization of history in the country's universities and research institutions. See Guillermo Zermeño Padilla (2011).

The discussion on how the modern experience of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had been translated from Europe to America was common among Latin American intellectuals who adhered to Dependency Theory,¹² Philosophy of Liberation,¹³ and other trends of thought that emerged in the region in the second half of the twentieth century. These were currents of thinking that offered a critical perspective related to imported views on how to understand modernity in historical terms. Hence, in the second half of the twentieth century, Latin-American intellectuals consolidated a critical stance that existed in the region at least since the eighteenth century: a skepticism about a homogeneous sense of progress which is an essential part of the modern concept of history (Araujo 2015, 178).

In the most telling example of the impacts of this epochal shift in the region, the Brazilian case is paramount to how some local historians dealt with this moment of significant changes in Latin-American historical thinking. In the main, because it was in light of such an intellectual scenario that a discussion on Koselleck's metahistorical reflections first found its place amidst Brazilian historiography.¹⁴ As mentioned above, the German historian was deeply concerned with the side effects of modernity and the insights stemming from conceptual history's toolbox fit like a glove to the metahistorical quarrels that flourished in Brazil throughout the last decades of the twentieth century.

THE RECEPTION OF KOSSELCK'S THOUGHT IN LATIN AMERICA THE *ESTUDOS HISTÓRICOS* JOURNAL AND THE BRAZILIAN CASE

Few other publications summarize this incorporation of Koselleck's ideas in Brazil more than the debates published in *Estudos Históricos*, na academic journal of historical studies whose inaugural issue came out in 1988. In emphasizing the importance of reviewing the conditions of possibility for the production of historical knowledge, the journal editors made clear that *Estudos Históricos* had the aim of continuing Brazil's longstanding tradition of meditating on the theory of history through a constant reflection on the history of historiography (Gomes; Moura; Oliveira 1988, 3-4).

Thus, there was no better way of beginning this metahistorical exercise than using the new analytical lenses acquired by local historians in the last few years to look retrospectively into the previous two centuries of historical

¹² Dependency Theory was a theoretical current that originated in the 1940s especially among intellectuals associated with the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC). As opposed to modernization theory, representatives of this current of thought generally argued that resources flow from a periphery of underdeveloped states to a center of developed states, enriching the latter at the expense of the former. For a detailed view of this trend of thought, see B.N. Ghosh, *Dependency Theory Revisited* (2001).

¹³ Philosophy of Liberation is a philosophical movement that emerged in Argentina in the early 1970s. Philosophers of liberation based their agenda on a critique of modern forms of oppression related to the West's expansion and the fostering of philosophical thinking committed to the autonomy and the liberation of the oppressed peoples of Latin America. For an introduction to this topic, see Eduardo Mendieta, "Philosophy of Liberation", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (2020).

¹⁴ Brazilian historians have been quoting Koselleck at least since the 1970s. His works were mentioned, for example, by scholars like Fernando Novais (1973) and Sérgio Buarque de Holanda (1974). Nonetheless, these were short mentions, and it was only in the second half of the 1980s that the contributions of the German historian were incorporated within the metahistorical insights of some prominent Brazilian scholars. For a broader picture of the reception of conceptual history in Brazil, see *História dos Conceitos: Diálogos Transatlânticos* (2007).

knowledge production in Brazil. This task was accomplished in the journal's first issue by two historians who dealt with two distinct periods of historiographical activity in the country. First, Manoel Luis Lima Salgado Guimarães¹⁵ (1952-2010) dealt with the nineteenth century while critically accounting for IHGB's (*Brazilian Historical and Geographical Institute*)¹⁶ understanding of Brazilian history. Secondly, Ricardo Benzaquem de Araújo¹⁷ (1952-2017) analyzed the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries while covering João Capistrano de Abreu's¹⁸ (1853-1927) historical writing.

In his article, Guimarães discussed the relation between historical writing and the constitution of the Brazilian National State in the early nineteenth century. With the country's independence in 1822, creating an identity for the young nation was an urgent issue. This urge for a national self-image explains the founding of IHGB in 1838 and its efforts to standardize the writing of Brazil's history at an official level. However, this historiographical project led to a severe issue: how was it possible to amalgamate a narrative about Brazil's past, including the Indigenous peoples, the enslaved Africans, the Portuguese, and other tropical heterogeneities?

The solution sought by the IHGB was to elaborate a narrative that pacified the country's internal differences in the name of a national project that did not break with the colonial past but continued its violent push toward the civilizational ideal of the period. Guimarães then was keen to recognize that the emergence of a historical outlook in nineteenth-century Brazil was a *sui generis* development. Drawing on Koselleck's critique of modern history, he concluded that: "The nation, whose portrait the institute intends to draw, must, therefore, emerge as the unfolding in the tropics, of a white and European civilization" (Guimarães 1988, 8).

By following Koselleck's insights, Guimarães inferred that the modern concept of history — which became hegemonic in the German-speaking world between the last decades of the eighteenth and the first decades of the nineteenth century — produces not only a linear and homogeneous sense for the historical process but also a unifying and aggregating impulse towards assembling fragments in a narrated whole:

From history, understood as the stage of past experiences, examples and models could be filtered for the present and the future, and politicians should turn to it as a way of better performing their functions. History is thus perceived as a linear and progressive march that articulates future, present, and past; only by sharing such a conception, as Koselleck indicates, can one aspire to learn from history, thereby granting it a pragmatic character (Guimarães 1988, 15).

¹⁵ Manoel Luiz Lima Salgado Guimarães (1952-2010) was a Brazilian historian whose studies orbited around the fields of Brazilian historiography, philosophy, and theory of history. Among his most relevant works, it is possible to mention *Geschichtsschreibung und Nation in Brasilien 1838-1857* (1987).

¹⁶ The IHGB was founded sixteen years after Brazil's independence to concentrate the sum of the accumulated knowledge about the country. Hence, throughout the entire nineteenth century, it worked as an authorized center for producing an official discourse about Brazil's culture, history, and national identity. For a critical introduction to the history of IHGB, see: Valdeí Lopes de Araújo, *A Experiência do Tempo: Conceitos e Narrativas na Formação Nacional Brasileira (1813-1845)* (2008).

¹⁷ Ricardo Augusto Benzaquen de Araújo was a historian and anthropologist best known for his works in intellectual history, Brazilian social thought, and theory of history.

¹⁸ João Capistrano Honório de Abreu was one of Brazil's founding fathers of professional historical thinking. He was a supporter of progressive ideas and was an anti-clerical thinker. One of his most important works is *A Descoberta do Brasil e o seu Desenvolvimento do Século Dezanove* (1883) [*The Discovery of Brazil and its development in the Sixteenth century*].

In exposing the excluding contours of this nineteenth-century State-sponsored historiography, Guimarães criticized the foundations of Brazil's tradition of historical writing and the oppressive features stemming from the time framing of modern historical thinking.

Benzaquen de Araújo continued the vein of Salgado Guimarães' criticism. His article also departed from Koselleck's insights to undertake a case study of Brazil's nineteenth to twentieth-century historical writing. He chose to deal with Capistrano de Abreu while depicting the limitations of the modern concept of history that stood beneath Capistrano's representation of Brazil's past:

In fact, it is precisely this connection between memory and time that I would like to examine a bit more closely, for I believe that memory only begins to be described as undergoing a process of corrosion, of inevitable erosion, when it becomes associated with a notion of time understood as a line moving continuously forward, toward the future. This implies an abandonment of the classical model, which causes individuals to literally redirect their gaze and their hopes, turning them away from the past and concentrating them on what is to come — a shift that, among various other effects, produces a gradual yet growing weakening of memory, little by little replaced by forgetting (cf. Koselleck 1985, pp. 130–155, 213–218)¹⁹ (author's citations) (Araújo 1988, 40).

Beyond the mechanism of forgetting, the notions of truth, objectivity, and temporal linearity characterize the modern, professional mode of historical writing adopted by Capistrano in his narrative of the “discovery of Brazil”. Although it appears to derive from a sense of neutrality, this conception is not situated “outside of time,” since it is grounded in the new articulation between experience and expectation inaugurated by modernity:

Thus, it is precisely the emergence of this Enlightenment definition of time — assimilated to progress and converted into a line that moves inexorably in a single direction — that will separate what we previously called the space of experience, the foundation of the classical conception of history, from the modern man's horizon of expectation, a horizon now fixed solely on the future, a future that seems to dispense with any and all teachings conveyed by tradition, relegating it to the deepest obscurity (Araújo 1988, 40).

This continuous unfolding of time toward an open future begins to guide human historical experience and to control any manifestations of tragedy, chance, or chaos in history. Consequently, Capistrano's narrative erased the tragedy perpetrated by the colonizers and placed the colonized peoples in a position of backwardness and subordination:

This occurs because the “truth” of the facts is grounded in critical and narrative mechanisms — of uniform composition and universal reach — that create the impression that it is the product of an absolutely pure and transparent reason, supposedly removed from any intellectual stance or project of power, and influenced only by the data of reality through equally uniform and universal senses (Araújo 1988, 51).

¹⁹ Benzaquen de Araújo draws on the French and U.S. editions of *Critique and Crisis* (*Kritik und Krise*) and *Futures Past* (*Vergangene Zukunft*), since the Brazilian translations of these works by Koselleck would only be published later — in 1999 and 2006, respectively.

In this way, by associating the modern concept of history with an “endless battle that the West wages against tragedy,” Benzaquen de Araújo implicitly questions whether this was the kind of historical knowledge Brazilian historians would continue to practice (Araújo 1988, 51–52).

Hence, there is no doubt that Guimarães and Benzaquen de Araújo’s contributions urged Brazilian historians to adopt a different metahistorical stance concerning the country’s historiographical tradition and the modern concept of history. The two Brazilian authors historicized the spread of the modern idea of history to Portuguese America while interpreting it as a conservative way of appeasing conflicts and homogenizing differences without “forcing a complete review of values, as was the case with the French Revolution” (Araújo 1988, 32).

The colonial (or even postcolonial)²⁰ perspective of these historians departed not solely from the historicization of Brazil’s historical thought vis-à-vis the European context, but it unleashed a historical-critical perspective on European thought itself. Thus, it would not be far-fetched to affirm that such a historiographical move deprovincialized Koselleck’s thinking by shedding light on the contrasts stemming from the contact between modern historical thought and the multiple layers of time comprising the past-present-future configurations existing in Brazil.

Nonetheless, as much as it was representative of new metahistorical horizons brought about by the process of re-democratization in Brazil, the case of *Estudos Históricos* offers only a limited view of this readaptation of Koselleck’s epistemology in Latin America. Thus, it is also necessary to retrieve the criticism on Koselleck’s thinking primarily associated with debates that stood at the back of the most ambitious collective research on conceptual history ever outlined in the region, the Ibero American Conceptual History Project, better known as *Iberconceptos*.

IBERCONCEPTOS AND BEYOND THE REINVENTION OF CONCEPTUAL HISTORY IN LATIN AMERICA

When looking back on the project’s origins, the Spanish historian Javier Fernández Sebastián recalls that, among other reasons, *Iberconceptos* first arose as an attempt at reaching broader than some of the bounds conceptual history had found in continental Europe and North America. Hence, while in the United States, the seeds did not flourish for a transatlantic approach to the history of concepts,²¹ in Europe, a similar limitation arose from the skepticism that Koselleck himself nourished against the possibility of comparing concepts amidst a kaleidoscope of languages and political traditions. Therefore, against

²⁰ The similarities between the arguments of the Brazilian authors and those of Dipesh Chakrabarty stand out. However, if the former takes Koselleck as their reference, the latter uses Heidegger as an instrument to understand the oppressive consequences of adopting this linear concept of history for the subaltern groups in South Asia. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (2000).

²¹ Fernández Sebastián refers specifically to Melvin Richter (1921–2020) and Martin Burke’s efforts in rendering *Begriffsgeschichte* a transatlantic bridge that could connect the practice of intellectual history in Europe and the USA. Nonetheless, various professional and institutional factors prevented this project from taking off. For a summary and critical regard on this matter, see Martin Burke, *Conceptual History in the United States: a ‘Missing National Project,’* *Contributions to the History of Concepts* (2005).

such linguistic barriers and when not considering the various indigenous idioms,²² the Iberoamerican world offered a much less heterogeneous set of languages and a more synchronic historic-political path due to its roots in the Spanish and Portuguese colonial empires (Sebastián 2018, 688-690).

However, this seemingly advantageous scenario did not prevent the emergence of divergencies regarding the project's theoretical bottom line. First, there was the need to come to terms with a modernization theory and the feasibility of a standard timeline encompassing a myriad of cultures and territories. Second, an agreement was necessary for specifying the socio-political vocabulary and phenomena dear to Ibero-America's experience of modernization. Not unexpectedly, at the same time it served as a primary theoretical reference, Koselleck's epistemology had to be reinvented to account for the spatial-temporal peculiarities of the colonial substratum stemming from the contact between the Old and the New World (Sebastián 2018, 690-692).

Like the case of *Estudios Históricos*, in *Iberconceptos*, Koselleck's theory worked to deconstruct the colonial discourse and reapproach the modern concept of history from a peripheral perspective. Hence, it is not surprising that History (Spanish, *Historia*) stood among the ten concepts chosen to compose the first volume of the project's lexicon published in 2009.²³ Likewise, the metahistorical insights of the German historian functioned as a means to criticize the Eurocentrism hegemonic in the Latin-American tradition of historical thinking.

For instance, in his comparative synthesis of the concept,²⁴ the Mexican historian Guillermo Zermeño Padilla emphasizes that, as opposed to the "quantitative" or strictly "chronologic" view of the history of ideas, conceptual history unleashes a "diachronic" and "qualitative" interpretation of the socio-political vocabulary of the modern period. Thus, instead of focusing on the events and ideas supposedly marking the rise of modernity from an external point of view (e.g., the disenchanted ethos of the Reformation in Europe), conceptual historians prefer paying attention to modernity as an experience, which is neither single nor specific but shared and encompassing a global framework. Consequently, when incorporated to account for Ibero-America, Koselleck's theory helps to dismiss the once prevalent idea that, in contrast to the Anglo-Saxon standard, the Portuguese and Spanish speaking worlds are just failed, anomalous or incomplete expressions of the modern experience (Padilla 2009, 552-554).

²² Only from 2015 onwards, in *Iberconceptos'* third phase a workgroup was established to account for political concepts in indigenous languages. Under the leadership of Noemí Goldman, the group "Translation and Transfers" (*Traducción y Transferencias*) has a section led by the French scholar Capucine Boidin who deals, among other languages, with Tupi-guaraní, Quechua, Aymara, and Náhuatl political concepts in the period of independence in the Americas. For further information on this workgroup within *Iberconceptos*, see *Grupo Traducción y transferencias conceptuales* (siglos XVIII y XIX), 2022, <http://www.iberconceptos.net/grupo-traduccion>.

²³ The complete list of concepts and a theoretical-methodological explanation of their choice are available in Javier Fernández Sebastián, "Introducción: Hacia una Historia Atlántica de los Conceptos Políticos" in *Diccionario Político y Social del Mundo Iberoamericano: La Era de las Revoluciones* vol. 1 (2009).

²⁴ The writing of a "cross-sectional synthesis" is part of the methodological approach in the first two volumes of *Iberconceptos*. Accordingly, an overall coordinator adopted a transnational perspective to summarize the nationally or regionally-oriented research results of each of the other project participants. For further details and a critical balance of the pros and cons of this and other methodological strategies of the project, see Javier Fernández Sebastián and Luis Fernández Torres, "Iberconceptos: un Proyecto de Investigación en Red: Cuestiones Teórico-Metodológicas y Organizativas, *Spagna contemporanea*, (2017).

Nonetheless, albeit its potential of widening and highlighting unforeseen aspects of modernity as a global phenomenon, Zermeño Padilla stresses that it is its capacity to disclose the shortcomings of contemporary historical thinking that fosters the epistemological strength of conceptual history in Latin America. In other words, unlike previous currents of thinking such as social history or the history of ideas, conceptual history carries within itself a “revisionist” vein, which, very much in line with some European schools of thinking of the post-1968 era, emphasizes the localness and historicity that is inherent to all forms of human knowledge:

Iberconceptos is, therefore, a project situated at the heart of historiographical revisionism, in contrast to the conventions of social and intellectual history of ideas, whose narratives tend to run in parallel while sharing a linear, progressive, and teleological discourse of a nationalist, populist, or liberal nature. Viewed in this way, conceptual history aligns itself with approaches characteristic of a new political anthropology, which insists on the contingent and fortuitous — and paradox-laden — character of human action and human affairs (Zermeño Padilla 2014, loc. 2284).

Accordingly, while in possession of this second-order observation, conceptual historians can differentiate between the three types of threads that constitute the language they have to deal with, namely, (1) concepts proper to past sources, (2) concepts associated with the historian’s own time, and (3) the theoretical concepts that are tributary to “philosophical” or “metahistorical” categories (Zermeño Padilla 2014, local. 2308):

Situating within a radical “historicism” and opposed to any form of essentialism (in which every observation appears as necessary), conceptual history presents itself as a critique of all forms of positivism or naïve realism produced during the modern period. Does this effort to historicize history, as its critics point out, amount to an unhealthy fixation, or is it a direct expression of the specific conditions in which modern historiography emerges and acquires meaning? According to the principles of conceptual history, every form of knowledge is situated knowledge, reflecting the position of the producer of knowledge at a given historical moment and within a specific material and cultural context (Zermeño Padilla 2014, local. 2308–2327).

Therefore, if, to some extent, Koselleck did not perceive the historicity of his own metahistorical position and still reinforced some of the national and teleological features of the modern historical discipline, the *Iberconceptos* project instead was formed in socio-political and epochal conditions, which allowed for a stronger focus on the “immanent” and “post-national” relation between language and society (Padilla 2013, 482).

Not so far from Zermeño Padilla’s stance is the Argentine historian Elías José Palti, who, apart from contributing to *Iberconceptos*, is one of the main renovators of intellectual history in present-day Latin America. In the last few years, Palti developed his approach to the history of political languages by departing from a critique of the Latin-American history of ideas, the Cambridge School of political thought, and Koselleck’s approach to the history of concepts. However, mostly his critique of the latter better illustrates Palti’s theoretical proposal. For instance, he maintains that similar to the traditional history of ideas, Koselleck bases his metahistorical stance on a dualist perception of the advent of modernity. Thus, while contrasting the modern with the pre-modern to seek discontinuities at the level of political language, the German historian reinforces an arbitrary framework for establishing the boundaries between the “modern” and the “traditional,” as is the case, for example, of his theory of the *Sattelzeit* (see, for example, Palti 2004):

In fact, he is able to discern only two possible concepts of time, each of them separated by that major epochal rupture he calls the *Sattelzeit*. This dichotomous perspective leads him to confuse, and to place under the same category (“modernity”), many quite distinct ways of conceiving and experiencing temporality; and this confusion necessarily has consequences for the historical-conceptual reconstruction he proposed. In sum, to fully accomplish the goal of Koselleck’s *Begriffsgeschichte* project — avoiding conceptual anachronisms and understanding the intellectual foundations of philosophies of history — it is necessary to establish a series of historical clarifications (Palti 2018, 410).

Not unexpectedly, this dualism extends itself to historical thinking, given the remnants of neo-Kantianism in Koselleck’s epistemology and its propensity to indicate in terms of “ideal types” the molds within which values, norms, and attitudes can eventually become articulated:

This proposition ultimately allowed Koselleck to outline a *Theorie der Geschichte* or *Historik*, attempting to integrate the two instances that, according to him, constitute it. He sought to do so by tracing the links that unite events through the forms in which they are represented and, conversely, by explaining the forms of their representation on the basis of the real connections among events, whose ultimate foundations lie in innate anthropological determinations. The possibility of generalization in history does not imply, nor does it reveal, any normative content; it merely indicates the frameworks within which values, norms, and attitudes may eventually be articulated (Palti 2011, 19).

Hence, albeit the adoption of an anthropological stance that radicalizes the philosophical substratum of neo-Kantianism, conceptual history ultimately draws on “formal instances,” which provide some “transhistorical stability that does not, however, exclude contingency, that is, that makes room for unpredictable events, without which there would be no history, properly speaking” (Palti 2011, 19).

Palti does not hide that what stands at the core of his critique are the possible consequences of the a-historical side of Koselleck’s epistemology to Latin-American historical and political thinking. On the one hand, this concern is due to a longstanding trend of defining Latin-American intellectual tradition as abnormal vis-à-vis any attempts at establishing the conditions for the possibility of historical discourse. On the other hand, Koselleck’s aprioristic stance is helpless when it comes to the need of complexifying the multiple facets of Latin-American thinking beyond the “essentialized” views of the region that became banalized in the historiography of the last several decades:

One of the major problems of Latin American intellectual history has to do with the fact that it still remains imbued with a certain essentialism characteristic of nineteenth-century nationalist views (...). A remnant of this can still be seen today in some authors such as (Fredric) Jameson, who continues to speak of the Third World as harboring emancipatory residues opposed to the rationalist logic of capitalism. Latin America would thus be the place of uncontaminated nature, reinforcing a romantic and idealized view of the region (Palti 2019, 184–185).

In contrast to such trends, Palti stands for a problem-oriented intellectual history whose focus is not on pre-established models versus “deviating” forms of thinking but on the proper aporias to modernity itself. As a consequence, instead of being measured against a priori categories of thinking, the Latin-American experience emerges in this “new intellectual history” not as a remnant of “traditional” forms of thought but as illustrative of more significant problems that transcend the mere local framework (Palti 2019, 173-179).

In a broader sense, while not taking for granted the metahistorical foundations of historical thinking and scrutinizing its theoretical validity, Palti sustains that his strategy aligns with the most significant transformation that took place in the field of intellectual history during the last several years, namely, a “self-reflective turn” that leads historians “to permanently problematize” the analytical categories of their own discipline (Palti 2019, 188).

In sum, albeit not exhausting the topic,²⁵ the positions of Zermeño Padilla and Palti demonstrate the situation of conceptual history specifically and intellectual history as a whole in contemporary Latin America, i.e., that of a self-scrutiny directed towards the very analytical categories of historical thinking. Here, once again, the contesting nature of Koselleck’s epistemology plays a significant role in probing the limits of modern historical knowledge. Yet, if, to a great extent, the critique present in *Estudios Históricos* still coincided with those of the German historian, the debates mentioned in this section identify some blind spots and plea for a position situated beyond Koselleck’s metahistory.²⁶

In any case, regardless of how effective its tools are for this proposal, it is fair to affirm that current debates about conceptual history in Latin America invite for an attempt to rethink the epistemological basis of historical thinking beyond its foundation in a nationally oriented theoretical repertoire and to reapproach the Latin-American case according to a renewed set of interests, questions, and demands.

On the one hand, it becomes clear that a good part of present-day Latin-American historiography shares several of the transnational and self-reflective concerns of international scholarship mentioned at the beginning of this article. Nonetheless, on the other hand, albeit an expressive growth in the region of the history of historiography as a subfield of intellectual history, an ambiguous attitude prevails among many historians of the subcontinent regarding specific historical approaches that could stem from the Latin-American tradition as contributions to this overall trend of making historical thinking more plural and less ethnocentric. Given the longstanding relevance of debates of this kind in the region, the following pages attempt to revisit discussions on the so-called epistemic advantages of the Latin-American case and the global potentialities that could still emerge from this South-oriented metahistorical perspective.

²⁵ Breña offers a good panorama of the diversity of intellectual history as practiced today in Latin America in *Tensions and Challenges of Intellectual History in Contemporary Latin America* (2021). Another good picture of the current situation of conceptual history in the region is available in *Horizontes de la Historia Conceptual en Iberoamérica: Trayectoria e Incursiones* (2021). Finally, under the coordination of Fabio Wasserman, the “Workgroup Temporality” (Spanish, *Grupo Temporalidad*) is the main responsible for following *Iberconceptos*’ metahistorical discussions. It is possible to find a summary of the main works of this group at: <http://www.iberconceptos.net/grupo-historicidad>.

²⁶ Palti is probably the historian who best summarizes the criticism directed against Koselleck’s epistemology in Latin America today. In a nutshell, he appeals to Foucault’s archaeological perspective to bring about a more complex picture of the modern space-time relations that emerged both prior to and after Koselleck’s *Sattelzeit*, for example, in the baroque period of the *Schwelldzeit* (1550-1650) and the twentieth century “age of forms.” See Elías Palti, *An Archaeology of the Political: Regimes of Power from the Seventeenth Century to the Present* (2016). However, it is possible to agree with Santiago Castro-Gómez when he notices, for instance, that Palti’s omission of colonialism prevents his work from incorporating the insights of Latin-American anti-colonial scholarship and seeing the rise of modernity beyond its traditional depiction as an intra-European process. See “Elías Palti - Una Arqueología de lo Político (2)” Santiago Castro-Gómez (2020).

THE PECULIARITIES OF HISTORICAL THINKING IN LATIN AMERICA ON THE EPISTEMIC ADVANTAGES OF A PERIPHERAL HISTORICAL OUTLOOK

While reflecting on the foundations of Koselleck's epistemology, different interpreters highlight his skepticism towards progress in modern society as the primary basis of his entire intellectual project (Hettling; Schieder 2021, 59; Olsen 2012, 14-16).²⁷ That being the case, a skeptical attitude was necessary to grasp the historical background of the modern world in contrast to pathos-oriented notions such as “nation,” “fatherland,” and “heroism” (Olsen 2012). In fact, on varied occasions, Koselleck openly associated his theoretical stance with his experience of defeat and captivity in World War II, which engendered the skepticism any historian needs to have as “the minimal condition to deconstruct utopian surplus” (Koselleck 2005).

This position influenced several of his writings, as is the case, for example, of his reflections into a theory of how the vanquished are those who develop new analytical instruments and thereby reveal innovative insights into history (see, for example, Lepper; Schlak 2012; Šajda 2017; Mueller 2019). Accordingly, in their attempt to reflect and cope with the experience of defeat, the vanquished have an insightful potential that transcends that of the “winners,” especially when they need to rewrite general history in conjunction with their own. Therefore, it would be possible even to speak of an “inexhaustible epistemological potential” as an anthropological constant stemming from the experience of the vanquished:

The historian who is on the side of the victor is prone to interpret short-term successes from the perspective of a continuous, long-term teleology *ex post facto*. This does not apply to the vanquished. Their first primary experience is that everything happened differently from how it was planned or hoped (...). It is thus an attractive hypothesis that precisely from the unique gains in experience imposed upon them spring insights of lasting duration and, consequently, of greater explanatory power. If history is made in the short run by the victors, historical gains in knowledge stem in the long run from the vanquished (Koselleck 2002, 76).

Not mentioned in Ankersmit's work quoted in our introduction, it is very likely that this aspect of Koselleck's thinking probably served as an extra reason for the excellent acceptance of his epistemology in Latin America. This relation is especially true if recalled that a good part of the region's philosophical and social thinking based its theoretical premises on similar ideas about what could be referred to as the epistemic advantages stemming from the experiences of the colonized, conquered, and oppressed.²⁸

²⁷ Olsen associates Koselleck's skepticism with what came to be known in the German context as the “skeptical generation,” namely, a generation marked by distrustful attitudes toward political ideology, long-term societal planning, and a pragmatic position in politics and life. For further details on the sociological definition of this skeptical generation in twentieth-century Germany, see Helmut Schelsky, *Die skeptische Generation: Eine Soziologie der deutschen Jugend* (1957).

²⁸ Although it would be possible to identify the origins of discussions of this kind in Hegelian and Marxist views about the Master-slave dialectic, for example, within the framework of standpoint and feminist theories, the concept of epistemic advantages gained theoretical precision, especially in the work of Nancy Hartsock (1943–2015). Overall, standpoint theorists argue that the social situatedness of marginalized groups makes it more feasible for them to be aware of issues and formulate questions than it is for the non-marginalized. Due to its controversial character, accusations of lack of precision, and recent discussions on the consequences of epistemic injustice, debates on epistemic advantages and standpoint theory

For instance, in the first half of the twentieth century, events such as the two World Wars and the Mexican Revolution prompted the rise of debates on the identity of the Latin-American nations in the face of what seemed to be the decaying culture of the Old World. Not coincidentally, either in Anthropology or in Marxist thought, a growing trend of valorizing the local color, the indigenous, and the mestizo constituent of the national identities became widespread, especially among essayist thinkers such as Gilberto Freyre (1900-1987), José Vasconcelos (1882-1959), and José Carlos Mariátegui (1894-1930). Consequently, in tandem with the process of academic professionalization of the human sciences in the subcontinent, remnants of traditions previously associated with unmodern forms of thinking began a process of reinvention in which such features were reinterpreted not as evidence of unreason, decay, or backwardness but as antidotes against the pitfalls of the modern world.²⁹

With much more critical regard vis-à-vis the contours of modern reason, representatives of the Philosophy of Liberation reinterpreted this premise and elaborated further on the possible epistemic advantages of the Latin-American historically oppressed. While departing from a critique of European thinking, philosophers like Enrique Dussel argued for an *analectical* standpoint, which, as exterior to dialectical-totalizing thought, could create the conditions for overcoming dependency, domination, and subordination. In this sense, the conquered's point of view has the capacity of dismantling the *myth of modernity* while identifying the roots of this global phenomenon not in intra-European events — such as the Renaissance and the Reformation — but in processes of conquest and oppression as it is the case of the colonization of America.³⁰ This change of perspective makes Dussel give prominence to the spatial dimension inherent to any process of knowledge production and it fosters a *transmodern* theoretical position that is neither disdainful nor enthusiastic about modernity but points toward multiple trans modern histories and memories that bring to the foreground the intellectual presence of the outside of Europe (Dussel 2013, 471).

gained renewed methodological treatment, for instance, in Jingyi Wu, “Epistemic Advantage on the Margin: A Network Standpoint Epistemology”, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (2022).

²⁹ The Latin-American History of Ideas, for example, represents one of the central attempts at systematizing what was back then seen as the cognitive advantages of the historically marginalized. Its leading proponent was the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea (1912-2004), a student of the Spanish philosopher José Gaos (1900-1969), whose approach to the history of ideas identified important metaphysical yearnings for community in the Latin-American case, which were necessary to mitigate contemporary society's push toward mechanized forms of individualism. See, for example, Andrés Kozel, “Fervor de Comunidad,” in *La Idea de América en el Historicismo Mexicano: José Gaos, Edmundo O'Gorman y Leopoldo Zea* (2012).

³⁰ The main target of Dussel's criticism is Jürgen Habermas' chronology and concept of modernity, especially the latter's claim that intra-European events such as the Enlightenment and the French Revolution are essential for the establishment of the principle of subjectivity. For Dussel, it is impossible to conceive of modernity without colonialism; thus, Habermas' stance is unreflected and has pernicious effects on European self-consciousness. See Enrique Dussel, *The Invention of the Americas: Eclipse of “The Other” and the Myth of Modernity* (1995), 25-26. Although Dussel was probably not aware of the historian's work, it would be no exaggeration to affirm that his arguments expand Koselleck's skepticism in a decolonial direction, given the latter's well-known opposition to Habermas' Enlightenment-based conceptualizations of modernity and the public sphere. For more details on the controversies between Habermas and Koselleck, see, for example, Olsen, *History in the Plural* (2012), 80-87.

It is plausible to consider not only the Philosophy of Liberation, but intellectual movements such as the Latin-American History of Ideas,³¹ Critical Pedagogy,³² and Dependency Theory,³³ as watersheds for debates on the epistemic advantages arising from the otherness condition of Latin America. However, one can say that this discussion only reached its peak within the framework of the so-called Modernity/Coloniality collective.³⁴

In this case, Walter D. Mignolo best summarizes many of the group's positions by further developing a notion still implicit in previous discussions, namely, the concept of *geopolitics of knowledge*. For the Argentine semiotician, European colonialism intersects with epistemology, with points of enunciation that constantly reaffirm the linear myth of modernity as a monotopic understanding imposed onto multicultural spaces. However, in the colonial space, the strangeness of the Other constantly erodes the process of self-conscious comparison and reaffirmation of the same, which is the basis of Western hermeneutics. For this reason, beyond cultural relativism, the understanding subjects of colonial peripheries have the capacity of disturbing the clear rendering of the central-Western point of reference, thus expressing the notion of *border thinking* (i.e., “the epistemology of the exteriority; that is, of the outside created from the inside”) and revealing the power asymmetry, which makes invisible other truths and modes of being (Mignolo; Tlostanova 2006, 206).

Therefore, for Mignolo, individuals situated in world peripheries like Latin America are prone to embracing the position of a *pluritopic hermeneutics*, which, as opposed to the monotopic understanding of Western tradition, can call “into question the positionality and the homogeneity of the understanding subject” and reflect “on the very process of constructing (e.g., putting in order) that portion of the world to be known” (Mignolo 1995, 12-15).

³¹ Leopoldo Zea's proposal for a Latin-American History of Ideas gained steam from the 1950s onwards, when similar initiatives took shape, for example, in Argentina, Uruguay, Chile, and Brazil. Notwithstanding differences in approach, almost all project collaborators had in common the intention of retrieving the ideas that, despite its local framing, had the advantage of looking beyond and expanding the benefits of modern reason far off its foundation in a central-Western orientation. See, for instance, E. R. de Carvalho, *Pensadores da América Latina: O Movimento Latino-americano de História das Ideias* (2009).

³² As a philosophy of education and social movement, Critical Pedagogy has its roots in the Brazilian educator Paulo Freire (1921-1997), whose work brings unprecedented relevance to the marginalized, colonized, and oppressed as active co-creators of knowledge. See, for example, Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (2007).

³³ Dependency Theory did not restrict to socio-economic debates, and essential contributions in literary critique emerged directly from the relevance attributed in the 1960s and 1970s to world-peripheral thought. One example is Roberto Schwarz's insight on how ideas “misplaced” from their European context can assume new inventive forms and be “capitalized as an advantage” when reinterpreted from a Brazilian perspective. See Roberto Schwarz (1977, 48), *Ao Vencedor as Batatas: Forma Literária e Processo Social nos Inícios do Romance Brasileiro*. Another example is Silviano Santiago, who, albeit his disagreements with Schwarz, reflected on Latin America as a culture in between, critically affecting the text of dominant cultures and creating a horizon wherein the universality of texts is subject to evaluation. See Silviano Santiago, *The Space In-Between: Essays on Latin American Culture* (2001). For a critical view about these positions, see Elías Palti, “The Problem of ‘Misplaced Ideas’ Revisited,” *Journal of the History of Ideas* (2006), 149-79.

³⁴ Modernity/Coloniality is a network of Latin-American intellectuals formed in the late 1990s, but with roots in some of the most influential currents of thought that originated in the region during the 1970s, namely, Dependency Theory, Philosophy of Liberation, Theology of Liberation, and Latin-American Philosophy. For detailed information on the history and purpose of the group, see *El Giro Decolonial: Reflexiones Para Una Diversidad Epistémica Mas Alla del Capitalismo Global* (2007).

This quick retrieval of the history of the concept in Latin America not only reveals common points with Koselleck's proposal but brings about several extra possibilities of rethinking the bonds between discussions on epistemic advantages and the potentialities of conceptual history in its contemporary global framing.

First, for calling into question the positionality and universality of the understanding subject, the Latin-American debates add a new layer of complexity to the self-reflective understanding of historical thinking, which, as seen above, is both a trend and a necessity in present-day historiography. Second, the exteriority-oriented point of view of the marginalized implies a historical reinterpretation of modernity, which is no longer seen as an intra European process, but as a transmodern phenomenon, with an enlarged number of protagonists cross-cutting concepts of reason and historical time. Third, for denying their inferiority and reaffirming the analytical potentialities of the vanquished, numerous stances deriving from the Latin-American case can foster an alternative to central-Western patterns of comparison, follow debates on the consequences of epistemic injustice (see, for example, Kidd; Medina, Pohlhaus Jr. 2017), and open the possibility for understanding global peripheries not as "deviations" from a standard but as privileged loci for comparative studies on the development of historical thinking (see, for example, Dussel 2013; Santos 2016).

Nevertheless, it is impossible to ignore that debates on epistemic advantages also possess their caveats, at least in Latin America. For example, some representatives of this stance are accused of holding a reductionist view about the modern phenomenon while associating modernity solely with colonialism and reducing its scope to a matter of asymmetry in power relations. Likewise, when they situate the victims (e.g., the indigenous peoples, the "people," or "Latin America" as a whole) in an a-historical site exterior to modernity, especially in its decolonial vein, such thinkers are criticized for producing idealized views (e.g., the so-called *abyayalismo*)³⁵ stemming from the otherness condition of the vanquished.³⁶ Furthermore, for rejecting the vocabulary inherent to modern politics and confusing epistemological and political matters, discussions on this topic often turn into apolitical views that risk leading to resignation, immobilism, or even reactionary political positions (see, for example, Castro-Gómez 2019; Segato 2013; Browitt 2014).

At long last, by claiming that such problems are in part what makes historians almost alien to these discussions, the following pages suggest that Latin-American debates on epistemic advantages could gain from closer contact with the approach of global conceptual history. In a nutshell, it will be argued that a more immediate dialogue between debates on epistemic advantages and the methodological tools of global conceptual history could work as a strategy

³⁵ For the Kuna people from North Colombia, *Abya Yala* (Kuna, *mature earth*) is a synonym for America. Yet, given its acritical use by some decolonial scholars from Latin America, Santiago Castro-Gómez uses *abyayalismo* to describe a variant of this trend of thought that characterizes modernity *in totum* as an imperialist, colonialist, patriarchal, genocidal, and racist project (See Santiago Castro-Gómez 2019, 11).

³⁶ Gustavo Verdesio speaks, for example, about the essentialization of subalternity and the a-political consequences of this stance as one of the shortcomings in the work of John Beverley. Given the relevance of Beverley's work for the group, this would help explain the dissolution of the Latin-American Subaltern Studies, another important network of Latin-American decolonial scholars based in the USA, founded in 1992 and split in the early 2000s. See Gustavo Verdesio, "Introduction. Latin American Subaltern Studies Revisited: Is There Life After the Demise of the Group?" *Dispositio* (2005), 15-16.

to balance such shortcomings and foster a transnational analytical pattern that, for being less dependent of central-Western standards, could work as an alternative for the comparison of the history of Latin American and other peripheral traditions of historical thought.

A SOUTH-ORIENTED APPROACH TO METAHISTORICAL CONCEPTS OF HISTORIOGRAPHY SOME POSSIBILITIES EMERGING FROM THE LATIN AMERICAN CASE

The second and third sections of this article sought to demonstrate that it is possible to associate debates on conceptual history with at least two general trends in the Latin American historiography of today: a metahistorical self-scrutiny and a critique of ethnocentric forms of historical thinking. Thus, if it would be exaggerated to infer that this double trend is due to the influence of Koselleck's thought, it is undoubtedly true that, through its epistemology, *Begriffsgeschichte* has contributed to complexify a longstanding tradition existing in Latin America to decenter historical thought beyond linear and homogeneous concepts of time.

The abovementioned discussions on epistemic advantages give an idea of the depth and extension of this tradition. Having the potential to disturb monotopic forms of understanding, Latin-American debates on epistemic advantages congregate many concepts with a solid capacity to transcend the traditional past-present-future configurations dear to modern historical thinking. Nonetheless, there are reasons enough to affirm that the polychronic potentialities related to such debates remain primarily underestimated in present-day historiography.

As already mentioned, although being open to North-Atlantic concepts of time and theories of modernization (as the case of conceptual history demonstrates), most contemporary representatives of professional historiography in Latin America prefer remaining oblivious to these discussions and reflections on the epistemic advantages are overall restrained to philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, and literary critiques situated in different parts of the continent. Given this curious peculiarity, it would be legitim to ask: what explains this critical distance that many Latin-American historians maintain vis-à-vis epistemological discussions of this kind?

Answers to this question are numerous, but the most flagrant certainly must do, on the one hand, with the association that mainly the decolonial representatives of this stance make between the future-oriented nature of historical thought and the *coloniality of power*,³⁷ a concept that interrelates the legacies of European colonialism in social orders and forms of knowledge production. However, besides being reductionist in its rendering of modern historiography as equal to colonial domination, this view overemphasizes the European origins of the historical discipline without considering that the scientification of history occurred in a globalized context, with the development of a diversity of hybrid methods, concepts, and theoretical approaches (see, for

³⁷ For Aníbal Quijano's understanding of the concept, see "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America," *Nepantla* (2000). For critiques on the use of the concept in decolonial theory, see José Antonio Mazzotti, "Estudios Coloniales Latinoamericanos y Colonialidad: una Breve Aclaración de Conceptos," in *Dimensiones del latinoamericanismo* (2018), and Paul Anthony Chambers, "Epistemology and Domination: Problems with the Coloniality of Knowledge Thesis in Latin American Decolonial Theory", (2020).

example, Rüsen 2002; Iggers; Wang; Mukherjee 2008; Woolf 2011; 2012). On the other hand, a different reason relates to the side-effects of the professionalization process that, especially from the 1990s onwards, leads to crescent levels of specialization of historical knowledge worldwide.

In the case of Latin America and intellectual provinces alike,³⁸ although bringing about significant of the abovementioned advances in terms of research, network, and institutional organization, the professionalization of the discipline also intensified the detachment from essayist and other forms of non professional historiography, the homogenization of the historiographic forms of representation, and, in line with the prevalent neoliberal ethos, the acritical incorporation of concepts, methods, and theoretical frameworks that are proper of central-Western contexts and interests (see, for example, Malerba 2009; Pereira 2018).

With a clear impact on the region's historians' *disciplinary memory*,³⁹ this process of professionalization/atomization also influenced the adoption of self-scrutiny evaluation patterns for the history of historiography, which is not always in line with the diverse historical cultures existing in the subcontinent. Hence, with the prevalence of the German, French, and Anglo-Saxon languages and standards as the appropriate paradigms for the development of academic history, Latin-American historiographies often fall on the wrong side of the equation, either as passive recipients of the European models or as examples of pre-scientific and dilettante ways of dealing with the past.

Consequently, the variety of historical thinking forms existing in the region generally occupies the place of exotic, interesting case studies, and the analytical potentialities of its theories, methods and key concepts remain, when much, as complementary to the North-Atlantic standards of historiography. Naturally, not only it is hard for historians of historiography to avoid adopting the European standard as the sole rule of development of historical knowledge, but it is also challenging for them to establish direct approaches or lines of comparison, for example, between the Latin-American and other South or non-Western traditions of historical thinking (Santos; Nicodemo; Pereira 2017, 161–186).

In this scenario, it becomes clear that a different approach is necessary if historians of Latin-American historiography intend to overcome such short-term interpretations about the trajectory of historical thinking in the region. It is precisely at this point that a promising alternative can emerge from the contact between global conceptual history and the Latin-American debates on epistemic

³⁸ For instance, Ewa Domańska makes a balance of the incorporation of French theory in East-central Europe's humanities and pleas for an overcoming of the largely acritical use of these frameworks as a toolbox that, at least since the 1980s, offers ready-made analyses and interpretations of Polish source materials. See Ewa Domańska, "Polish Humanities, French Theory and the Need for a Strong Subject," *Historyka, Studies in Historical Methods* (2021). In his turn, Syed Farid Alatas speaks of "academic dependency" to define, from a Southeast-Asian perspective, this kind of situation when the "knowledge production of certain scholarly communities is conditioned by the development and growth of knowledge of other scholarly communities to which the former is subjected." See Syed Farid Alatas (2008, 5): "Intellectual and structural challenges to Academic Dependency," *International Sociological Association e-bulletin*.

³⁹ The concept of *disciplinary memory* (Portuguese, *memória disciplinar*) was coined by the Brazilian historian Salgado Guimarães, and it introduced a critical approach to the history of historiography while accounting for the subjective elements, i.e., the remembrances and oblivions, that constitute the cultural consolidation any academic discipline. For an introduction to the concept in Guimarães' work and beyond, see Rodrigo Turin (2013, 78-95), "História da Historiografia e Memória Disciplinar: Reflexões Sobre um Gênero," *História da Historiografia: International Journal of Theory and History of Historiography* (2013).

advantages. If, as seen above, the former has the capacity of providing the skeptical methodological rigor necessary to historicize the very analytical categories of historiography in a transnational perspective, the latter can radicalize the metahistorical space-time foundations of historical thought beyond a central-Western anthropological outlook.⁴⁰

Thus, for example, while merging down both perspectives and abandoning Eurocentric views about the pathways of global historiography, this alternative approach could deal with the history of Latin-American metahistorical concepts that are most central in their capacity of pluralizing the temporal-spatial reach of history beyond its modern shape as a singular collective concept. By the same token, adopting global conceptual history's entangled and theoretically self-critical perspective might counter the a-historic and ethnocentric assumptions of essentialized identities existing in debates about epistemic advantages. At last, this blend of approaches could foster the replacement of an all-encompassing theory of historical times by an actor-based, multi-lingual, global history of metahistorical concepts (see, for example, Kragh 2021), thus complementing, at the historiographical level, a trend currently taking place in various branches of international social theory and historical thinking.⁴¹

In line with this shift of perspectives, the interpretative frame below outlines a different departing point for approaching the various expressions and manifold pathways of historical thought in Latin America. Based on some examples of key metahistorical space-time concepts, it sketches a tripartite typology that might serve as an initial reference for dealing with the history of Spanish, Portuguese, Afro-American, and indigenous language expressions of historical thinking:

Metahistorical type	Examples of key concepts
1. Indigenous, Afro-Latin American, and pre-disciplinary concepts. ⁴²	<i>Afro-diasporic thinking</i> (Portuguese, <i>Pensamento Afro diaspórico</i>), Amerindian perspectivism (Portuguese, <i>Perspectivismo amerindio</i>), Cosmohistory (Spanish, <i>Cosmohistoria</i>), Pachakuti (Aymara, <i>the overturning of space time</i>), Patriotic epistemology (Spanish, <i>epistemología patriótica</i>).

⁴⁰ There is an ongoing debate on the anthropological shortcomings of Koselleck's metahistory. It has been argued, for example, that the "natural givens" expressed by his metahistorical oppositions (i.e., "earlier/later," "inner/outer," and "above/below") are arbitrary or even Western-centered choices. Thus, it is not surprising that attempts exist to expand his proposal towards a broader anthropological foundation. This is the case, for instance, of Jörn Rüsen, "The Horizon of History Moved by Modernity: After and Beyond Koselleck," *History and Theory* (2021) and Luis Fernández Torres, "Las Constantes Antropológicas de la Histórica de Koselleck: una Propuesta de Ampliación" in *Horizontes de la Historia Conceptual en Iberoamérica: Trayectoria e Incursiones* (2021).

⁴¹ Besides the afore quoted examples of the works edited by Rüsen (2002), Woolf (2011-12), Iggers, Wang and Mukherjee (2008), it is also possible to mention the theoretical formulations made in this regard by Schultz-Forberg, "The Spatial and Temporal Layers of Global History" and Dag Herbjørnsrud, "Beyond Decolonizing: Global Intellectual History and Reconstruction of a Comparative Method," *Global Intellectual History* (2021).

⁴² This sample of key metahistorical concepts does not exhaust other possibilities, serving only as a reference for various ongoing discussions in an intersection of fields that range from history and anthropology to the history of historiography. For an introduction to each of the

2. Professional concepts of academic historiography. ⁴³	Historiography (Portuguese, <i>Historiografia</i> ; Spanish, <i>Historiografía</i>) Historicism (Portuguese, <i>Historicismo</i> ; Spanish, <i>Historicismo</i>), Historical consciousness (Portuguese, <i>Consciência histórica</i> ; Spanish, <i>Conciencia histórica</i>), Metahistory (Portuguese, <i>Metahistória</i> ; Spanish, <i>Metahistoria</i>), Source criticism (Portuguese, <i>Crítica das fontes</i> ; Spanish, <i>Crítica de las fuentes</i>).
3. Hybrid concepts of historical thought. ⁴⁴	Anthropophagy (Portuguese, <i>Antropofagia</i>), Lusotropicalism (Portuguese, <i>Lusotropicalismo</i>), Miscegenation (Portuguese, <i>Miscigenação</i> ; Spanish, <i>Mestizaje</i>), The Baroque of the Indies (Spanish, <i>El Barroco de Indias</i>), Transculturation (Spanish, <i>Transculturación</i>).

Table 1: A typology for approaching the history of key metahistorical concepts in Latin America.

1. Indigenous, Afro-American, and pre-disciplinary concepts: Alongside linguistic motives, one of the biggest challenges of accounting for this type of metahistorical concepts is the need of overcoming, on the one side, the claim that the Afro-American and American indigenous peoples prescind from a consciousness of historicity and that, for this reason, it would only be possible to account for the synchronization and systematic historicization of the world as a synonym to a so-called “colonization of time” (Fernández Sebastián 2018). On the other side, there exists the trend mentioned above of placing the Afro

concepts mentioned above, see, for example, *Pensamento Afrodiaspórico em Perspectiva: Abordagens no Campo da História e Literatura, vol. 1* (2021), to the case of *Afro-diasporic thinking*; and Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, *The Relative Native: Essays on Indigenous Conceptual Worlds* (2015) to the case of *Amerindian Perspectivism*. To *Cosmohistory*, see Federico Navarrete Linares, “Las Historias de America y las Historias del Mundo: una Propuesta de Cosmohistoria,” *Anales de Estudios Latinoamericanos* (2016), 1-35. For an introduction to the concept of *Pachakuti*, see Karl Swinehart, “Decolonial Time in Bolivia’s Pachakuti,” *Signs and Society* (2019). Finally, for the eighteenth-century creole concept of *Patriotic epistemology*, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, *How to Write the History of the New World: Histories, Epistemologies, and Identities in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World* (2002).

⁴³ These are vital concepts to the professionalization of history in Latin America between the first decades of the twentieth century, the 1950s, and the 1960s. Most interpreters detach this period as crucial for the institutionalization of the historical discipline in the region. For a detailed picture of this process and the relevance of these and other key concepts, see Juan Maiguashca, “Historians in Spanish South America: Cross-References between Centre and Periphery” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, vol. 4: 1800-1945* (2011), and Marieta de Moraes Ferreira, *A História como Ofício - A Constituição de um Campo Disciplinar* (2013).

⁴⁴ This sample of metahistorical terms comprises the period of institutionalization of the humanities in the region and is based on the fields wherein discussions on such hybrid concepts of Latin-American thought are most advanced, namely, literature and culture critique. For a theoretical overview and an additional number of concepts of this kind, see *Diccionario de Términos Críticos de la Literatura y la Cultura en América Latina* (2021), and *Diccionario de Estudios Culturales Latinoamericanos* (2009), and *Critical Terms in Caribbean and Latin American Thought: Historical and Institutional Trajectories* (2016).

American and indigenous epistemologies in an idealized, a-historic site of complete opposition to the modern patterns of knowledge production.

Contrary to these views, the approach of a global and theoretically focused conceptual history might complexify the treatment of such epistemologies while scrutinizing their metahistorical concepts not simply far off the outlook of the nation-state but also beyond the “nature vs. spirit” or “time vs. space” divisions that are typical of the central-Western ways of conceiving the bounds of historical thought. A similar principle applies to the Indo-Iberian approaches to history that preceded academic conceptions of history in Latin America (Thurner 2015).

Therefore, this different mode of appraising indigenous, Afro-American, and pre-disciplinary space-time concepts might, for example, counter Western “time obsession” (Deloria Jr. 2003), avoid Eurocentric views about the history of historiography, and help illuminate today’s global environmental challenges with conceptions of time and space not completely attained to the anthropocentrism (Krenak 2019), which is, for instance, one of the main limitations of modern historiography.

2. Professional concepts of academic historiography: Instead of regarding Latin America and other non-European spaces as passive recipients of the central-Western model of academic historiography, an interpretation of the professionalization of history concerned with the world peripheries might shed a different light on the hybrid, entangled, and multi-focal characteristics acquired by professional historical knowledge worldwide. Moreover, with some of the key concepts of academic historiography as its main reference point, this approach could elucidate different processes of creative adaptation of theoretic-methodological tools and reveal space-time outlooks not always visible in North-Atlantic contexts.

In the case of Latin America, it is known that terms like *historiography* and *historicism*, for example, acquired important roles as meta critical concepts dealing with history as a living experience, as a study of historical narratives, or as a strategy to relativize and reapproach the world historical process from a peripheral point of view (see, for example, Pereira; Santos; Nicodemo 2015; Rodrigues da Cunha 2021). Hence, bringing this plurality of stances to the foreground can contribute to the ongoing incorporation of different interpretations about historiography’s professionalization process and render historical thought with perspectives about the interconnection between the layers of space and time not limited anymore to a North-Atlantic conceptual framework.

3. Hybrid concepts of historical thought: This type of metahistorical concepts encompasses the abovementioned long-term tendency to value Latin America’s peripheral condition as containing epistemic advantages not attainable in central Western contexts. From modernism until decolonial thought, a range of intellectuals has been overturning conceptions of backwardness and originality to reflect about Latin America as a space *in-between* that retroactively affects the culture of the centers and creates the possibility for a wider and more effective appraisal of the universality of the epistemologies of the metropolis.

If literary critiques, anthropologists, and philosophers alike have to a great extent already probed the non-ethnocentric features of this process of epistemic expansion, the capacities of this kind of metahistorical concepts to pluralize historical thinking have not yet been fully probed by historians. For instance, although scholars recognize the quality of the Latin-American modernist movement as anticipating discussions on cultural hybridism, not

enough attention is paid to the reflections on power asymmetries, global encounters, and space-time orders, which constitute the core of concepts like Anthropophagy, Lusotropicalism, and Miscegenation (Schulze; Fischer 2018, 3-4).

Similarly, few attempts exist to delineate a clear cut between the socio-political and epistemological dimensions of these conceptual uses as a strategy that could render these concepts into functional analytical categories for present-day historical knowledge. Therefore, an approach that focuses on the epistemic advantages deriving from Latin America's hybrid condition needs to face the methodological challenge of disentangling this medley of epistemology and politics while also bearing in mind the possibility of turning the expansive character of this category of metahistorical concepts into new normative patterns for the study of other peripheral traditions of historical thinking.

Finally, it goes without saying that these are momentary suggestions emerging from the current situation of global conceptual history and Latin-American historiography, thus not excluding other research lines or approach possibilities. In any case, it may have become clear that in expanding its scope beyond the central-Western reference of the modern regime of historicity, the above-delineated approach to metahistorical concepts of historiography could foster renewed attempts at rendering historical knowledge a more diverse, plural, and holistic outlook.

Furthermore, besides enhancing the mutual understanding of historians in Latin America, this interpretative frame could work as a different departure point to the analysis of peripheral traditions of historical thinking, bringing about new forms of comparing and dealing with the history of Middle Eastern, African, South- and East-Asian historiographies without remaining strictly indebted to the Western-European model of historiographical development. Hence, by touching upon these possibilities, the following concluding remarks summarize the main arguments presented above while sketching the common points that could serve as references to this global approach to the history of peripheral historiographies and cultures of historical thinking.

TOWARDS A SOUTH-SOUTH METAHISTORICAL DIALOGUE

Without losing sight of local specificities, the previous pages sought to reveal some elements that are the primary marks of research on international conceptual history today. By shedding light on the history of reception and reinterpretation of *Begriffsgeschichte* in Brazilian, Mexican, and Argentinean academic milieus, the text claimed that the global and self-reflective shifts which are observable in North-Atlantic conceptual history have in many aspects also taken form in Latin America. Nonetheless, despite the pluralist attributes long linked to the subcontinent's historiographical tradition, historians of the region generally disregard those that were referred to here as the epistemic advantages of the Latin-American case due to several of the reasons mentioned above. However, it was argued that while critically analyzing the pros and cons of such debates and focusing on its vital metahistorical concepts, it might be feasible to derive valuable insights from this aspect of Latin-American tradition and depart from it to create different patterns of approaching not only the history of Latin American but of other non-hegemonic traditions of historical thought. Yet, it is possible to question to what extent the position deriving from the Latin-American case also applies to other peripheral traditions and if it can at some

point contribute to counter the Eurocentrism still prevalent in international approaches to the theory of history and history of historiography.

Far from aiming at a rigid prescription or a definitive answer, the tripartite model sketched in our previous section might indicate an initial response to such inquiries. In fact, besides their shared experience with European colonialism and albeit noticeable linguistic, religious, and socio-political differences, several elements approximate the historiographical traditions of regions like South and East Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Latin America.⁴⁵ For instance, recent research on the history of South-Asian historiography has revealed how in nineteenth and twentieth-century India, some universal principles of scientific objectivity walked hand in hand with popular modes of history-writing that intertwined with the pride of ancient identities and cultures (see, for example, Chakrabarty 2011; Mantena 2012). As expected, this encounter of historical conceptions brought about many locally framed reinterpretations of the theoretical toolbox of academic history, with hybrid forms of conceptualizing a variety of space-time layers praised today for their capacity of encompassing the experience of distinct ethnic, religious, and social groups.⁴⁶

A similar logic is identifiable in East Asia. Recent studies on the history of Chinese historical thinking, for example, reveal that in pursuing historical objectivity and truth, ancient Chinese scholars such as Wu Zhen (fl. 11th century CE) reflected on topics that only centuries later would become relevant in the West, like the central role of *literary grace* (Chinese, *wencai* 文采) or the importance of rhetoric in the historian's work (Zhang 2015, 50). The reevaluation of this millenary tradition of historical thought has rendered it almost impossible to interpret China as a passive recipient of Western historiography.

Thus, early twentieth-century strategies of reconceptualizing history in Chinese historiography have come to the fore, as is the case, for example, of Liu Yizheng's (1880–1956) replacement of modernity's singular collective concept of history with the idea of a “moral cosmic order” (Schneider; Tanaka 2011, 515). Hence, historians became more cautious when paying attention to the process of professionalization of the historical discipline in East Asia, and the combination of modern and traditional elements that resulted in the compound nature of China's *new historical studies* (Chinese, *xin shixue* 新史學) is now the object of substantial academic interest.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ It is impossible to disregard that tremendous advance occurred in the last few years to overcome generalist views about the historiographical traditions of the so-called Global North. Concerning the European continent, important efforts are being made to complexify the forms of historical thinking existing, for example, in the “Southern” and South-Eastern parts of the Old World. In the case of the former, besides *Iberconceitos*, the worth of mention is *Europa del Sur y América Latina: Perspectivas Historiográficas* (2014). In the case of East Central Europe, see, for example, *Historyka* journal's special issue about “Core Concepts of Historical Thinking” in Poland, but especially Tomasz Wiśniewski, “Kluczowe Pojęcia Myślenia Historycznego: Wprowadzenie do Dyskusji”, (2021), 7-24.

⁴⁶ Romila Thapar's struggle to counter the long-sustained myth that historical consciousness was absent in ancient India is worth mentioning. See, for example, Romila Thapar, *Time as a Metaphor of History: Early India* (1996). See also her recent efforts in shedding light on the relevance of such ancient traditions of historical thought to present-day discussions of international historiography in Romila Thapar, “Historical Traditions in Early India: c. 1000 BC to c. AD 600” in *The Oxford History of Historical Writing, vol. 1: Beginnings to AD 600* (2011), 553-76.

⁴⁷ Among other works that deal with the complexity of Chinese historiography in its intersection with ancient, pre-modern, and Western traditions, see *Chinese Historical Thinking: An*

No less significant in this same direction are the advances produced by historiographic research in Africa and the Middle East. Besides bringing about tremendous gains in reconsidering the relevance of oral ways of thinking historically, investigations on varieties of Sub-Saharan history shed light on the complexity of philosophical trends like the South-African Ubuntu and the intersection between the Yoruba cultures with the production of academic historical knowledge in Nigeria (see: Eze 2010; Falola 1999; 2011). As an outcome of the reappraisal of this crossing between the colonial and pre-colonial worlds, discussions emerged in the last few years on the possibilities of an autonomous body of theoretical thinking synchronized with Africa's own experiences, idiosyncrasies, and interests (Atieno-Odhiambo 2002, 13-64).

At the same time, in the Middle East, the latest investigations on the metahistorical stances of the Muslim world advanced in overcoming interest in European Orientalism and made clear the relevance of the kind of historical thought that originated in the region. Hence, thanks to this renewed interest, historians today are aware of various pluralist theories of times preconized by classic, modern, and contemporary thinkers of the Islamic tradition, thus raising attention to a framework of concepts that could be better suited to approach the historical complexities of cultures and societies in the Middle East and beyond (see, for example, Pfeiffer 2019; Riecken 2019; Perneau 2019).

In sum, despite their singularities, at some extent, all the aforementioned traditions had to trespass the epistemological flaws of colonialist historiography in distinct moments and with different strategies. Nonetheless, as similar to the Latin-American instance, this need to come to terms with a Eurocentric knowledge often resulted in inventive ways of merging elements of local historical cultures with the frameworks of academic history.

Therefore, Asiatic, African, and Middle Eastern historians are not so far from their Latin-American colleagues when it comes to speak about the challenges of dealing with traditions of thinking for long underestimated as devoid of any analytical value. If, on the one hand, similar challenges emerge today in these regions due to akin populist uses of discourses on the epistemic advantages of the locally oppressed;⁴⁸ on the other hand, obvious inequalities in resource and arbitrary parameters of knowledge evaluation still prevent these scholars from dealing in a less depreciative tone with their own historiographic heritage. Be that as it may, it is not possible to ignore that significant advances occurred in the last several decades, especially with the emergence of unprecedented levels of connection, new digital research methods, and various

Intercultural Discussion (2015), and Q. Edward Wang, "Is There a Chinese Mode of Historical Thinking? A Cross-Cultural Analysis," *History and Theory* 2007), 201-209, and Ying-shih Yü, "Reflections on Chinese Historical Thinking" in *Chinese History and Culture, vol. 2: Seventeenth Century Through Twentieth Century* (2016), 294-316.

⁴⁸ Not so far from what occurs in Latin America, the political uses of historiography are an additional challenge to historians dealing with the history of historical thought in many parts of the world. For instance, new-Confucian and other religious-nationalist movements in China, India, and Taiwan have argued for a "we always had it" interpretation of ancient forms of historical thinking as supposedly containing the seeds necessary to restore the former glory of Asia. Considering this over-simplistic view, several Asian scholars have reacted to this conservative political trend while offering a much more complex understanding of the different forms of pre-modern historical thinking existing in the region. For an overview and critique of these political uses of historiography in India, see Meera Ashar, "Taking a Step Back: Revisiting Studies of Indian Politics" in *Journal of South Asian Studies* (2009), 533- 552. For a criticism of this stance in East-Asian historiography, see Ulrich Timme Kragh, "Dogmas of Superficiality: The Episteme of Humanism in Writings by Taiwanese Historians Huang Chun-chieh, Wong Young-tsu, and Hu Chang-Tze" in *Chinese Historical Thinking* (2015), 143-58.

strategies of transnational cooperation by agents and institutions situated in the Global South.

Ultimately, it would be fair to claim that more than twenty years after Dipesh Chakrabarty's famous plea for the provincialization of Europe, time may have arrived to expand his initial proposal and speak as well for a necessary *deprovincialization of the peripheries*. To this end, beyond the pitfalls of ethnocentrism and academic colonialism, a change in attitude would be necessary to bring to the fore peripheral outlooks to issues that are far from being parochial and concern historians today at a global level.

Hence, without disregarding all the linguistic, methodological, and overall operational difficulties inherent to such a large-scale endeavor, the South-oriented history of metahistorical concepts of historical thought sketched in our previous pages could open the venue to this new form of transnational dialogue. If it is impossible to tell whether practical matters would make this initiative feasible in the short run, it is undoubtedly true that continuous contestations to the modern regime of historicity have rendered it necessary that voices long ignored are finally heard in the round tables of international historiography (see, for example, Lorenz; Bevernage 2013; Tamm; Olivier 2019). Thus, far from remaining restricted to some specific areas, there are reasons enough to affirm that the metahistorical gains unleashed by this reassertion of the margins would have large-scale reverberations, thus helping to complexify the means of historical knowledge not only in the peripheries but in the centers of present day discussions in historiography and historical theory.

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