Transnational History, Performativity and Conceptual Ethics

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Foreword and acknowledgments

As a result of the disturbing events of this spring, we graduate students have been asked to describe how the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our research and writing process. In terms of available archival- and source material, this thesis has been affected in a relatively small degree, as its primary concern is historical theory, and is in this sense independent of primary sources. When this is said, there have been some books I have not been able to access or re-access. In most cases, I have found the literature needed through various online resources.

On a personal note, the semester has been quite tough, both mentally and physically. Most of march was spent being quite ill in bed, with what I suspect was COVID-19. In turn, this necessarily confined a significant amount of the work on this thesis to be done in my bed, in a tiny apartment in Oslo, as risk in the family prevented a change of location. On a more positive note, my old physiotherapist has reclaimed a customer. While isolation, illness, and failure to uphold any kind of routine has been challenging, spirits have remained high in terms of writing this thesis, which has also been a valuable experience.

I want to thank the MITRA staff for how their personalities have provided a positive and insightful arena which has made these two years in the mitra- program both pleasant and insightful. They have taught me a lot and given me valuable perspectives on both history and the current world. A special thanks to my supervisor Kim C. Priemel. Your sharp intellect and encouraging tone have been vital in getting me through this semester.

Thank you to friends and family for constant support and always being there when needed. A special thanks to Kjell Magnus Sjøberg. You triggered my interest in history, philosophy, and everything in-between. Through countless conversations and discussions in the past decade, you have helped me keep a meaningful and interested outlook on this pale blue dot.

Finally, thank you to my classmates, particularly Jonas b. Eide, for friendship and valuable discussions these past years. It has been a joy.

Abstract

This thesis discusses historiography as a performative practice and discusses whether incorporation of the philosophical methodology of 'conceptual ethics improves performativity of transnational history. After an introduction in the first section, section 2. introduces the topic of conceptual ethics. Section 3. and 4. discuss transnational history and historiographical developments in the latter half of the 21st century and until today. Section 5. through 7. address narrativism and the 'postnarrativist' proposition of Jouni-Matti Kuukanen. Section 8. returns to transnational history and conceptual ethics, in light of the 'postnarrativist' proposition.

   The main argument is twofold and propose that (i) historiography is a performative practice and (ii) interdisciplinary incorporation of conceptual ethics to transnational history will improve its performativity. The former part of this argument stands in the tradition of theorizing historiography between absolutist historical realism and relativist postmodernism. The latter falls within the discourse on the methodology for transnational history.

Contents

Introduction

Surrounding the figure of the English merchant Edward Colston there could be seen an agitated crowd of protesters carrying placards of "Silence is Violence" in the center of Bristol. Shortly after, ropes were thrown around the English merchant and he was seen toppled forcefully to the ground. These events took place on the 7th of June 2020 and was a result of the ongoing 'Black Lives Matter' international human rights movement. The statue of Colston was erected in 1895 in commemoration of Colston's philanthropy, as part of 'invention of tradition,' as Eric Hobsbawm called it. However, Colston had also been a notorious slave-trader and the event in 2020 symbolized how philanthropic legacy was no longer uniformly perceived as positive, redeeming feat. The statue's toppling also showed how the legacies of colonialism and the age of empires are still very much alive around us, and they can be seen, not only in material objects but also in the way we experience and live in the present world. Recent years have seen growing calls for a 'decolonization of academia' and 'decolonization of history'.

While the above account is slightly misleading with respect to the subject in this paper, the symbolic overlap to current events was too tempting to be neglected, and this thesis will investigate one possible step in this direction of 'decolonizing history'. More specifically, it investigates the writing of transnational history and its connection to 'the decolonization of history'. I will argue for an interdisciplinary approach to transnational history with the recent trend of 'conceptual ethics' or 'conceptual engineering' (henceforth 'CE'),[1] in philosophical methodology. To do so, I will argue for a pragmatist account of historiography, by engaging deeply with theoretical issues of narrativism and representationalism. In this sense, the argument and research question is twofold; is it the case that history, and particularly transnational history, is a performative practice which should be evaluated as such; And if so, does transnational history improve its performativity by engaging with aspects and theoretical frameworks worked within CE? Scholars engaging in CE continuously work on topics concerning transnational history, while simultaneously seeking scholars with better historical knowledge and this thesis argues for an interdisciplinary approach in this respect.

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[1] CE is arguably not a new practice, though it is not until recent years that it has become the object of research. As such, the labels 'conceptual ethics' or 'conceptual engineering' are one of many. Other contributors use terms as 'revision', 'amelioration'/'ameliorative analysis', 'explication'.

The periodization and historiography of this thesis is somewhat problematic since it is not primarily engaging in history as the past or '*realhistorie*', but rather concerns historical practice, historical theory, and historiography itself. The themes investigated in this thesis arguably started with Hayden White's release of *Metahistory* in 1973. *Metahistory* turned the focus of historiography from epistemological issues towards history writing itself, and in turn, 'narrativism'. Roughly characterized, White criticized the very concept of 'historical science', claiming that historical works are "verbal structures in the form of narrative prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of explaining what they were by representing them."[2] Essentially, this places historians closer to artists imbuing historical actions with ethical and aesthetic reasoning or expressing ideology i.e. historians transforming historical events through narratives and plot structures that give meaning beyond the sum of their parts. In this respect, White was the first to analyze and criticize the rhetorical structure of history writing while emphasizing representation in construing historical reality, and the influence of *Metahistory* became increasingly influential following first the 'linguistic turn' and then the 'cultural turn' in the 1980s and 1990s. While White criticized the under-reflected, at times naïve beliefs many practitioners entertained, it did not fully deny the scientific character of historiography.[3]

White was neither the first historian to criticize positivism and contend that history writing had a moral purpose, nor would he be the last. The bibliography in this paper illustrates this to some extent, with a significant account of related works published within the last decade, among them Frank Ankersmit's *Meaning Truth and Reference in Historical Representation* (2012) and Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen's *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography* (2015). The latter work is engaged with extensively throughout this thesis. This entails a deep theoretical discussion on the persistent problems of representation and narrativity in writing history. The point of which is threefold. First, it is to illustrate that various waves of historiographical self-reflection are still involved with problems of representation and narrativity in history. Much of the theorizing of historiography have concerned either absolutist historical realism or relativist postmodernism.

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[2] White, *Metahistory*, foreword.
[3] White, "The Burden of History", pp. 130-135; For an overview and discussion of White's work and influence on the discipline, see: Doran, "Philosophy of History after Hayden White" (2012); Roth, "Undisciplined and Punished" (2018); Ankersmit, "Hayden White's Appeal to the Historians" (1998); Domanska, "Hayden White: Beyond Irony" (1998); Lorenz, "Can Histories Be True? Narrativism, Positivism, and the "Metaphorical Turn" (1998); Partner, "Hayden White at the AHA" (1997); Partner, "Hayden White: The Form of the Content (1998).

Kuukkanen holds that writing history is a deeply rational practice, and should be evaluated as such, despite prospects of truthfully describing the past being increasingly refuted. Second, it argues for an emphasis on performative historiography, rather than a truth-functional emphasis and offers an evaluative framework for works of history. 'Performative' here refers to how historical works not only describe a given reality but also change this social reality. Third, it provides ground for the main argument, that involvement with the emerging trend in philosophical methodology of CE improves the performativity of historiography. This is primarily concerned with transnational history and the 'decolonization of history', though more universalized arguments will be discussed. This is to highlight the constructivist nature of writing history and to exemplify and argue, for a pragmatic attitude towards 'doing' and evaluating historical works. Thus, the topical discourse goes from White's view of historical works as rhetorical structures representing the past to Kuukkanen's view of non-representationalist and performative history.

While an exhaustive list of historiographical contributions on this subject is beyond the remit of this thesis, some key contributions should be mentioned. Besides White, Ankersmit's work on historical representation, especially in *Narrative Logic* and *Historical Representation* has been highly influential. Similarly to White, Ankersmit proposes understanding historical works as holistic literary or linguistic theses and "how historians integrate a great number of historical facts into one synthetical whole".[4] Further, Jean-Francois Lyotard's *Postmodern Condition* is of obvious importance, while scholars such as Louis Mink, Arthur Danto, and W.B. Gallie all address narrativism, and are highly relevant.[5]

The use of theory and methodology in this thesis is also somewhat problematic to explicate, as the thesis is primarily centered *on* theory and the question of whether applying an external theoretical framework benefits transnational history. Thus, the result of this thesis is an eclectic mix of theoretical influences, which ideally will fuse into a coherent argument. This will resemble a form of Discourse Analysis Theory, which despite its name, is a range of theoretical and methodological tools with shared qualities and revolve around 'discourse', rather than a single, unified, and coherent theory. Briefly explained, we can say that language is used in different contexts (political, social, educational, etc.) and words and concepts used to acquire their meaning

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[4] Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic*, p. 15.
[5] Especially: Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, (2007); Danto, *Analytic Philosophy of History*, (1968); Mink, "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension", (1970); W.B. Gallie, "The Historical Understanding", (1963).

through these contexts. Thus, discourse analysis consists of recognizing these patterns of meaning and studying them both individually and in relation to other such patterns.[6] Furthermore, the use of discourse analysis entails four ontological- and epistemological premises which will also underline the theoretical work in this paper:

1. It has a critical attitude towards 'taken-for-granted knowledge' i.e. describing objective truth through language is impossible and in talking of the world one constructs categories that are inherently and necessarily subjective and perceptual.
2. They have historical and cultural specificity i.e. the categories created are tied to specific histories, cultures and temporal points.
3. Knowledge and social process are linked. Categorizing and constructing truths is a part of the social since language reflects social reality. Language and social reality are closely connected, and as such, language changes along with social processes.
4. Knowledge and social action are linked in terms of the social construction of knowledge having consequences on the social.[7]

This thesis also presumes a directional relationship between ontology, epistemology and methodology in terms of social inquiry. In this context, 'ontology' is used in a more explicit sense, approximating what Norman Blaikie suggests i.e. a mode of thinking in which ontology "refers to the claims and assumptions that a particular approach to social [or, by extension, political] inquiry makes about the nature of social [or political] reality claims about what exists, what it looks lie, what units make it up and how these units interact with one another."[8] Roughly, ontology relates to the nature of the social and political world, whereas epistemology refers to what we can know of it, and methodology explores how we might go about obtaining that knowledge. This advocates a directional relationship since finding methods for investigating social process (methodology) requires establishing the limits of our capability to gain knowledge of these processes (epistemology) and of their nature (ontology).[9] Thus, the importance of ontology is highly valued in this thesis.

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[6] Jørgensen and Phillips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method*, pp. 1-4.
[7] Ibid., pp. 5-6.
[8] Blaikie, *Approaches to Social Enquiry*, p. 6.
[9] Hay, "Political Ontology", pp. 6-10.

The thesis is structured into nine sections, the first section being this introduction. Section 2 presents and briefly discusses CE, as this underlies the entire thesis, and getting a grasp on what it entails will serve as a referential basis throughout the thesis. While this is a fairly long digression from the themes that follow, it is helpful in providing a necessary basis. Section 3 provides a brief illustration and discussion on the historiographical 'turns' to situate the emergence of transnational history as a late entry in historiographical self-reflection. Section 4 discusses definitions of transnational history and argues that it should be seen as an 'umbrella-term' and rather than a distinct historiographical sub-field. The section illustrates some of the general themes of inquiry that transnational history is concerned with and argues that it is heavily intertwined with recent efforts to decolonize history. Section 5 introduces the idea of a 'postnarrativist philosophy of historiography' and provides a short history of narrativism leading up to the proposition of 'postnarrativism'. The section examines the main characteristics of narrativism, as well as the problems associated with representation in historiography. This is concluded by arguing for non-representationalism in historiography. Section 6 examines reasoning in historiography and the role of colligatory concepts. The section works with Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* and E.P. Thompsons *The Making of the English Working Class* to establish a historiographical basis for discussion. Section 7 presents Kuukkanen's 'Tri-Partite Theory of Justification' for historiography and proposes a modified version of the theory. This attempts to avoid some of the issues of Kuukkanen's theory by appealing to a pragmatic approach exemplified by Kuukkanen. Section 8 returns to the role of CE and transnational history in light of the preceding discussion. Ideally, this will draw the thesis coherently together and give a persuasive argument for interdisciplinary work between transnational history and those working on CE. The strength of the argument will rely to some extent to which degree the reader is persuaded to see historiography as a performative and pragmatic practice. Section 9. concludes the thesis by summarizing the arguments and giving some final remarks.

2. Conceptual Ethics (Conceptual Engineering)

The topic of conceptual ethics or conceptual engineering has in recent years been flourishing in the field of philosophical methodology and relates to improving our conceptual toolbox, especially regarding our philosophical and social-scientific theories. The view here is that incorporating CE to transnational history will lead to a less epistemologically and ontologically naïve, and more diverse and critical transnational history. Epistemological and ontological discourses are not exempt from being represented by concepts and language and have major implications on the methodology of transnational history. The argument is that our ontological assumptions underpin both our epistemology and methodology, in that "ontology relates to the nature of the social and political world, epistemology to what we can know about it, and methodology to how we might go about acquiring that knowledge."[10]

CE is concerned with evaluating and improving concepts by (i) assessing representational devices, (ii) reflecting and proposing improvements on representational devices, and (iii) attempting to implement these improvements.[11] Looking more specifically at conceptual ethics, this concerns a range of normative and evaluative issues of thought, talk, and representation. This addresses which concepts one should use, ways concepts can be defective, what we should mean by our words and when to refrain using specific words.[12] 'Ethics' does not refer to any particular moral or political norms in this context, but rather as a more general notion of what one ought to do and what outcomes we consider good or bad.

Four paradigmatic cases will help to illustrate what CE entails. Related to the later discussion on representation we can point to the work by Matti Eklund and Kevin Scharp on exploring inconsistency in 'truth'. They claim that it is necessary to develop an improved and consistent concept of truth or even multiple concepts.[13] As will be discussed in regard to truth-evaluation in historiography, and generally whether historiographical thesis can be true, it might be the case that our concept of truth is ill-suited to bring forth any progress in questions like these.[14]

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[10] Hay, "Political Ontology", pp. 6-7.
[11] Plunkett and Cappelen, "A Guided Tour of Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics", pp. 2-3.
[12] Ibid., p. 4.
[13] Cappelen, *Fixing Language*, pp. 15-16; Plunkett and Cappelen, "A Guided Tour of Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics", p.6; See for example: Sharp, *Replacing Truth* (2013); Eklund, *Choosing Normative Concepts* (2017).
[14] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 132-133.

It is interesting to examine whether the concept of 'truth' is generally ill-suited to explain what we seek when trying to find 'historical truth'.

A general illustration of CE can be seen by philosopher Rudolf Carnap's proposition of 'explication'. Carnap focused mostly on theoretical virtues, not on forming inquiries of knowledge, but asking how we *want* things to be within the constraints our available tools and knowledge available from the sciences.[15] He states that "the task of *explication* consists in transforming a given more or less inexact concept into an exact one or, rather, in replacing the first by the second".[16] However, Carnap recognizes only one deficiency in concepts, namely inexactness.

A case that will be revealed to connect more directly to transnational history and the decolonization of history is Sally Haslanger's work on race and gender. She criticizes our race and gender concepts, and the social and political effects of the meanings they have.[17] According to her, the goal is not to describe concepts and extensions, but rather to fully consider the "pragmatics of our talk employing the terms in question". What is the point of the concepts? What cognitive or practical task can, or should they enable us towards? Are they effective and legitimate tools?[18] One of her most influential proposals is to change the meaning of 'man' and 'woman' to fit the definition:

> S is a woman if:
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> (i) S is regularly and for the most part observed or imagined to have certain bodily features presumed to be evidence of a female's biological role in reproduction; (ii) that S has these features marks S within the dominant ideology of S's society as someone who ought to occupy certain kinds of social position that are in fact subordinate (and so motivates and justifies S's occupying such a position!); and (iii) the fact that S satisfies (i) and (ii) plays a role in S's systematic subordination, i.e., along some dimension, S's social position is oppressive, and S's satisfying (i) and (ii) plays a role in that dimension of subordination.
>
> S is a man if:
>
> (i) S is regularily and for the most part observed or imagined to have certain bodily features presumed to be evidence of a male's biological role in reproduction; (ii) that S has these features marks S within the dominant ideology of S's society as someone who ought to occupy certain kinds of social position that are in fact privileged (and so motivates and justifies S's occupying such a position; and (iii) the fact that S satisfies (i) and (ii) plays a role in S's systematic privilege, i.e., along some dimension, S's social position is privileged, and S's satisfying (i) and (ii) plays a role in that dimension of privilege.[19]

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[15] Leitgeb and Carus, "Rudolf Carnap".
[16] Carnap, *Logical Foundations of Probability,* p. 3.
[17] Plunkett & Cappellen, "A Guided Tour of Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics", p. 6.
[18] Haslanger, "Gender and race: (what) are they? (what) do we want them to be?, p 33.
[19] Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) are they? (What) do we want them to be?, p. 39.

Two important points should be made out of Haslanger's proposal. First, it is revisionary in that it changes the intention of 'woman' in making it *possible* for a woman not to be subordinated. It is true by definition that those categorized as a 'woman' is subordinated.[20] Second, it is broadly politically justified, and the claim is normative in that the new usage has positive political consequences. She states: "I believe it is part of the project of feminism to bring about a day when there are no more women (though, of course, we should not aim to do away with females!)".[21] As will be discussed in section 4., transnational history is focused on revealing underlying power structures. If Haslanger is right in her analysis, these power structures are implicit even within the concepts and words we use.

Arguments in the same vein made in a wide range of views on how and if the concept of race should be engineered. Kwame Anthony Appiah has one proposal, namely that the concept of race has an empty extension and should be abolished as "there are no races: there is nothing in the world that can do all we ask 'race' to do for us".[22] Further, he argues that the concept presupposes 'racialism', namely the position that "we could divide human beings into a smaller number of groups, called 'races', in such a way that the members of these groups shared certain fundamental, heritable, physical, moral, intellectual, and cultural characteristics with one another that they did not share with members of any other race".[23] Racialism is empirically false, and thus race has an empty extension.[24] Other approaches also use racialism as motivation for making a normative claim. Haslanger advocates ameliorating our racial concepts since the current concept is defective. Transnational history is also concerned with questions of race. In the *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, the entry on 'Race-Mixing' states that:

> "race-mixing refers to the establishment of sexual relationships that cut across boundaries of race and culture; historically such relationships have been formed between peoples from a wide variety of racial backgrounds, but frequently the historical and theoretical examinations of mixing have focused on the relationships formed between European and non-European Woman."[25]

If we are to take the issues posed by Appiah and Haslanger seriously, and I think we should, then transnational history would require reflecting, both on the perception of 'race-mixing' and

[20] Cappelen, *Fixing Language*, p. 14.
[21] Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (what) are they? (what) do we want them to be?, p. 46.
[22] Appiah, *In my Fathers House*, p.75.
[23] Appiah, "Race, culture, identity: misunderstood connections", p. 80.
[24] See Mallon, "Passing, Traveling and Reality" (2004) for other eliminativist accounts on 'race' i.e. proposals for removal.
[25] Ikirye, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, p. 865.

historical and theoretical examinations on these 'racial backgrounds'. This is especially important if the decolonization of history is a goal.

A very different but interesting proposal is put forth by Sarah Jane Leslie, who presents empirical evidence that using certain linguistic constructions leads the user into making cognitive mistakes. This happens when people use generics, statements such as "tigers are striped", and essentializing social kinds.[26] She proposes a large-scale linguistic revision when speaking about race, ethnicity, religion, etc. in not labeling, but rather describing a person. For example, describing a person as 'following Islam', rather than a Muslim or using locutions such as 'people with darker skin' rather than 'Blacks' or 'African Americans'. In this way, the emphasis is on the individual person and properties a person possesses, rather than towards an essentialized social kind. For instance, gender categories are essentialized from a young age, causing people to believe that there are deep, fundamental, and inherent differences between men and women.[27] Being perhaps the only work in CE based on psychology, the claim is that changing emphasis to the adjective rather than to the noun can reduce expectations of conforming to a stereotype and lessen the essentializing of social kinds.[28]

The clear-cut features of CE are rather vague, but it is rather about *that kind of activity* or *these kinds of issues*, which has been flourishing in recent philosophical methodology.[29] It is not the case that this kind is or has been reserved for philosophical methodology. In Herman Cappelen's book *Fixing Language*, the philosopher presents what is recognized as the first monograph on CE. The book does not present a new theoretical framework (CE) but attempts to draw attention to a twentieth and twenty-first-century intellectual tradition which typically isn't seen as closely related.[30] Thus, while CE has arguably been practiced throughout history, it is not until recently that this became a distinct object of research.

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[26] Leslie, "Carving Up the Social World with Generics", pp. 208-210.
[27] Ibid., pp. 211.
[28] Ibid., pp. 220-221.
[29] Plunkett & Cappelen, "A Guided Tour of Conceptual Engineering and Conceptual Ethics", p.7.
[30] This includes works such as Frege, Begriffsschrift, (1879); Carnap, *The Logical Foundations of Probability* (1950); Devitt, *Designation* (1981); Hacking, *The Social Construction of What?* (1999); Kripke, *Naming and Necessity* (1980); Ludlow, *Living Words* (2014); Quine, *Word and Object* (1960); Strawson, *Individuals* (1959); Williamson, *Vagueness* (1994); Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). Cappelen, *Fixing Language*, preface.

3. The Emergence of Transnational History

Examining 'transnational history' is central to this thesis, but precisely what 'transnational history' entails remains highly elusive, both in terms of what it is and what it is supposed to be centered around. Its scientific status as a sub-discipline, field, or practice in history is unclear, and the same goes for its subjects and objects of study. Still, if occurrences of specific key terms in academic papers, book titles, or journal editors are indications of changes within a discipline then transnational history has certainly arrived. Marked by the increasing use of the term transnational (as well as global) history in the early 1990s and 2000s, something was and is arguably changing within and around history as a discipline, though it need not be the kind of paradigm shift or major turn as Thomas Kuhn had in mind.[31] However, the release of the monumental *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* by Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier in 2009 indicated the establishment of a shared discipline of transnational history. Despite this, the clear-cut features of transnational history remain evasive and the book is better seen as a thematic conglomeration of transnational subjects rather than a schema of some new field of study or methodology. The book includes entries such as 'knowledge', 'modernity', 'race-mixing', 'religion', 'sexuality and migration', 'solidarity' 'decolonization' etc. which indicates to some extent the concerns of transnational history.

Unsurprisingly, this is due to transnational history not being a concrete method or field of study but should rather be seen as an umbrella perspective, incorporating established tools and perspectives stemming from earlier contexts and debates leading up to it. Arguably, the only obviously shared characteristics and convictions of these contexts and debates is that comprehension and understanding of historical and social processes are not exclusively within customary, delineated spaces or vessels, be they states, nations, regions etc.[32] These are rather vague characteristics, thus, an elaboration of developments behind changing historiographical contexts and debates is in order. The accounts below of (New) Social History and the Cultural (or linguistic turn)[33] are primarily seen through the lens of Sewell's accounts in *Logics of History*.

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[31] Struck et al., "Introducing Space and Scale in Transnational History", p 573; Bayly et al., 'AHR Conversation: On Transnational History', pp. 1034-1060.
[32] B. Struck et al, 573-574.
[33] Sewell categorizes the cultural turn and linguistic turn simultaneously, though there are some major distinctions, which will be elaborated upon.

This provides a limited account but should be satisfactory to explain the wider trends of historiographical self-reflection and fit within the framework of this thesis.

It is also important to mention that the various 'turns in history' don't have concretely sketched out periodization's nor definitions. As historian Judith Surkis has it, "if the "linguistic turn" initiated a turn to talk, it was soon followed by the cultural and the imperial, and more recently transnational, global, and spatial turns", making narrativizations of historiographical developments a minor historiographical subfield on its own.[34] This paper will not participate in this historiographical sub-field, but rather provide a wide and general trend of the developments. In contrast, Sewell's account presents the cultural turn and linguistic turn together, with a 'new social history' as a precursor. The purpose behind presenting Sewell's account is to demonstrate developments of historiographical self-reflection before addressing the key problem that has underlined the theory of history in the past decades.[35] Further, this thesis will argue that Sewell both encourages and 'does CE' in *Logics of History*, which makes it a suitable work for 'the scheme of things'.

In a presidential address to the American Historical Association in 2008, Gabrielle Spiegel took stock of the narrative of changing historiography as responding to the 'semiotic challenge' to traditional history writing post World War II. She recounts the challenge arising from several domains simultaneously; through philosophical investigations of language; anthropological exploration of culture; psychoanalytic examinations on subject formation; and radical interrogation on the possibilities and limits of knowledge.[36] According to Spiegel, these challenges greatly affected the generation of historians coming of age in the 1960s and 1970s, in which the linguistic, cultural and poststructuralist "turns", massively "changed our understanding of the nature of historical reality".[37] This point and challenge will be discussed in depth later in this paper.

Her description groups 'the turns' together, similarly to what Sewell does in *Logics of History*, by linking history's linguistic turn to the wider trend of cultural studies, of which cultural history was largely derivative. While addressing the linguistic turn as one of the great intellectual movements of the twentieth century, Sewell points to a linguistic model of the social conjoined

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[34] Surkis, "When Was the Linguistic Turn?", pp. 701-702.
[35] For an in-depth genealogy of the linguistic turn, see Spiegel "When Was the Linguistic Turn?". For a wider discussion on the Cultural Turn, see Bonnell & Lynn (ed.), *Beyond the Cultural Turn,* or see Volker Depkat "The 'Cultural turn' in German and American Historiography" for a comparative approach.
[36] Spiegel, "History, Historicism, and the Social Logic of the Text in the Middle Age", pp. 59-86.
[37] Spiegel, "The Task of the Historian", p. 2.

the developments in both cultural history and cultural anthropology. This in turn informed the underlying ontological assumptions fundamental to contemporary cultural history. [38] Sewell analogizes society or 'the social' as being like language. As Sewell states: "the social…is founded on the nature of things: human social action can be understood as linguistic because humans are symbol-using animals." Further, the 'social' is a sign conventionally understood as signifying 'the really real', but it is not 'the really real'. [39] However, Sewell argues that the concept of 'the social' is needing refurbishment, something that will be expanded upon later. While this might cloud some of the finer points of the various turns, a closer examination is not necessary for the purpose of this paper. Thus, examining *how* the distinct strands of thought braided together in seeing language as constitutive of intellectual and social life is neglected here.[40] What follows is a short presentation of 'New Social History' and the Cultural/Linguistic turn, following Sewell's account.[41]

3.1 (New) Social History

Following the years after World War II, social history became very much an international project and Eric Hobsbawn remarked that it was an extraordinarily flourishing field and a good time for being a social historian. [42] Sewell characterizes this emergence of social history in terms of changing subject matter, methodology and intellectual style to be a lasting intellectual transformation much like a paradigm shift.[43] Before that, the term 'social history' was hard to define. Hobsbawn identified three uses, namely; to histories of the poor or lower classes, and their movements; human activities elusive to classification, such as manners, customs and everyday life; or in combination with 'economic history' and economic historians interested in relationships between classes and social groups.[44] However, the production of a specialized academic field of social history did not emerge until the 1950s, with the Annales school.[45] Most significant was the

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[38] Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 331.
[39] Ibid, pp. 330-331.
[40] Surkis, "When was the Linguistic Turn?", p. 704.
[41] This is primarily focusing on the case in American historiography but should give a sufficient characterization of the major themes.
[42] Hobsbawm, "From Social History to the history of society", p. 43.
[43] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 26-27.
[44] Hobsbawn, "From Social History to the History of Society", pp. 20-22.
[45] It should be mentioned that the main scholarly outlet of the 'Annales School' had since 1929 been *Annales d'Histoire Economique et Sociale* (Annals of Economic and Social History), but it wasn't before the 1950s that this dropped the economic half and developed seriously to distinct social history; Hobsbawn, "From Social History to the History of Society", p. 22.

historicization of the social sciences, turning to historical questions and concepts that had hitherto been at the periphery. [46]

This shift expanded the scope of historical study in two ways: First, social history turned attention to previously ignored categories of people such as workers, criminals, women, slaves etc. rather than political leaders and great thinkers. Second, social history tried to capture the complete sphere of ordinary people's life experiences rather than focus on narrowly defined politics.[47] This change of focus also entailed new forms and focuses on source material, with sorts of records previously deemed historically irrelevant becoming gold mines of documentation. Documents like wills, inventories of estates, popular songs, city directories, baptisms etc., became relevant as they gave evidence to social structures, institutions and life experiences of the millions of ordinary people.[48]

The expanded scope of social history also led to a change in methodology, which was complemented with a distinctive theoretical and epistemological outlook, which gradually constructed a coherent package and epistemic object for social history.[49] The central focus was on the 'social' or 'social structure', both of which were transpersonal, objective forces tightly constraining the actions of agents that were not themselves aware of them.[50] Examples of these social structures are hierarchies of wealth, occupational distributions, urban settlement patterns etc. In sum, Sewell characterizes the move to social history as a redefinition of the primary object of historical knowledge, namely from politics and ideas to hidden social structures, and finding new ways to gain knowledge of this object. In the course of the 1950s and 1960s, what was called "traditional narrative history" had been overwhelmingly quantitative and positivistic. [51] This is of course just a rough outline and not the case for every historian.[52]

One final point to take note of is that while social history in its variations was easily identifiable as such, defining precisely what was meant by historians with *social* history is not as

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[46] Hobsbawm, "From Social History to the History of Society", pp. 22-23.
[47] Ibid", 26-27.
[48] Ibid., p. 27.
[49] 'Epistemic object' here refers to what they could know and study (of the past), in this case, especially social structures; Sewell, *Logics of History,* p. 28.
[50] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 28.
[51] Ibid, pp. 29.
[52] See Ross, *Origins of American Social Science* (1991) for an analysis of how American social science was modeled on natural science and liberal politics; or Kleinman, *Politics on the Endless Frontier* (1995) for a critique on how governmental organizational structure directed public policies for science.

easy, something that will be expanded upon later.[53] Perhaps the most important work in social history was E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class*, which will be discussed later in this paper. The book opened extensive interpretative terrain on which labor, social, gender, and cultural- history has developed in the years since its release.[54]

3.2 The Cultural Turn (Linguistic Turn)

While Sewell uses the terms 'cultural turn' and 'linguistic turn' interchangeably, there are important distinctions. 'The linguistic turn', as a concept, has a complex and involved history. An early landmark on the process/changes came through philosopher Richard Rorty's *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method* in 1967. However, this was mostly concerned with philosophers of language and logical positivists, where Rorty highlighted Rudolf Carnap's linguistic philosophy in rejuvenating debate within the discipline, referring to his ideas of explication.[55] Sewell's account below prioritizes aspects of the cultural turn.

Returning to the cultural turn, during the 1970s, the focus and consensus 'working model' of social history became increasingly under attack from a fresh form of history emphasizing culture.[56] This was inspired by cultural anthropology as a way of getting at meaningful human action, which allowed the new cultural history to pursue questions concerning rituals, conventions, language, and conduct of ordinary people.[57] Sewell notes that this was done by expanding the historian's conception of the social by including cultural structures to the established social structures.[58] Turning attention to cultural structures also had ontological and epistemological implications. The new social history assumed that social structures were analytically prior to social action, implying a basically positivist epistemology and objectivist ontology, which collided with cultural anthropology.[59] Cultural anthropology, on the other hand, seemed to imply that economic and social structures themselves were products of interpretive work by human actors. Consequently, historians joining the cultural turn away from social history had to reconfigure themselves as 'interpreters of the inevitably interpretive practices that produced intersubjective

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[53] Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 38.
[54] Batzell et al., "E.P. Thompson after Fifty Years", pp. 753-754.
[55] Rorty, *The Linguistic Turn*, p. 33.
[56] Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 40.
[57] History of meaning had of course already had a big role in the field of intellectual history.
[58] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 41.
[59] Ibid, p. 42.

cultural patterns', rather than being scientists examining an objective social world through hard data.[60] This change to qualitative, interpretive practice, replacing the focus on quantitative in social history, could potentially uncover structures or systems of meaning equally real as quantitative studies while also restoring the dimension of meaningful human action to history.[61] Another common route to cultural history was through literary studies, often inspired by post-structural scholars such as Derrida, Lacan and Foucalt though this was commonly more associated with the linguistic turn. [62]

Sewell notes that the new cultural history taking shape in the 1980s was defined by large-scale transplantation of epistemology and methodology form the social sciences, eroding many of the boundaries between the humanities, greatly influenced by post-structuralist theory.[63] Further, the most intellectually creative field and politically intense during historical studies in the 1980s was 'women's history'[64] Women's history in the 1970s was quite similar to various other sub-fields of social history, emphasizing previously ignored categories, but started exploring the more radical epistemological implications of the feminist movements of the time.[65] Thus, practically, the goal was not to document distinct historical experiences of women, but rather to explore how "gender difference had been established, maintained and transformed." The critical and deconstructive analysis concerning central cultural categories, such as sex and gender, indubitably radicalized and reinvigorated the whole of cultural history.[66]

Sewell further notes that that since around the mid-1990s the discursive establishment, maintenance and transformation of supposedly natural or firm identities became the central problem of cultural history (in America).[67] The key aspect to address is that the cultural turn involved rejecting the naïve objectivism of social history, following the key argument that the so-called hard data were themselves cultural products.[68] It was in the wake of these historiographical developments that transnational history emerged in the late 1990s.

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[60] Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 42.
[61] Ibid, pp. 42-43.
[62] Ibid, p. 45.
[63] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 46-47.
[64] 'Gender History' might be a preferable term for some, reasons for which will be discussed later on; For a short account of developments of epistemology and politics of women's history from 1960s to 1980s see Joan Scott, "Women's History".
[65] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 47-48.
[66] Ibid., p. 48.
[67] Ibid, pp. 48-49.
[68] Ibid, p. 50.

Historian Adrian Jones argues that there is a parallel to be drawn with history written since the linguistic turn and the situation at the beginning of the twentieth century, of which the Annales school was an opposing reaction.[69] Early twentieth-century history writing was dominant in obsessing with detail, fragmentation and analysis of texts rather than an evocation of the past. He states that history as such no longer exists; there is only class history, gender history, and so on. This, he claims, is a shift in focus from what the past was like to the representations people have made of it.[70]

It should be emphasized that the short discussion above sketches out some of the main themes of the development of historiographical self-reflection and is not undisputable. For example, some even argue that the real linguistic turn and narrativistic turn with a true and radical application of insights from post-structuralist philosophy and Whitean narrativism has not even begun yet.[71]

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[69] Jones, "Word and Deed", p. 539.
[70] Ibid., pp. 528, 537.
[71] E.g. Kalle Pihlainen, "The End of Oppositional History?" (2011).

4. Transnational History

'Transnational' history has a number of definitions though there has not been a consensus by historians to adopt one definition. A general definition is proposed by Akira Iriye, stating that transnational history is "the study of movements and forces that have cut across national boundaries".[72] This definition is *not* how transnational history is interpreted in this paper. Rather, transnational history is interpreted as something more similar to what Sven Beckert proposes, namely that transnational history is: "the interconnectedness of human history as a whole, and while it acknowledges the extraordinary importance of states, empires, and the like, it pays attention to networks, processes, beliefs, and institutions that transcend these politically defined spaces."[73] In this interpretation, transnational history has a vaguer definition albeit wider in scope and has here been cast engaging with a number of historiographical 'grand narratives', possibly even creating a new one, closely related to the history of globalization.[74] One of the most striking aspects concerning the development of transnational history is the lack of concrete manifestos of it.[75]

The position taken by this paper resembles 'openness as a historical concept', as Patricia Clavin puts it, is a positive one. In this respect, the vagueness of the term is seen as helpful in terms of causing productive debates, avoiding teleology and showing a welcoming attitude towards pluralism.[76] This is in accordance with the view of transnational history as an umbrella term, including and lending from a number of different approaches. I argue that one of the strengths of transnational history is that transnational can concern historical sub-disciplines such as intellectual-, cultural-, political- history etc., and is not tied to any single approach.[77] This falls in line with the history of the concept of 'transnational'. The first identified usage was in a *Princeton Review* article in 1968, by German linguist Georg Curtius, stating that 'every language is fundamentally something transnational'.[78] He insisted that every national language connected to a family of languages beyond contemporary national frameworks. The meaning of 'trans' was normally associated with going through national space, but the Latin term 'trans' means 'beyond'

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[72] Iriye, "Transnational History", pp. 211-212. (*Contemporary European History*)
[73] Beckert in Bayly et.al, "On Transnational History", pp. 1445-1446.
[74] Ibid., p. 1460.
[75] Saunier, "Learning by Doing: Notes about the Making of the Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History", pp. 159-160.
[76] Clavin, "Defining Transnationalism", pp. 434, 438.
[77] Saunier, "Going Transnational?", p. 128.
[78] Saunier in Iriye, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, p. 1047.

rather than 'through'.[79] This indicates that 'transnational' does not merely refer to something related to nations and movements between nations, but also something outside or beyond nations.

The concept has later been modified and refigured due to a concern of 'methodological nationalism' by historians, to reconfigure some of the political and social extensions of the word.[80] In this sense, the concept of 'transnational' has itself undergone engineering out of normative concerns. In practice, historians' use of the term has emphasized the supra- or subnational aspects of studied phenomena.[81] A different proposal comes from Sanjay Subrahmanyham, claiming that, at the least global history, comparative history and international history, had been a contamination of categories, and that nationalism "has blinded us to the possibility of connection".[82] Point being, that 'comparison' is implicitly categorizing while 'connection' may remove some of the national boundaries conceptually in place. Comparing necessarily demands something to be compared to, while 'connection' allows us to see history as a porous network of phenomena by crossing geographical and linguistic barriers.

While comparative history and histoire croisèe are methods while global or international history are fields of inquiry, transnational history is not as easily identifiable. Though discourse on these variants of historiography have been discussing benefits and pitfalls in a more combative way, this paper rather emphasizes the common points of reference and similar goals of these disciplines. Beckert describes the attitude kindly in saying that world, global, international, or transnational history "are all engaged in a project to reconstruct aspects of the human past that transcend any one nation-state, empire, or politically defined territory".[83] While "global history" would be a useful description in identifying what sort of history is discussed, many of these histories are not necessarily global in scope. In this sense, the subfields should be seen as evolving in parallel in reflexively elaborating ideas. For example, the work of Marc Bloch on 'histoire comparee' have been key-texts in the genealogy of both comparative and transnational history, arguing that a necessity for historiography is to dismiss archaic topographical cubicles where made-up borders of social realities are created.[84] In this respect, it has been remarked that

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[79] Saunier in Iriye, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, pp. 1047-1048.
[80] Saunier, "Learning by Doing", pp. 161.
[81] Fink, *Workers Across the Americas*, preface.
[82] Subrahmanyam, "Connected Histories: Notes Towards a Reconfiguration of Early Modern Eurasia", pp. 759, 761-762.
[83] Beckert in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", p. 1445.
[84] Tyrrell, "Making Nations/Making States", pp. 1038, 1041-1042.

transnational history in practice relates little to nation-states explicitly, and is rather dealing with concerns below, beyond or beside them, such as the history of ideas or of NGO's.[85]

Transnational history also shares a strong connection with cultural history and cultural studies in its focus on circulations, especially concerning methodologically tracking movements of goods, people, ideas, which can rarely be done by reviewing source material alone. Further, emphasizing circulation may allow scholars to avoid an over-reliance on 'grand narrative', and binary model of, domination and resistance.[86] This is the problem that Dipesh Chakrabarty pointed out in *Provincializing Europe*, namely of asymmetrical knowledge. Chakrabarty argues that the phenomenon of "political modernity- namely, the rule by modern institutions of the state, bureaucracy, capitalist enterprise- is impossible to *think* of anywhere in the world without invoking certain categories and concepts, the genealogies of which go deep into the intellectual and theological traditions of Europe".[87] This is important to note, and Ikirye emphasizes the clear link between transnationalism and modernity, seeing modernity as perhaps the single most transmitted idea since 1800.[88] Kozol further emphasizes how the narrative or binary model of domination and resistance has latched onto concepts of globalization and transnationalism.[89] She mentions transnational feminist scholars such as Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan being at the forefront of examining the effect of gender on social experiences beyond simplistic conditions of power and inequality. Studying diasporic communities makes it impossible to address the experiences of immigrants without 'complex ideological constructions of citizenship, domesticity, sexuality, or ethnicity'.[90] Thus, topics such as gender and sexuality are necessarily material *and* ideological simultaneously. These function within a complex interchange between the nation-state, smaller communities, cultural and political processes etc.

Despite its skepticism towards grand-narratives, transnational history still (necessarily) relies to some extent on them, at the least from a common discourse ground to place arguments. Historically, ideas of modernization, development, and globalization have indubitably affected how historians work. The reluctance among practitioners of transnational history to organize around one center or give full agency to a set of protagonists makes it inherently more challenging.

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[85] Saunier, "Circulations, connections and the transnational centers", p. 111.
[86] Hofmeyer in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", p. 1450.
[87] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. 5. His italics.
[88] Ikiyre, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, p. 720.
[89] Kozol in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", p. 1451.
[90] Ibid. pp, 1451.

However, as Matthew Connelly points out, the narrative technique is even more essential for making sense of the world as it forces us to explain change and agency behind processes.[91] In this sense, transnational historical approaches are especially important as they tend to provoke reflection on major conceptual categories such as development and modernity.[92] Transnational narratives take modernization, for example, to be a complex multi-layered process of exchanges rather than 'just' Western process and a result of the enlightenment. Arguments for the human rights advocacy in the past century being closely correlated with Western liberal concepts can be taken as a case in point of Chakrabarty's claim. While referring to the material conditions such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the argument that concepts such as 'rights' or 'justice' were solely emerging from the Western tradition arguably presume that other cultures do not have a history of rights towards condemning violence and oppression, as Uma Narayan argues.[93] This is exemplified well in the prologue of *The Last Utopia* by Samuel Moyn where he states:

> "When people hear the phrase "human rights," they think of the highest moral precepts and political ideals. And they are right to do so. They have in mind a familiar set of indispensable liberal freedoms, and sometimes more expansive principles of social protection. But they also mean something more… for the political standards it champions and the emotional passion it inspires."[94]

Mark Mazower's account in *Governing the World* illustrates how the invocation of concepts of a similar kind has been used to maintain these ideas of western dominance. Mazower describes a speech given at the Woodrow Wilson Center for Scholars in Washington, by the U.S. ambassador to India, Harvard professor Daniel Patrick Moynihan in February 1974. In the speech, Moynihan openly praised Wilson's willingness to use military strength in the First World War to save "the liberty of the world" and lead the "concerted powers of all civilized people". Mazower notes that the lasting contribution of Moynihan was "to lay the intellectual foundations for a radically new multitiered American response to decolonization and its consequences".[95] While critics argue that the ideas of human rights are a part of the western attempt to ride rough-shod on diverse cultural sensibilities or even impose a tyranny of enlightenment values. The fact remains, whether rhetoric or reality, human rights are a global phenomenon.[96]

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[91] Connelly in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", pp. 1458.
[92] Kozol in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", pp. 1459.
[93] See Narayan, *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions and Third-World Feminism"* (1997)*;* Narayan, "Colonialism and Its Others: Consideration on Rights and Care Discourses", pp. 133-140.
[94] Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History*, prologue.
[95] Mazower, *Governing the World*, pp. 305-310.
[96] Mazower, "The Strange Triumph of Human Rights", p. 379.

One important thing to note is that the most energetic precursors to transnational history writing came from scholars who practiced new and non-mainstream specializations, primarily variants of new social history emphasizing issues of class, race and gender.[97] Kozol expands on this by underlining the importance of considering "the dialogic relationships between social justice movements and changes in academic discourse".[98] She points out that challenges to gender inequalities and heteronormativity, as well as critiques of U.S and European imperialism and racism have been extremely influential for the development of transnational history. This has in turn produced historical analyses exploring social inequalities structuring the "movements, flows and circulations" that is the concern of transnational history through dialogues between activists and scholars.[99] Further, it has recently been argued that transnational history has a special relevance towards studying the history of ecology and the environment.[100] If this is the case, then proposals of CE such as through political scientist Hugh Dyer's examination on the relationship between 'sovereignty' and ecology. He argues that concepts of 'sovereignty' should be reconsidered and move from a national to a global- level, in order to better deal with challenges of environmental change.[101]

On the other hand, criticism has been directed towards transnational history for excessively prioritizing social and cultural history over economic history.[102] Although this is arguably a valid critique, the argument in this paper is primarily directed towards the cultural and social focus of transnational history.[103] Furthermore, as Chris Bayly highlights, transnational history, compared to national or regional history, often requires a wider selection of types of analysis.[104] Going back to Sewell, this implies that transnational history often adopts theory and method from the social sciences to a larger extent than national or regional history, and it is useful to remember his critique of historians adopting ill-fitting social-theoretical concepts from the social sciences. In other words, the widening of the analytical horizon might come at an epistemological cost that is under-reflected and insufficiently calculated by historians.

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[97] Tyrrell, "Making Nations/Making States", pp, 1042-1043, 1045-1046. Saunier, "Learning by Doing", p. 162.
[98] Kozol in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", pp. 1445.
[99] Ibid., p. 1445.
[100] Tyrrell, "American Exceptionalism in an Age of International History", pp. 1048-1049.
[101] Dyer, "Challenges to Traditional International Relations Theory Posed by Environmental Change", pp. 2-3.
[102] Tyrrell, "Reflections on the Transnational Turn in United States History", p. 466.
[103] There are of course exceptions. E.g. Beckert, *Empire of Cotton* (2015).
[104] Bayly in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", pp. 1456-1457.

Furthermore, the notion of 'transnational' itself could be linked to terms such as 'race' or 'postcolonial' in being valuable for studying periods of the past that lacked these precise concepts.[105] This concerns concepts and practices of 'nation' and 'state' as well, since many figurations predate the modern nation-state. However, it is arguably the case that the possibility of adopting concepts from a shared vocabulary, despite addressing different periods, is more of a gain than a loss if properly historicized. As Patricia Seed emphasizes, "the shared vocabulary of the present – employed to subtly compare with the past – remains one of the methodologically central mechanisms for the cohesion of history" as it allows historians to share common ground.[106] Matthew Connelly highlights this importance of cohesion in stating that transnational histories of ideas have to be studied together with tangible effects of the ideas. For example, ideas concerning class, race or reproduction. affected "policies and programs that had life-and-death consequences for millions".[107] Clavin further notes that she takes the ability to follow *people* to be the most important contribution of transnational history.[108]

Having presented and discussed some of the main characteristics of transnational history, the connection between transnational history and calls for the 'decolonization of history' shall soon become clear. However, as this thesis is an argument for interdisciplinary work between those doing CE and transnational history, a short account of interdisciplinary work in historiography is helpful. In doing this, I will again follow Sewell's account in *Logics of History*.

4.1 Interdisciplinary Historiography

It was not until between the 1880s and First World War that the distinct and professionalized academic disciplines such as history, sociology, anthropology etc. began to emerge.[109] Previously, the boundaries between these disciplines were blurred. Subsequently, it was first in the early twentieth century that these disciplines cemented their division through forming distinct discourse communities, distinct methods, vocabularies and standards of evaluation, entrenching themselves within clearly defined borders.[110] Sewell notes that it was not until the aforementioned 'paradigm

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[105] Seed in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History", p. 1442.
[106] Ibid", pp. 1442-1443,
[107] Connelly in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History, p. 1453.
[108] Clavin in Bayly et al., "On Transnational History, p. 1443.
[109] See Townsend, *History's Babel*, (2013) for a detailed account of how the fragmentation of history from the 1880s and divisions from the 1940s led to a state of micro-professionalization which still defines the field today.
[110] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 2.

shift' through the "linguistic" or "cultural" in during the 1970s and 1980s that an interdisciplinary mix rebegan to flourish in historiography. This brought forth a heyday of theories concerning meaning and representation developed by scholars within fields such as literary criticism and philosophy.[111]

Interestingly, one of the characteristics of history as it emerges as a distinct field is the strikingly peripheral place of theory compared to the social science disciplines. Sewell exemplifies this by stating that he can only think of one historian whose fame is primarily due to theoretical work, namely Hayden White.[112] Sewell further emphasizes that ever since the beginning of systematic disciplines, historians and social scientists contrasted the "descriptive" research of historians with the "explanatory" research of social scientists.[113]The former being informally defined by a careful use of archival, or primary, sources while insisting on a meticulously accurate chronology and mastery of narrative, while the latter centered around theories and formal methodologies.[114] One important point regarding increased interdisciplinary approaches by historians in recent times is how historians borrow social-theoretical concepts that do not quite fit. They often need adjustment, nuancing or combination with concepts from seemingly incompatible theoretical discourses to be fruitful for historical research.[115] One such proposed fix can be seen in Peter Halden's *Stability in Statehood*. In his book, he attempts to change the conceptual apparatus through which the EU, European history and today's "failed states" are usually understood, by combining sociological institutionalism and early modern republican political theory. Fittingly, Halden changes the conceptual apparatus by a desire to "question the current conceptual apparatus, and the relation between history and social science and transcend the historicity of our disciplinary perspectives."[116] Though, not explicitly stated, Halden is both doing and proposing CE in his book.

This use of social theory and theoretical approaches borrowed from sociology is an implicitly critical, or even pragmatic, practice that has little effect on the supply of social theory

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[111] See Maza, *Thinking About History* (2017) for a summary of historical practice. Especially the first three chapters on history's subject matter, the historical space and the objects and activities that attract scholarly attention; Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 3.
[112] Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[113] Ibid., p. 3.
[114] Ibid., p. 3.
[115] See Asdal and Jordheim, "Texts on the Move: Textuality and Historicity" (2018) for an account of how structuralist linguistics in history books overlapped significantly with the social sciences in the prominent use of actor-network-theory; Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 5.
[116] Halden, *Stability Without Statehood,* p. 197.

offered to the historian. If a theoretical approach is borrowed and forgotten by a historian, so to say, then potential use of the approach has diminished. Sewell criticizes this tendency not to reflect on possible systematic mistakes in borrowed theories for use in historical research and a lack of proposals of new conceptual schemas or vocabularies that can potentially improve or supersede existing concepts.[117] Moreover, he states that only by entering the competition and by developing systematic critiques and reformulations of theories may historians expect to construct social theories suitable for "grasping the ever-changing world that is our common object."[118] Further, he claims that historians suffer from a sort of "narrative-overconfidence," causing them to return to sources for more detail, complexity, examples etc. when reaching a tight spot. Consequently, important conceptual questions disappear in a welter of narrative rather than being addressed at an adequate conceptual level. He claims that: "historians may be virtuosos of social temporality, but their theoretical consciousness if often so underdeveloped that they are not conceptually aware of what they know."[119]

4.2 Decolonizing History

The account of transnational history given above should indicate its potential role in contributing to decolonize historiography in recent years. The concept of 'decolonization' has for a relatively long period been a key framework in historical analysis, though its direct meaning is both elusive and vague. Can history be 'decolonized' and how does this relate to researching decolonization? Calls for the decolonizing history are increasing, though what this entails is not especially clear. The section below will present some core themes of 'decolonizing history', drawing on a discussion on the topic between five historians from October 2018 through March 2019.

An immediate concern to be addressed is the role of decolonization in relation to empire and a world shaped by empires. Elisabeth Leake notes that while legacies of empire and decolonization fundamentally shaped politics and society in the 21st century, being largely responsible for systems of inequality influencing institutions today, little discussion or reflection is devoted to the processes of empire and its ending.[120] Decolonization implicitly rests on understanding the implications of imperial power and consequences in structuring racial

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[117] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 5-6.
[118] Ibid., p. 6.
[119] Ibid., pp. 11-12.
[120] Leake in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", pp. 170-171.

discrimination. Su Lin Lewis expands on this point by stating that 'decolonizing history' is roughly concerned with making historians aware of and committed to the disproportionate emphasis towards Eurocentric history while in concurrence with power-structures underlying this.[121] Thus, necessary historical narratives entail a global story. Here, it is useful to remember Beckert's inference on transnational history's overlap to global history, but that transnational histories are not necessarily global in scope. One way to address this disproportion is to challenge conventional wisdom and disciplinary reference points lurking in assumptions of nations, regions and empires being natural and coherent entities.[122]

Sarah-Miller Davenport also notes that empire and decolonization does not *necessarily* have to be at the center stage of analysis, potentially excluding and consequently letting historians 'off the hook' in addressing imperial foundations of the discipline, and rather that decolonizing history must occur in various scales.[123] She suggests that decolonizing domestic North American and European history requires centering 'race' as a key problematic. After all, ideas of categorizing humans into distinct races emerged within the context of New World slavery and European colonialism. For example, Greeks and Romans had no concept of race and classified people by social class and ethnicity, with slaves being the lowest.[124] Empire would here be more central in British history than North American, as the majority of racialized subjects were physically outside Britain compared to the more domestically defined North American cases. However, over-emphasizing this difference runs the risk of assuming race is not relevant if studying British history (or white people) in the metropole, neglecting how 'whiteness' also was constructed in an imperial context.[125] Fryar expands on this critique, referring to the practice of British history in the UK as "virtually unequipped to engage with questions of race, despite its utter centrality to many aspects of British history".[126] While this highlights some of the overarching themes of, and issues with, decolonizing history, the question of how to promote critical engagement on questions of power(structures) and constructed categories of social difference remain.

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[121] Lewis in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", p. 171.
[122] Behm in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", p. 171.
[123] Davenport in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", p. 174.
[124] See, Painter, *The History of White People*, (2010) for an extensive history of ideas of 'whiteness' and 'race', emphasizing how 'race' is not merely about biology.
[125] Ibid., pp. 174-175.
[126] Fryar in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", p. 175.

Amanda Behm proposes to expand thinking collectively, first by addressing the relation between 'decolonial' demands and interdisciplinary traditions of postcolonial critique, since there is an apparent disconnect between 'decolonizing the syllabus' and applying insights from postcolonial theory, critical race theory and 'new imperial' history against the wider historical practice.[127] Leake infers that researching decolonization and resistance allows for the decentering of history from the nation-state, which is also an important area of study in transnational history.[128] This implies a necessary connection between practicing transnational history and the decolonization of history. For example, studying new political groups and contestations following the process of decolonization from the 1950s, such as the Non-Aligned Movement, ethno-nationalist movements, anti-colonial militants etc.

There is not any one way to decolonize history, and the idea of simply decolonizing the curriculum in terms of including a diverse range of scholars should be seen as an obviously lacking approach. One primary, albeit vague, way to decolonize history is to establish sustainable engagement towards constructed categories of social difference, particularly race.[129] This implies that the decolonization of history should not be seen as a striving towards a goal of 'finally having decolonized history', but rather be seen as a constant critical perspective in history writing.

An important fundamental position that this paper holds is that writing history, and especially in efforts to decolonize history, is often springing from some underlying motivation of social justice. A case in point is the historian E.P. Thompson, whose work *The Making of the English Working Class*, will be discussed in depth later. Thompson retired around the age of fifty from Warwick University, to engage in political activism.[130] In *Provincializing Europe*, Chakrabarty cites Indian critic Ashis Nandy, to describe his own 'decisionist' position: "desirable constructions of the past are primarily *responsible to the present* and to the future; they are meant neither for the archivist nor for the archeologist. They try to *expand human options* by reconfiguring the past and transcending it through *creative improvisations*."[131] Chakrabarty continues and states that: "All our pasts are therefore futural in orientation… but one has to make the distinction between the conscious thought of "a future" that we address in our pursuit of social

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[127] Behm in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", pp. 176-177.
[128] Leake in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", pp. 177.
[129] Behm et al., «Decolonizing History, pp. 187-188.
[130] Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 34.
[131] Ashis Nandy, "History's Forgotten Doubles," *History and Theory* (May 1995), p. 61. Cited in: Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, pp. 248-249. His emphasis.

justice and futurity that laces every moment of human existence. The first kind of 'future' is what both the historicist and the decisionist address.[132]

4.3 Concepts and History or 'history as conceptualization'

This thesis centers on history and conceptual work, but it also argues for history as significantly about conceptualization. 'History' can be seen in three senses, namely, 'history-as-past', 'history-as-portrait' and 'history as practice'.[133] In the first sense, 'history' is synonymous with the past and refers to events or experiences we cannot experience in any direct way. Traces or memories of past happenings might exist, but these happenings no longer exist themselves.[134]

'History-as-portrait' separates from the 'history-as-past' as it is a part of our present experience and refers to some organized, intelligible structure that claims to represent the past. This is often in the form of a written or spoken narrative, though cinematic, pictorial or exhibitions can also be 'history-as-portrait' and is a form of communication.[135] 'History-as-practice' is 'doing history' and refers to history as a discipline involving scholarly inquiry and research of the past. This implies 'cultural heritage' or that which is 'inherited' from the past. Doing history implies studying survivals of the past, but equally recognizing all parts of survival as inheritance is impossible and choosing which to embrace depends on which 'history-as-portrait' we embrace. Historians assume 'history-as-past' in order to create 'history-as-portraits'.[136]

History-as-practice is characterized in various ways, but the main separation is between those who see it as science and emphasize historical method and the logics of historical reasoning or those who see it more as a form of art or literature, emphasizing rhetorical or representational aspects.[137] This separation has also been a persisting key-problem in the theory of history. For example, Jörn Rüsen stated that if the narrative implementation in history introduced structural conditions and this was seen as 'fictionalization', then historical interpretation is an "essentially

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[132] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. 250; This is of course not the only reason for 'doing history', see Lynn Hunt, *History: Why it Matters* (2018) for an in-depth argument. Especially chapter three: "History's Politics".
[133] Shaw, *Events and Periods as Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge*, pp. 4-5.
[134] Ibid p. 4.
[135] Ibid., p.4.
[136] Ibid., p.5.
[137] Ibid., p. 6.

poetical art. If sense comes from aesthetic or linguistic means, we should recognize 'poetization of historical cognition' corresponding to a "lack of methodology of historical interpretation".[138]

This thesis will emphasize both sides and argue that they are not mutually exclusive, with the role of 'conceptualization' in doing history in mind. Doing history involves producing concepts that organize understanding of the past which are articulated through 'history-as-portrait'.[139] This thesis is also primarily concerned with history-as-practice rather than with specific instances of 'history-as-portrait' or 'history-as-past'.

As the French historian Henri-Irénée Marrou wrote: "To know (in this case, to know historically) is to substitute a system of concepts elaborated by the mind for the raw event itself."[140] The only way we can compare what we think or talk about is through an intersubjective basis in which concepts are necessary to stabilize discourse.[141] These are stable subjects for the historian when illustrating some historical change. Even when enquiring or describing a relatively stable situation or 'temporal cross-section', the historian must assume some larger process of change, if only to be able to periodize.[142] It is impossible to give an account of change except if one presumes some things to be changing.[143] Further, concepts do not except in isolation, but are rather "dynamically constructed and collectively negotiated meanings" which are dependent on a relational system of other meanings.[144] Within these systems of concepts, we establish and organize facts, and the systems include things like theories, arguments and narratives.[145]

A much-quoted phrase by Cambridge historian J.G.A. Pocock stipulates that "men cannot do what they have no means of saying they have done; and what they do must in part be what they can say and conceive that it is.[146] Like all else, history has to be discussed by utilizing specific concepts, which have distinct historical and social baggage. Concepts are defined by their meanings and uses, and some basic concepts have the power to alter our world view.

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[138] Rüsen, *History*, pp. 66-68. Cited in: Fernandez, "Story makes History, Theory, Makes Story", p. 89.
[139] Shaw, *Events and Periods as Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge,* p. 6.
[140] Marrou, *Meaning of History*, 155 (1966). Cited in: Shaw, *Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge,* p.6
[141] Hjørland, "Concept Theory", pp. 1519-1536.
[142] Berkhofer, *Fashioning History*, p. 52. Cited in: Shaw, *Events and Periods as Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge,* p. 6.
[143] Danto, *Narration and Knowledge*, pp. 235-236.
[144] Hjørland, "Concept Theory", p. 1522.
[145] Shaw, *Events and Periods as Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge*, pp. 6-7.
[146] Pocock, "Virtue and Commerce in the Eighteenth Century", p. 122.

Understanding the history and use of the basic concepts is crucial in comprehending political, cultural, and social relations both in the past and present.[147]

With this in mind, Jon Helgheim and Iver Neumann remind us that a concept such as 'empire' discussed above should be treated with due care, given its linguistic surroundings. For instance, even though Holy Roman (imperium) and Byzantine (basileia) concepts of empire partly share a history, they are used in different linguistic and semantic contexts, and thus must be different.[148]

Investigating concepts meanings and uses is arguably the task of conceptual history. However, the extent of which conceptual history should be perceived as a discipline in its own right, or methodological tool for history remains and will remain an open question.[149]

In the words of Nietzsche, 'only that which has no history can be defined'.[150] Since concepts we think and act with change over time, comparing historical epochs straightforwardly is impossible, even if the concepts retain their phonetic and semiotic expressions. If this is overlooked, absolutely central differences can be missed, and the analyses lose their scientific value.[151] As Nietzsche states in *The Will to Power*: "Hitherto one has generally trusted one's concepts as if they were a wonderful dowry from some sort of wonderland: but they are, after all, the inheritance from our most remote, most foolish as well as most intelligent ancestors…What is needed above all is an absolute skepticism towards all inherited concepts".[152]

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[147] Jordheim and Neumann, "Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", pp. 153-154.
[148] Ibid., p. 154.
[149] Koselleck, "Zur historisch-politschen Semantik asymmetrischer Gegenbegriffe" (1979). Cited in Jordheim and Neumann, "Empire, imperialism and conceptual history, p. 156.
[150] Nietzsche, "Zur Genealogie der Moral», p. 158. Cited from: Jordheim and Neumann, "Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", p. 158.
[151] Helgheim and Neumann, "Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", p. 158.
[152] Nietzsche, *Will to Power*, pp. 220-221.

5. On 'Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography'

The next section will present and discuss Kuukkanen's book *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography* and its proposals. However, some reasons for inclusion and justification of devoting a substantial part of this paper to Kuukkanen's proposition of a tri-partite theory of justification is in order.[153]

One important reason is that the book highlights many of the problems related to both narrativism and representation. Further, as Paul Roth puts it: Kuukkanen "directly confronts a key theoretical dilemma that has shadowed the debate in historiography for decades: histories cannot be written without using some narrative structure or other, but epistemological evaluation cannot be applied to narratives *qua* narrative."[154] In other words, rational evaluation cannot be applied to empirical inquiry when in the form of history, and if it is rationally evaluable, it is not in the form of history. The fundamental assertion in the book has found support among those interested in theorizing history. Former chief editor of *History and Theory* Brian Fay praises the book for introducing a wholly new way of looking at historical writing, comparing it to Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Further, another participant at a forum debate on the book, Eugen Zelenak, holds that while narrativist history has brought a wealth of novel perspectives and considerations to the field, the returns have been diminishing. In his view, Kuukkanen's book offers a new progressive research program. [155]

This paper will refrain from attributing such an impact, but many of the issues and insights brought forth justify its inclusion here. His detailed analysis and discussion on colligatory-concepts lay the foundation for much of the discussion on conceptual engineering and conceptual ethics. The term 'colligation' or 'colligatory-concepts' was first coined by the philosopher of science William Whewell, who wanted to explain scientific induction i.e. how scientists develop general theories from specific observations. He argues that the scientist must *conceptualize* an observation before a theory can explain it, that is, she must propose a specific point of view from which to regard the observation.[156] The notion of colligation was first introduced in relation to history by

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[153] It is also worth mentioning that the book won the International Commission for History and Theory of Historiography 2016 prize for best monograph in the philosophy of historiography.

[154] Roth, "Back to the Future: Postnarrativist historiography and analytic philosophy of history", p. 270.

[155] Ankersmit, "Forum Debate on Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen's Postnarrativist philosophy of historiography", 2.

[156] Whewell, *Novum Organon Renovatum*, p. 73. (1858). Cited in: Shaw, *Events and Periods as Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge*, p. 10.

William Walsh.[157] In short, it refers to how historians make historical events intelligible compared to scientists.[158] He notes how historians refer to 'inner relationships', rather than causal laws when identifying processes of historical change where individual events are colligated.[159] To make these processes intelligible, historians often use colligatory concepts such as 'the Renaissance', 'The Christian Expansion', 'The Thaw' etc., to identify a broad description of historical events. The role of colligatory concepts will be expanded upon in-depth later.

Kuukkanen demonstrates the explication of his historiographical practice in his analysis of E.P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* and Christopher Clark's *The Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*, offering guidance on how to identify ways in which historiographical theses construct their arguments.[160] Theorists of history have often been accused of neglecting actual historical practice when discussing history, making the book unique in the attention it devotes to these examples.[161] The main argument of this thesis is that the postnarrativist proposition offers a fruitful way to evaluate historical works and that transnational historical works can be bolstered by the use of CE in this evaluative framework. The main claim behind Kuukkanen's inclusion is the argument that historical practice and its evaluation should be performative, rather than truth-functional.

Kuukkanen's work will be taken as a case in point as it regards the convergence of the ideas and themes central to postnarrativism and those of conceptual engineering, primarily with a focus on performativity and pragmatism. While some critiques of Kuukkanen's project will be discussed, it will be seen that his views are given justice. By discussing some of the main problems surrounding historical writing, this section will anchor the main argument of this thesis, namely on the role of conceptual work and conceptual ethics in historical writing, and transnational history (as interpreted) more specifically.

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[157] Walsh, "The Intelligibility of History", pp. 128-143.
[158] McCullagh, "Colligation and Classification in History", p. 267.
[159] Ibid pp. 267-268.
[160] Roth, "Back to the Future: Postnarrativist historiography and analytic philosophy of history", p. 291.
[161] Ankersmit, "Forum Debate on Jouni-Matti Kuukkanen's Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography", 1.

5.1 'Postnarrativist Historiography'

Kuukkanen's postnarrativism is one of the latest proposals in response to the changing perspective on historiographical self-reflection, especially that of narrativism. Returning to the aforementioned waves of historiographical self-reflection emerging from the late 1950s and onward, the most impactful was arguably the establishing of narrativism in the early 1970s. In short, this can be summarized through what Kuukkanen terms 'the narrativist insight', namely the view that "History books include integrative views, theses or claims, and all the hundreds of pages and their sentences and statements are designed to explicate and ground those."[162] These 'integrative views' are most often called narratives, though the main point is that there is *some* content-synthesizing entity that amounts to an argument for a way to perceive the past. A content-synthesizing entity is for instance a set of historical statements, synthesizing into an entity such as a book, journal, article etc., making an interpretive claim. However, the epistemic status of this narrative or content-synthesizing entity is largely elusive.

Crudely sketched; there is either seeing historiography as a literary product, leading to the prima facie absurd conclusion of 'anything goes' in terms of epistemic truth for a synthesizing unit, or the traditional Rankean perception of historiography as a 'scientific' discipline. However, this appears to be incompatible with the narrativist insight and truth-functional evaluation. Working from a foundational premise of holding historiography to be a form of rational practice i.e. as a scientific discipline, the central problem, as Kuukkanen states it, is "to find criteria that can be used to rank different historical interpretations, accepting that no interpretation is absolutely correct, but also insisting that it is neither the case that anything goes.[163] As Juan Fernandez concludes in "we realize not only that story makes history, and that theory makes story, but also that some historical stories are arguable better than others, so the idea of rational progress in historical knowledge makes sense.[164] Nonetheless, a consensus of a framework for evaluation is missing. In one sense, this is the translation problem Ankersmit poses in *Narrative Logic*, namely, how to translate the past or traces of the past to a narrative of historiography. [165] Fernandez formulates a similar problem. He asks if epistemology must consider narrativity because "methods

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[162] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* p. 1.
[163] Ibid., p. 2.
[164] Fernandez, "Story makes History, Theory makes Story", pp. 102-103.
[165] The context of this translation problem for Ankersmit comes from a response to the Russian mathematician Grigorij Perelman who argues that the historian's task is to give an objective account of the past by an available set of translation rules, analogous to the rules of a cartographical projection; Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic*, pp. 76-82.

of telling a true story is related to the core rationality of history", what kind of rational order does narrative introduce in historical materials?[166]

5.2 A Short History of Narrativism

The early debate on narrativism was, roughly sketched, between the scholars on one side who suggested that narrativity was a distinguishing trait for historiography and separated it from the sciences and the other side who rejected this notion. The debates where characterized by ongoing controversies between two conflicting sides of academic discourse identified as "defenders of reality" and "defenders of the text."[167]

Arthur Danto suggested early that historians attach valuations and significations to historical phenomena retrospectively, which were not a part of the phenomena themselves, by using narrative type descriptions.[168] He imagines the Ideal Chronicler, one who perceives, knows and transcribes all events in Europe in 1618. Even she could not have known at that point that the Thirty Years War began that year, despite knowing all the factors leading to the war. Thus, he demonstrated that there is 'an inexpungible subjective factor' to historical interpretations.[169] Implicitly, history can *only* be told retrospectively by a subject, by using narrative sentences demonstrating a temporal direction.[170]

Further, W. D. Gallie proposed that story or narrative is peculiar and essential to all historical writing and understanding, and that "every genuine work of history… is a species or special application of the genus story" concluding that "history, like all stories and all imaginative literature, is as much a journey as an arrival, as much an approach, as a result."[171] Louis Mink made a nuanced claim, not criticizing the emphasis on narrative, but rather that a narrative itself is not essentially following a story. Rather, historical comprehension treats numerous separate things as 'elements in a single and concrete complex of relationships' to make them 'just in balance'.[172]

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[166] Fernandez, "Story makes History, Theory makes Story", p. 80.
[167] Asdal and Jordheim, "Texts on the Move", pp. 56-57.
[168] Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of History*, p. 142.
[169] Ibid., pp. 142.
[170] It is worth mentioning that Paul Roth critiques Kuukkanen's characterization of Danto as a narrativist. According to Roth, Danto uses the term 'narrative' with different connotations and his contributions should be understood in an epistemic and *not* narrativist understanding of histories; Roth, "Back to the Future: Postnarrativist historiography and analytic philosophy of history", p. 273.
[171] Gallie, "The Historical Understanding", pp. 169.
[172] Mink, "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension", p. 551.

Particularly, that stories are not lived but told and narrative qualities are transferred from art to life. The central suggestion being that narratives are techniques for comprehending a story as a whole, a network of overlapping descriptions, and that time is not of the essence.[173] Mink's account of historical practice does in one way describe history much closer to how we would describe art than how one would describe a scientific practice.

Morton White suggests that narrative is the form of discourse typically employed by historians, focused on a *central subject* of which the historian gives 'a connected account of development'.[174] Further, he raises the question as to how historians can evaluate other historians' work, since two competing histories can all contain only true statements, making a preference in terms of truth and falsity impossible.[175] This begs the question of why and how the historian selects the various statements rather than others in her narration.

Typical features of historical periods or 'colligatory power' are often used to justify their inclusion in historical works. However, also the historian's interest and value judgment of historical importance or 'worth-of-remembrance' of events underlies the choices. Point being, if the historian writes true and in a connected narrative, she is free to choose her facts on all kinds of considerations.[176] There is an abundance of facts and, even in the case of having *all* the facts, selection would be a key operation in constructing a narrative. In other words, historical representation is always under-determined by historical facts.[177]

Maurice Mandelbaum offered an early opposition to the centrality of narrativity in historiography by rejecting the notion that the historian is 'engaging in an activity which is best represented by the model of telling a story' or constructing sequences of occurrences.[178] This does not synergize to a proper analysis of the complex collection of contextual causes leading to the outcome nor provide satisfactory reasons as to why the events occurred as they did. To a large extent, Mandelbaum attributes the usual association of a historian to a storyteller to the retrospective nature of historical writing. The historian already knows the outcome of events, although interpretive nuances on causal effects are relevant. [179] McCullagh continued the critique

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[173] Mink, "History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension", pp. 555-557.
[174] White, *Foundations of Historical Knowledge,* pp. 4, 221.
[175] Ibid., pp. 225.
[176] Ibid., pp. 259.
[177] Froeyman, "Never Shall Twain Meet?", p. 163.
[178] Mandelbaum, "A Note on History as Narrative", p. 414.
[179] Ibid, pp. 414-415.

and emphasized the distinction between explaining *how* and *why* a change occurred, claiming that the narrative style was primarily for dramatic value.[180] Understandably, accusations of relativism were directed towards the early narrativists, though this was often the case of many of the fields who went through the 'linguistic turn'. The relativist charge is a relevant critique, though later discussion in this paper will argue that this is not the case and that some useful conclusions can still be drawn from the early debate sketched out above.

First, it emphasized the distinction in historiography between lower and higher levels of cognition in historiography and the impossibility of translating truth-value of lower-level statements to higher-level cognition. Second, it emphasized the role of constructivism and colligation in historiography through subjective 'narrative sentences', a network of overlapping descriptions and a central subject.[181] Third, it focused primarily on temporal structure and sequences. These concerns sidelined the question of literary features in historical texts and focused mostly on the question of whether narrativity lowered the scientific status historiography. Thus, the early historiographical narrativists positioned themselves more in relation to general questions concerning the philosophy of science, rather than specific problems for theorizing historiography.[182]

5.3 White and Ankersmit

The major change in landscape for the theory of history emerged with Hayden White's *Metahistory* in 1973, which fundamentally shifted the focus of the theory of history away from many of the concerns of the early narrativists and their opponents. A major factor was that White shifted the focus on individual statements of the past, to entire texts of history.[183] Further, according to Ankersmit, White's work laid to ground the view of language being a neutral medium in historiography, which became virtually obsolete and methodological issues were forced to a higher level than on elementary propositions.[184]

In *Metahistory*, the topic was not a traditional 'theory of history'. It did not give a way of categorizing events to a meaningful whole or explain why this could not be done, such as much of

[180] McCullagh, "Narrative and Explanation In History", pp. 258.
[181] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* pp. 19.
[182] Ibid., pp. 20-21.
[183] Ibid*.,* p. 21.
[184] Ankersmit, *History and Tropology*, p. 67.

the work by the early narrativists. White was rather a theorist on the 'history-as-portrait', as his subject rather was "how the liberal and Foucaldian modes of representing the past form discrete events into coherent stories, into meaningful narratives." is, he demonstrated how histories work as *linguistic and rhetorical constructions*.[185] The goal was to liberate the historical works from the 'burden of history', which was based on the historian's conceptions on art, and science which was based on antiquated notions, barring themselves from the intellectual community by ignoring self-conscious developments emphasizing the constructive qualities of both art and science.[186] *Metahistory* was an attempt to re-establish historical studies in accordance with the aims and purposes of the intellectual community at large, so that the historian could participate in the 'liberation of the present' from the burden of history.[187]

Frank Ankersmit nicely sums up some of the consequences of White's work, namely that; (i) "philosophy of history finally, belatedly, underwent its linguistic turn and became a part of the contemporary intellectual scene"; (ii) emphasis on explanation and description was abandoned in favor of historical interpretation; (iii) fixation on details was abandoned in favor of interest on the totality of historical works; (iv) the orthodox epistemological view that contrasted things in the past and the historian's language no longer had any justification; and (v) the 'selection problem' for historiography was a matter of style, and style affected both the manner *and* matter of historiography.[188]

This coincides with what Ankersmit suggests in *Narrative Logic*, in that one should understand historical works as constructing holistic literary or linguistic theses and that these could be compared to "comprehensive, panoramic interpretations of large parts of the past".[189] Ankersmit acknowledges that singular narrative sentences are paradigmatic for historical writing, in that historians state interconnected facts, but without holistic literary theses these are like 'a corpse without a heart'.[190] It is worth mentioning that while White and Ankersmit focus on linguistic features in their narrativist theories of historiography, other narrativists such as Paul Ricoeur and David Carr[191] emphasize narrativity as a fundamental human experience in general, focusing on

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[185] White, *Metahistory*, foreword. My emphasis.
[186] White, "The Burden of History", pp. 111-134.
[187] White, *Metahistory*, foreword.
[188] Ankersmit, *History and Tropology*, pp. 67-68. (Re-find pdf)
[189] Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic,* pp. 15.
[190] Ankersmit, "Danto on Representation, Identity, and Indiscernibles, p. 68.
[191] It should be noted that it might be wrong to classify Ricoeur as a 'historical narrativist', as he had broader interests and might be better characterized as a 'phenomenological narrativist'.

phenomenology and temporality, though this is not the focus in this thesis.[192] Here, the most relevant features of narrativist theories of historiographies represented through the discussion above.

5.4 Defining Features of Narrativism

5.4.1 Representationalism:

Kuukkanen identifies three features, or tenets, which he argues combines to synthesize the central aspects of narrativist historiography, namely what he terms 'representationalism', 'constructivism' and 'holism'.

Kuukkanen uses the term 'representationalism' as referring to a position, or assumption, about historiography which proposes that "representations and their productions are fundamental for historiography".[193] Traditionally, historians have gathered around a version of historical representation which he calls 'the copy theory of historical representation'. This view entails that historians should perceive the past as something which one should copy, refuting that language should not add anything to historical past, since this would distort the past 'wie es eigentlich gewesen' or how it *really* was.[194] This follows from the Rankean theoretical proposals of historiography. However, as the short presentation of Ankersmit and H. White, and narrativism has shown, copying the past *directly* is impossible, White argues that one should still attempt to form representations of the past.[195] He argues that one should not abandon the attempt to 'represent the Holocaust realistically, but rather revise our notion of what constitutes a realistic representation to account for experiences which are unique to our time, in which older modes of representations have been inadequate.[196] Thus, there seems to be an inconsistency in White's position, since he holds that while it is impossible to recreate the past in the historian's language, being imprisoned by a subjective point of view and language, he hesitates in deeming corresponding representation to the past forever unreachable.[197]

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[192] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 25.
[193] Ibid., p. 31.
[194] This is of course an outdated position in modern historiography; Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 30.
[195] White, "Emplotment and the Problem of Truth", p. 37.
[196] Ibid., p. 52.
[197] Ibid., p. 33.

In response to critics deeming the copy theory of modern historiography untenable, Ankersmit later developed a new technical notion of historical representation as an attempt to solve some of its problems, particularly those associated with the 'copy' concept. Rather, representation should be seen as resembling what it is representing, rather than copying it.[198] Primarily, this is done by distinguishing between 'reference' and 'representation'. Both stand in a relationship to reality in that historical representations may refer to reality via terms of subjects, but a representation can only 'be about' reality.[199] A further problem is "that only representations, and not reality can be 'coherent' or 'consistent'"[200]

In later works, Ankersmit attempts to solve these problems by changing the understanding of 'representation'. He argues for a return to the etymological meaning of 'representation' as making present something which is absent. In this way, a historian can re-present the past, which is categorically absent, by means of textual representation.[201] However, is it credible to think that a historian's text on, say, the Cold War can bring the events designated by the epithet 'Cold War' to the reader? It might bring *a* sensation of what life was like in the Cold War, but the Cold War as a lived experience was something real and tangible. This tangibility cannot be represented by text. The latest proposal of Ankersmit's theory of representation attempts to fix this by introducing the concept of 'aspect' into his tri-partite account of representation.[202] Then, when a historian presents a biographical history on Stalin for example, it should not be seen as representing Stalin himself, but rather an aspect of Stalin which is specified in her book. Competing historical works on Stalin thus represent other aspects of Stalin, but none of the works represent the totality of the historical figure/the historical subject Stalin himself.

5.4.2 Constructivism:

Implied by the rejection of a copy theory of representation by the narrativists are immediate epistemological concerns, as history cannot discover or capture the past in the same way a photographer can capture and 'immortalize' a representation through a photograph. Consequently, the historian rather has to construct the historical landscape, and in writing history, she lends a

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[198] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 34.
[199] Ankersmit, *Historical Representation*, pp. 41.
[200] Ibid., pp. 41.
[201] Ankersmit, *Meaning Truth and Reference in Historical Representation*, pp. 157-159.
[202] Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation*, pp. 78.

structure onto the past through a narrative.[203] It is reasonable to argue that historiographical practice does not entail attempts of copying and comparing representations in accordance with a pre-modeled past, but rather constructing narratives to make the past intelligible. However, one could respond by following Geoffrey Elton's argument and claim that historiography has a disciplinary advantage since the past is strictly independent of inquiry and thus unmodifiable.[204] This leads to the question of historiographic epistemology, namely; how do we gain historical knowledge? Along Elton's line of argument, "historical methods are no more than a recognized and tested way of extracting from what the past has left the true facts and events of that past."[205] This would require the historian to distance any projection of subjective beliefs and assumptions in a reconstruction, following Ranke's injunction to let facts stand for themselves. Elton's view appears to imply 'translation rules' of sort, in which the relationship between past and representation is given.[206] However, while there appears to be a fair consensus on the possibility of there being indirect translation rules concerning appropriate reading of source material etc., the existence of direct rules of correspondence between past and historical representation appears less promising. Ankersmit takes this stance further and states that "whatever concrete content we may give to the translation rules, they will never be more than arbitrary selection rules, acceptable to some historians but to be rejected by others."[207] Further, White's presentation of the four tropes follows along Ankersmit's lines, in suggesting that translation rules are culturally imbedded as ways in which we can understand the past, not as correct correspondence or past *wie es eigentlich gewesen*.

The main problem for both Ankersmit and White appears to relate to the lack of narrative structure in the past, it only becomes narratively structured through the hands and imagination of the historian. Given the structural difference between the past and the historian's presentation, the idea of copying or matching a direct correspondence becomes a misconceived notion, not just on sociological and epistemic grounds, but metaphysically as well.[208] Subsequently, when White presents his four tropes, the data underpinning the different conceptualizations are not intrinsically

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[203] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 37.
[204] This position would perhaps be characterized as strict historical realism; Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 37-38.
[205] Elton, *The Practice of History*, p. 65. Cited in: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 38-39.
[206] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp.38-39.
[207] Ankersmit, *Narrative Logic*, p. 81.
[208] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* pp. 41-42.

linked to the mode of presentation but the representation is rather an a priori choice.[209] Historical phenomena/data are not intrinsically ironic or tragic. This also implies the imposition of not just the historical reality by the historian, but also a (Western) culturally conditioned encoding as well.[210] This is also one of the underlying themes of attempting to decolonize history, exemplified with Chakrabarty's work.

5.4.3 Holism:

The feature of 'holism' in narrativist theory of historiography relates to the aforementioned position which requires that historical works be treated and studied as a whole, rather than by cherry-picking singular claims in historiographical texts.[211] Essentially, this implies that one cannot divide narratives intp smaller pieces and retain their primary identity as a whole. Noteworthy is the discussed difference in 'narrative substance' and 'narrative subjects' as presented with Stalin-nx. Narrativists cannot falsely describe its object, for example, the reference to the 'Cold War' in Hobsbawm's *The Age of Extremes* cannot falsely describe the 'Cold War' since it is Hobsbawm himself who tells us of a 'Cold War' in his own stipulation. Strictly speaking, there is no such thing as 'Cold War' other than as a colligatory concept for arranging knowledge. Consequently, a denominator is per definition never wrong as the denominator is an arrangement of knowledge within a stipulation, which presents the definition itself.

Kuukkanen identifies three characteristic features of holism in narrativist theory of historiography, namely 'undecomposability', 'analyticity' and 'unfalsifiability'. First, undecomposability entails that historical works cannot be decomposed to its constituting parts without losing its identity. Second, analyticity comes from the discussion on representation in that representations are necessarily derived from their definitions since they constitute the meaning of these representations. Lastly, unfalsifiability entails that since representations are wholes, they cannot be false since narratives are definitionally and analytically true.[212] Summarizing these features, one can see that historical works are autonomous and 'analytic entities' in which empirical evidence does not provide satisfactory criteria for evaluating and ranking competing historical works. Ranking here could be seen in terms of which historical work one should prefer

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[209] White, *Metahistory*, pp. 395-397.
[210] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* pp. 44.
[211] Ibid, pp 44.
[212]Ibid., pp. 48-49.

if they were giving competing views on the same historical phenomena. This is while acknowledging that historical practice centers around a great deal of empirical work as well.[213]

Holism understood as presented above would thus make the traditional idea of understanding and language learning impossible, as it would require a total overlap of beliefs and meanings. Consequently, Kuukkanen rejects holism and suggests that it is necessary to separate the meaning of a thesis from the evidence for a thesis.[214] It is important to notice here, as Paul Roth emphasizes, that Kuukkanen misrepresents the holism account as he appropriates it quite directly from Ankersmit's account of holism. The consequences of this will be further discussed below.[215]

5.5. Representationalism versus non-Representationalism

Returning to the previously discussed notion of historical representation and problematic consequences, one can re-evaluate whether representationalism is worth the philosophical commitment in historical theory. Representationalism comes in three versions as discussed above, namely copy theory of representation, substitution theory of representation and as representing aspects which symbolize or stand for an object of study, without being a replacement.[216] Given the structural differences between historical texts and/or narratives and the past, both the copy theory and substitution theory appear inadequate. The proposed view of historical representations as 'aspects' by Ankersmit appears to be the only prima facie satisfactory solution to how we could retain representationalism.

However, this view appears to entail ontological inflation, in that each 'aspect' of historical representation duplicates historical ontology.[217] Ankersmit uses the metaphor of our shadow accompanying us on a sunny day, presenting various aspects of us corresponding to a particular representation, i.e. the shadow.[218] Thus, one would have two objectively existing entities in representation and aspect (my shadow and I), as well as historical reality. Consequently, each historiographical representation would form a new independent abstract object, perhaps through linguistic representations, which would inflate our ontology.[219] Thus, one could argue that each

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[213] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 48-49.
[214] Ibid., p. 91.
[215] Roth, "Back to the Future: Postnarrativist historiography and analytic philosophy of history", pp. 276.
[216] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 53.
[217] Ibid., pp. 55-57.
[218] Ankersmit, *Meaning, Truth, and Reference in Historical Representation*, pp. 72.
[219] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* p. 57.

historical work presenting Stalin-nx are cumulating historical knowledge towards an ideal limit of a 'complete picture' of the historical Stalin, similar to early explorer's making individual discoveries of a geographical landscape which combines to a complete map or pieces of a puzzle gradually uncovering a whole image.

This view seems to imply that representations are about aspects which are themselves a part of historical reality, being some part of a 'historical world inventory'. It is not clear how an aspect of, say, Stalin could be a part of the historical world, whether there is a finite number of aspects or what the role of the historian's contribution towards the represented aspect is. Questions like these, as well as the seeming implication of historiographical inquiry possibly coming to an end when all aspects are presented, appear to significantly limit the representationalist view unless some serious practical benefits emerge which makes the faulty commitment worthwhile.[220]

Rather, the opposite seems to be the case. First, there is a practical problem on how to identify an aspect and ensure discourse on the correct aspect (in a discursive context) when attempting to pin down what historian X's representations are.[221] Second, given the difficulty and disagreement prone to occur in spelling out a historian's meaning or thesis, how does one justify an aspect? Either, all but one interpretation would be justified, or all interpretations would be justified. The former seems to require some interpretation-independent and intersubjective reading outside the historical writing while the latter makes the idea of 'aspect' redundant, as all would be different interpretations of a representation.[222]

In response to the associated problems of representationalism, Kuukkanen suggests applying Occam's razor and giving up the representationalist intuition that historical writing necessarily consists of creating representations. Meaningfulness of historical writing does not have to require representations to be about some corresponding entities which are being re-presented. Representationalism appears to imply an ability to present again, but Kuukkanen argues historiography benefits logically from being presentational, rather than re-presentational.[223] This is not to say that historiography should be devoid of any subject matter: "Equally, it is reasonable to say that the phlogiston theories of eighteenth-century chemistry are 'about' the natural world,

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[220] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 59-60.
[221] It is useful to remember Wittgenstein's argument against private language here: a private language would be unintelligible even to the user, as a non-public nature will not allow meaning to be established.
[222] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 62.
[223] Ibid., pp. 61-63.

although it is futile to look for the 'phlogiston' that would make statements about it true or false".[224] In other words, it is not the case that historical works do not refer beyond themselves, but rather that they fail to refer to any unique corresponding entities.

There is also a point to be raised regarding representation and the individual historian. As long as a historical representation remains inside the head of the historian, there is a psychological problem with how the individual fantasy works.[225] For instance, while the analogy of history and representation to cartography has been mentioned, historians such as Ernst Bernheim has preferred comparisons to the transposition of a musical theme to solo instrument.[226]

This leads to his main claim, namely that representationalism is an unreasonable commitment when concerning the main knowledge product of historiography in the case of historiographical theses and interpretations.[227] This falls in line with the narrativist position: works of history contain synthesizing theses, but these do not necessarily have to be objects which make historical (re)presentations true or false. Historiographical constitution cannot be carried out solely on an evidentiary basis.[228] Rather, historical works should be seen as argumentative interventions in an ongoing historical discourse, where attending to empirical work or evidence is not enough by itself. This relates to the separation between lower-order (factual) statements and higher-order knowledge contributions of historiographical practice; practicing history is interacting with and changing historical discourse. He claims this to be a perceived move from the narrativist perspective of the historian as a descriptive storyteller to a critical reasoner.[229]

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[224] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 64.
[225] Fernandez, "Story Makes History, Theory makes Story", p. 83.
[226] Ernst Bernheim, *Lehrbuch,* pp. 482-483. Cited in: Fernandez, "Story makes History, Theory makes Story", p. 83.
[227] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* p. 65.
[228] Ibid, pp. 66-67.
[229] Ibid, p. 67.

6. Historiographical Reasoning

The narrativist position argued that seeing historical texts as amounting to nothing more than a combination of lower-order statements removes the 'view' or 'meaning' of a historical work, which is all of the statements combined. In contrast, narrative skeptics would dispute this and claim that acceptable historiography can be practiced without a narrative, such as medieval annals or chronicles, reporting only events without commentary.[230] This would be, as Latour proposes in *Reassembling the Social*, to "abstain from frameworks altogether. Just describe the state of affairs at hand" while "holding a firm belief that sciences are objective."[231] However, as implied by White, even annals contain a minimal narrativist account. Furthermore, annals are far from proper historical accounts as they lack coherence, consistency and integration.[232]

On the narrativist side, positions range from phenomenological narrativists such as David Carr and Paul Ricouer claiming that narrative is essential in human experience to linguistic narrativists, who holds that history requires narrativity for it to be intelligible. However, this is a metaphysical debate that will not be addressed here. The point being, they all take narratives to be necessary for historiography and historiography being an inherently narrativist type of practice.[233] There are many examples of this position: Peter Gay stating that "historical analysis without narration is incomplete"[234]; Nancy Partner stating that "history is narrative in form, virtually by definition, because narrative is what brings the seriatim stream of time under control for intelligible, meaningful comprehension"[235] and Mink that "stories are not lived but told… it seems truer to say that narrative qualities are transferred from art to life".[236] As has been shown in the presentation of early narrativists, there appears to be a link between chronology, a central subject and a causal relation between events. This is further exemplified by Partner, stating that: 'plot' must be 'intelligibly connected, every component standing in some logical relation to the others'.[237]

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[230] As previously noted, White reminds us that a chronicle is already more structured in providing a 'central topic'; Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 71.

[231] Latour*, Reassembling the Social*, p. 144.

[232] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 72.

[233] Ibid., pp. 72-73.

[234] Gay, *Style in History*, p. 189. Cited in: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 72.

[235] Partner, "Foundations: Theoretical Framework for Knowledge of the Past", p 2.

[236] Mink, *History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension*, pp. 557-558.

[237] Partner, "Foundations: Theoretical Framework for Knowledge of the Past", pp. 503)

Consequently, the view appears to imply holism, which as discussed in the previous section, does not come without problems. Holism appears to demand from the historian (and reader) to comprehend and design narratives and historical phenomena in its totality, as they are definitionally part of the entire narrative, and adequate historiographical comprehension comes from this totality.[238]

Again, this is an unreasonable commitment. Rather, Kuukkanen proposes separating the meaning of and evidence for a historiographical thesis. Thus, one should divert the attention to what it takes to understand a historical thesis, namely when "a sufficient number of appropriately related beliefs or claims, as well as the relations between them, are known." The function of evidence is not, or not mainly, to make a reader understand a thesis, but rather to convince her of its tenability.[239]

6.1 Meaning and Reasoning in Historiography

The analysis below of Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* and Christopher Clark's *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914* follows to a large extent Kuukanen's analysis, but somewhat differs and is expanded upon. Ideally, the analysis would consist of two works of my own choosing, but due to workload limitations, this is not the case. As the point of the analysis is to illustrate how historical works are reasoning and what constitutes their meaning, the important aspects should still emerge. The section should provide more concreteness while bolstering the argument that historical works are argumentative theses.

6.1.1 *The Making of the English Working Class*

In *the Making of the English Working Class*, Thompson explores the English artisan and working class in the years between 1780 and 1832. Its central thesis can be divided into three parts, namely; the English working class was born between 1780 and 1832; the birth was an active process; the working class made itself, rather than being made. As he states in the preface: "The working class did not rise like the sun at an appointed time. It was present at its own making."[240] This is the main

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[238] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 75.
[239] Ibid, pp. 79-80.
[240] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 9.

point of analysis as, despite having great depth and a wealth of information, the details are not central to the theses i.e. they are subservient to the main thesis which synthesizes the book.[241]

Rejecting the holistic account might prima facie indicate that Thompson's thesis and its meaning could be seen as constituted by individual, atomic entities that do not require relational understanding.[242] However, to understand the meaning of his thesis, there is a decent amount of information that needs to be expounded. For instance, to understand that the working class "was present at its own making" we need to know that Thompson holds 'class' to be a *historical* phenomenon and not a static "structure" or "category" and how 'making' is understood as a process.[243] To understand this process, we have to understand how the seeds for the emancipation of the working class were planted, which is clear in part one of the book, fittingly named 'The Liberty Tree'. The 'seeds' were made of various, often religious, forms of disagreement and an idea of 'the Free-born Englishman' which entailed freedom not only from intrusion of the State, but also "belief in the equality of rich and poor before the law".[244] Further, we have to understand how the Industrial Revolution changed working conditions and production relations while having political and cultural continuity from the late eighteenth-century. He illustrates how this changed the lives of field laborers,[245] the artisans and 'others',[246] and handloom weavers.[247] Thompson emphasizes that despite the improvement in living conditions for most people compared with their forerunners 50 years before, the period "*felt* catastrophic enough," and the reduction of the worker and the man to an instrument.[248] Finally, we must understand that there was a popular Radicalism at the end of the 1820s which, while driven underground in the years after 1815, had a clear continuity of 'making' from pre-1815 years to the 1930s. This defined itself to a more clearly defined class-consciousness in the Marxist sense until there was a feeling of which "the working class is no longer in the making but has been made" between 1832 to 1833.[249]

Understanding things like these is what constitutes the meaning of the thesis and comprehending meaning requires linking these elements together. Kuukkanen's main claim is that

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[241] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* pp. 76-77.
[242] Ibid., p. 80.
[243] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 9.
[244] Ibid., p. 83.
[245] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, pp. 213-234.
[246] 'Other' is due to difficulties of offering accurate estimates due to faulty source material and great differences of degree concealed in the term 'artisan'; Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, pp. 234-235, 234-269.
[247] Ibid., pp. 269-314.
[248] Ibid., pp. 231, 203. His emphasis.
[249] Thompson, *The Making of The English Working Class*, p. 807.

most of the factual elements of the book are not necessary for understanding its meaning, but the more one delves into the factual evidence the meaning becomes clearer. This indicates that there is a distinction between meaning and evidence, though these are naturally entangled. Thus, when we go beyond meaning-context, we move to evidence which is inessential for understanding the meaning.[250]

Evidence provides reasons for accepting a historiographical thesis, but is the evidence narratively structured? Since there is a distinction between evidence and meaning, what is the relationship between them in a work of history? This becomes more evident when analyzing the reasoning in the book. A central argument for Thompson is that when the creation of the labor market was in place, the insecurity of the workers increased. This is illustrated by his account of the work of an overseer stating that "if there comes a frost they discharge me" and "when the season opens they come to me, and take 'em back again",[251] indicating that wet weather created surplus while harvest created a shortage. The documentation of this overseer increases the understanding of the deterioration of the worker's situation despite material conditions improving. Details like this are evidence for the claim that the situation became worse for working people, which in turn reasoned for the radicalization of the people; a pre-condition for creating awareness for their class condition. The reader is thus invited to arrive at Thompson's definitional criterion for the birth of the working class.[252] This illustrates the argumentative structure of historical works, namely through a chain of reasoning connected by various claims which themselves are one of many claims and relations supporting the main thesis. Many of these details are not necessary for understanding Thompson's thesis, but they are presented as reasons for him to advance his thesis and bolsters the argumentative strength and understanding of the thesis. This does not take away from the view that factual discourses are important parts of historical discourses since the historian has to back a significant claim if it is central to a chain of reasoning.[253] It is not unusual for seemingly independent historical phenomena to be included in descriptive and factual parts in order to bring depth to the main argument.

This shows how there is not a formal argumentative strategy or mode of writing resembling that of analytic philosophy's explicit arguments. The point is that historians advance their thesis

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[250] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 82-83.
[251] Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class*, p. 224.
[252] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* pp. 88-89.
[253] Ibid., p. 91.

through reasoning, which in turn is made reasonable through chains of reasoning typically including longer descriptive sections. Thus, if we call these sections 'narrative' we highly devalue the historian's work in that they simply report given chronological events.[254] A great deal of analytic work is necessary before the historian finds her final organization of a book and successfully implementing such a structure is one of the most difficult tasks of the historian.[255]

6.1.2 *Sleepwalkers: How Europe Went to War in 1914*

In *Sleepwalkers* Christopher Clark examines the complex events and relationships which led Europe to World War I in 1914. In supporting his thesis for Europe sleepwalking towards World War I, Clarke presents some revealing anecdotes. One example is a meeting between Foreign minister Leopold von Berchtold and Serbian Prime Minister Nikola Pasic in autumn 1913. Berchtold was supposed to raise the issue of the Serbian occupation of Albania, but 'forgot' to express Vienna's strong objections due to being overwhelmed by Pasic's 'warm overtures'. However, they were supposed to meet at the opera later that evening, but in this instance, Pasic retired early and Berchtold arrived late. Thus, Berchtold wrote a letter which was handed to Pasic, but yet again, a German script and a notoriously inscrutable handwriting prevented the message from being understood, both by Pasic and the Austrian Foreign Office.[256]

This is one of many examples Clark presents of 'sleepwalking, related to uncertainty and unclarity in monarchical decision-making, and generally poor understanding of the international system and lack of trust combined with fluctuating power-relations and influences.[257] Another distinct feature of Clark's interpretation of the origins of the Great War is the lackluster search for a culprit. He claims that there were no signs in the UK press nor from the British Foreign Secretary indicating a desire for war. Similarly, he refrains from placing blame on the Austro-Hungarian Elite, rather blaming the political structure's lack of conductivity in decision-making and balancing contradictory information.[258] Lastly, he emphasizes misjudgment of what the stakes really were and the fact that people had not experienced total war before.[259] It is grasping these kinds of issues

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[254] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* pp. 90-91.
[255] Marvick, *The New Nature of History*, pp. 207-208; Cited in: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 91.
[256] Clarke, *Sleepwalkers,* p. 98.
[257] Ibid, pp. 184, 240.
[258] Ibid., pp. 429.
[259] Ibid., pp. 561.

that are required in order the comprehend Clark's thesis. This is analogous to a puzzle or a mosaic, where the picture becomes more and more evident as the pieces fall in place. During the process of placing the pieces, there comes a point where we might recognize or understand the imagery which becomes clearer as more pieces fall into place. While many of the statements in *Sleepwalker*s fall on the evidence side, it is possible to understand Clark's thesis without knowing all the evidence or details and it is also easy to see how he could have selected other evidence or examples. The line between what functions as meaning-constituting and evidence is a sliding scale that cannot be explicitly specified, but there should arguably be a point were a reader can claim that they understand Clark's thesis.[260]

The central question in inquiry is then how Clark attempts to persuade the reader that the main players in the run-up to the Great War were oblivious to the potential consequences rather than making conscious policy decisions. First, the book is clearly constituted by many non-narrative parts if 'narrative' is seen as describing events in a temporal succession. Kuukkanen exemplifies this by illustrating chapter tree of *Sleepwalkers*. The chapter is structured as to explicate the polarization of Europe's geopolitical questions, by answering four questions such as "Why did Britain opt to throw its lot in with the alliance?" and "What role did Germany play in bringing about its own encirclement by a hostile coalition?".[261] Thus, the chapter is systematically organized without a narrative structure, with subchapters jumping temporally back and forth.

Further, Kuukkanen notes how Clark devotes the fourth chapter to investigating where decision-power in pre-War Europe was, whether it was kept by monarchs, ministers, public opinion etc., by studying the major powers in turn.[262] Building on earlier suggestions in Clark's book, asking these kinds of questions shows patterns of reasoning rather than narrative since there were no the power structures and Europe's geopolitical system is not descriptively forced on temporal events other than by Clark himself. The chosen inclusion of these elements are rather argumentative choices than narrative necessities. There are of course narrative-descriptive parts elements in *Sleepwalkers*, which Kuukkanen argues should be seen as explanatory parts in the main argument. The inclusion and factual description of anecdotes such as that involving Pasic

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[260] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 85.
[261] Clark, *Sleepwalkers,* pp. 123.
[262] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 93.

and Berchtold is not solely to tell a story but to exemplify the state of affairs with personalities and events in order to increase the persuasive power of the 'sleepwalking-thesis'.[263]

It would be erroneous to argue that Clark's book is essentially narrative if 'narrative' is seen as a temporal set of events, whether these are causally related or not. For instance, in chapter three, "The Polarization of Europe, 1887-1907" argues that "the polarization of Europe's geopolitical was a crucial precondition" for war but not that bifurcation into two alliances did not lead to war itself.[264] Further, he states that:

"To understand how the polarization came about, it is necessary to answer four interlinked questions. Why did Russia and France form an alliance against Germany in the 1890s? Why did Britain opt to throw in its lot with that alliance? What role did Germany play in bringing about its own encirclement by a hostile coalition? And to what extent can the structural transformation of the alliance system account for the events that brought war to Europe and the world in 1914?"[265]

Thus, the chapter is systematically organized and there is no narrative structure there, as exemplified with the subchapter "the End of British Neutrality" devoted to answering why Britain "threw in its lot with that alliance".[266] The chapter and subchapters continuously jumps back and forth in time and in between countries in order to answer the questions.

This returns us to the question of the form or argumentative structure in historical presentation. Traditionally, the suggestion is that historical presentation takes on a narrative structure, often implying a chronological order and a holistically endowed meaning.[267] The fact that Clark approaches the chapter as presented above, addressing these questions, reveals his use of patterns of reasoning, rather than simply presenting a narrative. Further, the way in which Clark proceeds in choosing emphasis on 'power factors' and which information to include are argumentative choices made by Clark. Thus, as Kuukkanen claims, "'narrative' mischaracterizes the nature of knowledge production in historiography, which, in actuality, results in something more structured than just a set of descriptions of singular events."[268] He holds that this is a degrading suggestion of what historical work is and he argues that historians use reasoning and critical faculties more than is acknowledged, in forming conclusions, inferences and

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[263] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 94-95.
[264] Clark, *Sleepwalkers,* pp. 121-123.
[265] Ibid., p. 123.
[266] Clark, *Sleepwalkers*, pp. 136-141.
[267] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 86.
[268] Ibid., pp. 87.

judgements.[269] This is while recognizing that *Sleepwalkers* also contains narrative and descriptive parts. However, the thesis that Europe's main powers were 'sleepwalking' is nowhere to be found in the historical sources nor even in the events themselves. The conclusion cannot be deduced from simply reporting what there was.

One important thing to notice in these examples is the diversity of argumentation and premises function differently in historiography than in the traditional standard logical sense. The arguments presented are looser, by establishing points of the past in order to accept certain theses or points of view. Choices of inclusion in historical works are argumentative choices, sometimes explicitly stated, sometimes narrative-descriptive to increase persuasion of the primary meaning or thesis of a historical work. [270]

As discussed in section 5.2 through 5.4, narrative and argument have often been seen as incompatible, though some, such as Partner, have argued that narrative form is itself a highly persuasive form of argumentation.[271] The perspective in this paper is that the narratives are more like explanatory parts within the main thesis and the choices of inclusion are made in light of the main thesis.[272] I have argued that all the descriptive and factual elements are not necessary to understand points argued for in a historical work. This begs the question, as posed by Ankersmit, of then why someone should bother to read or write historical volumes as wholes if they can be condensed and get the same message across?[273] The answer is twofold: First, they play an evidentiary role in the main thesis, which is why the synthesized entity i.e. whole book or text matter is the main cognitive unit in historiography. Second, the underlying principle of historical accounts is not merely to present events in a narrative, but to *persuade* the reader to accept the thesis and historical account. The non-condensed historical works are then more persuasive as they have a better evidentiary basis and argumentative support.

6.2 Colligatory-concepts in Historiography

The role and notion of colligatory concepts briefly mentioned in section 5.5 are central to historiography, particularly for narrativists: Danto referred to 'narrative sentences' which involved

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[269] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 87.
[270] Ibid, p. 95.
[271] Partner, "Foundations: Theoretical Framework for Knowledge of the Past", p. 503.
[272] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography,* pp. 90-91.
[273] Ankersmit, "Reply to Professor Zagorin", pp. 286-287.

"an inexpungible subjective factor"[274]; Mink to 'configurational modes' which established historical comprehension through a presentation of separate things as "elements in a single and concrete complex of relationships"[275]; while Morton White holds that narration requires a 'central subject' and referred to the 'colligatory power of statements'.[276] Hayden White's tropes on unifying texts and bringing a meaningful plot should not be neglected either. Colligatory concepts are for example: 'Cold War', 'Industrial Revolution', 'Renaissance' 'Christian Expansion' etc.

Behind these notions of colligation is the main idea that they create novel historiographical information through integrating information, which did not exist prior to the creation of this colligation.[277] The relevant questions to ask are then whether these expressions should be seen as true representations of the historical past and if these can be justified, especially if they cannot be true or representing historical past. As Kuukkanen argues: "These are important questions since it is naturally desirable that historiography would not be just about arbitrary figments of literary imagination, and that historiography not be a field that lets imagination reign totally free and unconstrained without any cognitive constraints".[278]

Walsh described colligation as being created from the inner relationship between historical phenomena, which makes more complex phenomena intelligible when the historian 'colligates' various events according to appropriate conceptions.[279] He argued that colligation is an essential part of the historian's interpretive process when working with a large amount of source material which is prima facie not connected until the historian shows that "sense can be made of it by revealing certain pervasive themes or developments."[280] Further, the way the historian emphasizes significance to historical events is by locating the aspects of these events which *point beyond* themselves while relating to other events as phases in a continuous process. Colligation is organizing which is something writing history necessarily entails. This is, according to Walsh, a largely interpretive and subjective act in which the historian adds something non-objective to the historical reality.[281] It is worthwhile to remember Ankersmit's account of aspects of representation, which contends that each historian who writes a narrative also constructs a

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[274] Danto, *Analytical Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 142.
[275] Mink, History and Fiction as Modes of Comprehension", p. 551.
[276] White, *Foundations of Historical Knowledge,* p. 221.
[277] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 98.
[278] Ibid., p. 98.
[279] Walsh, "The Intelligibility of History", p. 133.
[280] Walsh, "Colligatory Concepts in History", p. 136.
[281] Ibid., p. 135-137.

colligation. For instance, there are equally many 'Renaissances,' as there are narratives on the subject as each narrative articulates a distinct point of view.[282]

For instance, the colligatory concept of 'the Thaw', which refers to the period in the Soviet Union when repression and censorship in the early 1950s to 1960s when Nikita Krushchev established policies of 'de-Stalinization'. Thus. 'thaw' was following the 'freeze' of Stalin. The term itself comes from Ilya Ehrenburg's novel *The Thaw* which centered on private lives in the post-war Soviet Union. The end of the book symbolizes the idea of 'thaw' well, where a change in mood is apparent with a factory chief designer:

> "Everything was all at once alive and resonant. Funny thing: now Vera will come in, and I'm not even thinking of what I'll say to her. I won't say anything. Or I'll say: "Vera, the thaw has come".[283]

The novel represents the thaw in a fairly symbolic level, while the discourse of Soviet history has a more concrete understanding of 'the thaw'. For instance, Peter Neville in *Russia: A Complete History*, states that "Under Khrushchev, the second phase of the cultural thaw began."[284] Historian Georg von Rauch states that this was seen in that the loosening of control became obvious in theater, creative arts, the movies, music, and broadcasting.[285] This exemplifies that there are two somewhat different uses of the term. The former refers to a generally hopeful and lighter atmosphere broadly, following Stalin's death, which is exemplified by Ehrenburg's use. The latter, as used by Rauch, refers to a more specific cultural liberation through concrete events, which is more common among professional historians. [286]

This begs the question of whether colligatory concepts can accurately represent the past in terms of correspondence to facts. The discussion in section 5.5 argued that this is not the case. Given the central role of colligatory concepts in historiography and the inference that they are not objectively given nor refer to corresponding entities in historical reality, this paper argues that historiography cannot be true in a corresponding sense, as this necessitates reference.[287] This does

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[282] Ankersmit, *"Narrative Logic"*, pp. 227-247.
[283] Ehrenburg, *The Thaw*, p. 164. (1966). Cited in: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 101.
[284] Peter Neville, *Russia: A Complete History*, p. 203 (2003). Cited in: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 102.
[285] Rauch, *A History of Soviet Russia*, p. 433.
[286] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, 104.
[287] 'Reference' is here taken as in the traditional understanding of proper names. For example: 'Nelson Mandela', 'Mount Fuji', 'Norway' etc.

not mean that other statements than colligatory concepts cannot be true.[288] However, writing history without colligatory concepts, something like what was imagined by early positivists, would both neuter the language and remove the most powerful and interesting features of historiography.[289] Goldstein remarked that "colligation adds something but not new empirical information. Rather, it adds… a conceptual framework, a kind of discourse."[290] Thus, the question of how to rationally evaluate colligatory concepts when they cannot be true in terms of correspondence. Kuukkanen proposes five criteria; (1) exemplification, which is how well the descriptive content exemplifies the historical data which it represents; (2) coherence, which is how coherent the material highlighted is constructed; (3) comprehensiveness, is the amount of historical data subsumed by the concept compared to rival concepts; (4) scope, in how large the scope of application is; and (5) originality, in how original and innovative the concept is.[291] While these are suitable evaluative categories, this paper argues that for concepts in transnational history, and in accordance with goals of decolonizing history, that the ethical consequences of concepts should be considered as well. In other words, they have normative effects which matter, which will become evident in section 7.

It should also be pointed out that colligatory concepts are not equal to theoretical concepts since colligatory concepts refer to unique historical periods with temporal and spatial boundaries while theoretical concepts apply to a larger set of phenomena.[292] Neither is colligatory concepts equal to periodization, which is rather a *strategy* of historians to represent continuity and change, in which the criteria for periodization changes over time.[293] As Peter Stearns has is: periodization is "the conceptual tool that makes change over time a manageable topic, and therefore history teaching feasible."[294]

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[288] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 105.
[289] Ibid., pp. 106.
[290] Goldstein, *Historical Knowing*, p. 45. (1976) Cited in: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 109.
[291] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 123-128.
[292] Ibid., p. 110.
[293] Shaw, *Events and Periods as Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge,* pp. 40-41.
[294] Stearns, "Periodization in World History Teaching", p. 561.

6.3 The Elusive 'what there really was'

The presentation above has sketched out the main problem of narrativism and representation and exemplified how reasoning functions and is practiced in historiography through synthesizing arguments towards a main thesis or 'meaning'. Before proceeding to Kuukkanen's proposal for a tri-partite theory, some recap and discussion is useful. Given this account of historiography, it is apparent that the problem is not that there is no 'what history really is', but rather that we can never know it. Equally, history concerns that which happened in the way in which it comes to be represented, precisely because representations are constructions.[295] It is important to note here that 'constructed' means neither 'unreal' or unjustified, as there are various types of both comparative and rational evaluation. Due to historical truth having nothing to correspond with, it is necessarily defined as coherence based on source material available and systems of concepts.[296]

Kuukkanen refutes that this implies that there are no epistemological or empirical grounds in which one should choose one historical interpretation over another, such as Jenkins and Hayden White do. A mistaken argument is often formulated in postmodern and narrativist accounts, especially within early narrativism. The erroneous point of inference comes when stretching the correct conclusion of there being no absolute and correct historical interpretation to the conclusion that no interpretation is cognitively more justified than any other.[297] There is a vital difference between 'cognitive' and 'epistemic' evaluation in this regard, with 'cognitive' relating to rational, while 'epistemic' relates closer to 'truth' in the absolute sense. The claim in this thesis is that for transnational history, in accordance with efforts to decolonize history, the cognitive evaluation should also be concerned with normative aspects. As Chakrabarty claimed, "all our pasts are futural in orientation".[298] These points argue for a pragmatic attitude towards both historical justification and evaluation of this justification.

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[295] Jenkins, "Nobody Does it Better", p. 60, 67.
[296] Shaw, *Events and Periods as Concepts for Organizing Historical Knowledge*, pp. 6-7.
[297] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 151.
[298] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, p. 250.

7. The 'Tri-Partite Theory of Justification'

Kuukkanen proposes a tri-partite theory of justification as a pragmatic way to rationally evaluate historical works. Based on his premise of historical works as arguments, he claims, historical knowledge is evaluated by a (1) rhetorical dimension, (2) a discursive dimension and (3) an epistemic dimension.[299]

The rhetorical dimension of evaluation is seen analyzed in *Sleepwalkers* and *The Making of the English Working Class*, namely, how historical works form their argumentative persuasion in terms of informal arguments and reasoning. Thus, it could equally be called the argumentative dimension, focused on the direct manifestation of historical texts making a direct appeal to readers.[300]

The discursive dimension refers to the historiographical discourse or context a work of history must place itself in. Thus, the claim is that proper justification of historical theses must account for existing knowledge and arguments in order to make an appropriate historiographical intervention. In other words, how the historian situates her historiographical argument within a historiographical setting.[301] He illustrates with the example of the Great War, about which has been written an estimated 50.000 titles.[302] In order to justify a historical work on the Great War, it is necessary to situate the work in relation to some other works on the Great War as no historical argument is formed based on source material alone.

Two important points to take out of this is that (i) the plausibility of a historical thesis is dependent on the impact in the argumentative fields, and (ii) historiographical reasoning is placed within specific cultural settings, constituted by various social and political interests. Thus, it is not internal reasoning on logic and evidence alone that matters, but also the way it makes *sense in the world*.

The epistemic dimension concerns the relation between historical presentation, the object of study (the past) and evidence directly.[303] This dimension centers around the use of colligatory concepts discussed in section 5.2, in which Kuukkanen argued for five criteria of evaluation. This

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[299] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 155-160.
[300] Ibid., pp. 197.
[301] Ibid., pp. 157-158.
[302] Winter & Prost, *The Great War in History*, pp. 1; Cited in: Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 161.
[303] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, p. 156.

paper argued that the normative consequences of the colligatory concepts should also be included as criteria of evaluation, particularly with efforts to decolonize history in mind.

In sum, Kuukkanen's proposition suggests that these three dimensions amount to 'cognitive justification' of historical works and the arguments they contain. Due to the problems of narrativism and representation, truth-functional evaluation should not be applied to synthesizing entities. Rather, they should be seen as making assertions on the past and depending on the success of these assertions, according to the three dimensions, the assertion is warranted.[304] Further, a 'warranted assertion' is when the historian has constructed a rationally persuasive argument successfully within a historiographical context, and her conclusion and colligatory notions propose an insightful way to make sense of and exemplify the past. In sum, this is the evaluative framework, or 'postnarrativism', that Kuukkanen presents as a response to the problems associated with narrativism and representation, and the initial insight that histories cannot be written without using some narrative structure or other, but epistemological evaluation cannot be applied to narratives *qua* narrative."[305]

The view is that historiography is a rational practice which operates within the domain of rationality, where the evaluation of cognitive justification for historical works can be separated into three dimensions.[306] The idea behind the tri-partite theory of historiographical justification is to see theses of history as rationally warranted claims and argumentative interventions.[307] However, Kuukkanen makes an error in calling for a capital "R" notion of rationality by declaring that "it is *rationality itself* that provides the prospect for community transcendence and the inter-communal validity of historiographical arguments".[308] In doing so, Kuukkannen is contradicting his own inferences through a pragmatic characterization and approach to historiography as carrying an informal argument.[309] A more viable solution and the use of Kuukkanen's tri-partite theory would be the more pragmatic small "r" account of rationality. Paul Roth notes that while this increases the risks of blurring the principled distinctions between the three dimensions of his theory, and refutes universalistic claims, it does provide guidance on how to explicate

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[304] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 166-167.
[305] Roth, "Back to the Future: Postnarrativist historiography and analytic philosophy of history", pp. 270.
[306] Kuukkanen, *Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*, pp. 166-167.
[307] Ibid., p. 155.
[308] Ibid., p. 192-193. His emphasis.
[309] Roth, "Back to the Future", p. 280.

historiographical practice and in turn evaluate works in history.[310] In this way, the narrativist insight and its important role in historiography without forsaking concerns of rationally evaluating historical inquiry. This epistemic evaluation does not involve grounding universal canons to see texts in a logical form but involves a detailed and careful consideration of the connections a text charts and merit in relation to other work in the field.[311] This requires abandoning a goal of a universal logical solvent for the dilemma between narrativism and epistemology, while still maintaining the pragmatist convictions of Kuukkanen. These pragmatist convictions are also central to the stance one holds towards CE for transnational history.

7.1 Skinner's theory of Speech acts

Before examining the connection between Kuukkanen's proposal on historical evaluation and CE, it's useful to look at Quentin Skinner's theory of speech acts. First, Skinner argues that there is an intended force behind an author's saying or writing, in which text is a linguistic act, and there is "an intended act of communication".[312] He terms this the 'illocutionary force' in order to contrast it from the propositional meaning. For example, Skinner argues that when Machiavelli stated that "princes must learn when not to be virtuous" in chapter 15 of *The Prince*, that Machiavelli's "primary intention (and the illocutionary force of his given utterance) was to challenge and repudiate an accepted moral commonplace".[313] Similarly, Kuukkanen argues that historical theses are forms of speech acts in that they are reasoning for a point of view within an argumentative context. This paper supports Kuukkanen's arguments but holds a broader position, closer to that of Skinner. He states that: "This is the fact that all serious utterances are characteristically intended as acts of communication" and that "they can never be viewed simply as a string of propositions; they must always be viewed at the same time as arguments. Now to argue is always to argue for or against a certain assumption or point of view or course of action".[314]

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[310] Roth, "Back to the Future, pp. 280-281.
[311] Ibid., p. 281.
[312] Skinner, *Meaning and Context*, p. 63.
[313] Ibid., p.86.
[314] Ibid, p. 274.

8. Transnational History and CE

Before addressing CE and transnational history, a few points should be highlighted. The above section concluded that historiography is a performative practice i.e. it does not only describe a given reality but changes this reality as well. This thesis interpreted transnational history as an umbrella perspective focused on the interconnectedness of the whole of human history, by transcending politically and geographically defined spaces. It was argued that transnational history as such, is interconnected with efforts to decolonize history with social justice in mind. Thus, if historiography, and transnational history, is a performative practice, then transnational history should be evaluated in accordance with efforts to decolonize history and uncovering hidden power-structures in mind.

8.1 The General Importance of CE

This section will shortly present some of the general arguments of doing or getting involved with CE, before looking more specifically at CE and transnational history.

The first general argument is the prudential argument, which rests on the following premise: terms or concepts applied in thinking and discussing a particular subject matter *can* be defective and improved upon. Section 2 argued that this is the case. The prudential argument states that if representational devices can be defective in ways as discussed in section 2, then the next steps are: (i) we should examine whether the concepts are defective and (ii) if they are, ameliorate them. Thus, your relation to the basic assumption determines the persuasiveness of the prudential argument.

If your position on the basic premise is that there exist *some* defective concepts, though that these are very infrequent, it might look as if this is limited to be a theoretical issue, with miniscule practical benefits. However, if these representational devices are positioned in a defective domain, and some of the theoretical subsets of terms are dubious, then the whole subfield must worry.[315]

This is due to the directional relationship in finding strategies for examining social process (methodology) that requires establishing the limits of our capability to gain knowledge of these

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[315] Cappelen, *Fixing Language*, pp. 39-42.

processes, (epistemology) and of their nature (ontology). While the more radical position on deficiency, as held by the great 'theorists of nonsense' such as Carnap and Wittgenstein argued that large swaths of discourse were nonsensical, this paper takes a more modest stance.[316] This is closer to what Cappelen claims can occur with 'pocket nonsense': Specific subject matters are not nonsensical, but when language is introduced and used in defective and nonsensical cognitive ways, it can lead to pockets of nonsensical speech and cognitive events.[317] Thus, if your position on the basic premise is that defective concepts are widespread and straightforwardly generalizable, then getting involved with CE must be a clear priority.

In his book, *The Construction of Social Reality,* Searle gives an ontological argument for how social reality is created. He claims that at the core of social ontology there are 'constitutive rules of the form 'X counts as Y in C' where Y is a "status function" which provide a status to the things which fulfils X.[318]

If we reflect on the role of cash in modern society. Physically they material objects, often paper, which contain various properties (X) depending on the currency. However, in different countries they function as something more than material objects given the status of 'currency' (Y).

This indicates two things. First, there must be a communal acknowledgement or acceptance of the status of X as Y. The currency much be valued as a currency. Second, language is indispensable in constituting our institutional reality, whether this is in relation to currency, administrations etc. Institutional structures are dependent on language for their existence, and language is these institutions are contingent for their social reality, as demonstrated with currency. We must continue to accept the currency as currency, otherwise it becomes worthless.[319] Consequently, if language is constitutive of social facts, then changing language would change the social facts: there is a corollary which implies that a parallel 'dynamic evolution' of social facts and language happens simultaneously.

While this is exemplified with a hypothetical here, the fact is that this has happened continuously in history as well. Semantic drift happens continuously, take the example of 'salad'. It is not long ago that a dish had to be cold and have a high preponderance of green leaves in for it to be a salad. Then, a concoction of fruit would not be a salad. Now we find it unproblematic to

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[316] E.g. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (1953); Carnap, *The Logic Foundations of Probability* (1950).
[317] Cappelen, "Nonsense and illusions of thought", p. 34.
[318] Searle, *The Construction of Social Reality*, pp. 45-46.
[319] Ibid*.*, p. 45.

apply 'salad' to "various warm leaf-free concoctions".[320] If this is true of 'salad', it indicates that small changes happen to many- if not all-words over time. [321]

A second ontological argument can be exemplified by the earlier illustration by Haslanger about 'man' and 'woman'. The point of doing CE, in this case, is not about what we want the words 'man' and 'women' to be, but rather what we want man and woman to be. We are not creating anything new with language but reclassifying it in a way that affects what is reclassified towards change.[322] As Jordheim and Neumann stated, concepts come with specific historical and social baggage and are capable of altering our world view.[323] At the same time, they are also changing, and these changes have practical consequences on the social world.

A salient example of the importance of conceptual amelioration is the case of sexual harassment. Until recently, the term 'sexual harassment' did not exist. While working as a director of Cornell University's Women's Section, Lin Farley noticed a pattern, when the women in her class described their work-experiences: the women had all been fired or quit from a job because they had been made excessively uncomfortable by the behavior of men. Despite hearing the same descriptions from women in all walks of life, she had not seen it described in literature and it was not publicly recognized to be a problem.[324] It was not until the year after in a 1975 testimony before the New York City Human Rights Commission that the term 'sexual harassment' was publicly coined.[325] In one sense, Farley was interpreting semiotic codes that her students testified to her and constructed a concept of 'sexual harassment' which indubitably has reinforced social justice for women.

8.2 The Ontology of Transnational History

The importance of CE for transnational history is very much dependent on the argument of ontology underlying epistemology, and epistemology underlying methodology. In this sense, it is important to note that there is a substantive difference between the concerns of CE and general ontological concerns. While the latter is concerned with the nature of ontological questions, CE concern 'metaontology' i.e. the enterprise of ontology: is the ontology in good standing or is it

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[320] Dorr and Hawthorne, "Semantic plasticity and speech reports", p. 284.
[321] Cappelen, *Fixing Language*, p. 31.
[322] Ibid, pp. 44-47.
[323] Jordheim and Neumann, "Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", p. 153.
[324] Farley, *Sexual Shakedown: the Sexual Harassment of Women on the Job",* pp. 21-49.
[325] MacKinnon and Siegel, *Directions in Sexual Harassment Law*, p. 8.

somehow misbegotten?[326] The proposals illustrated by Appiah and Haslanger on 'gender' and 'race' argues that the ontology is misbegotten and that this has negative effects. Section 2 in this thesis referred to the entry *Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History* on 'Race-Mixing'. The entry stated that 'race-mixing' referred to sexual relations that cut across boundaries of race and culture, and that historical and theoretical examinations tended to focus on European men and non-European Women.[327] If Appiah is right in that 'race' does not exist, the methodology in the historical and theoretical examinations are per definition wrong, as they refer to non-existing objects. Furthermore, if ideas of race do presuppose racialism, then these examinations are inherently upholding a 'colonialist history', despite transnational history being intertwined with ideas of decolonizing history.

Thus, if we ameliorate a concept such as 'race' or 'gender', even if the effect its ontological status has had on history is dubious, two things happen: (i) we stop using a concept which might have inherently bad effects on the social world, (ii) it helps in revealing underlying phenomena which have, so to say, been clouded by the concept of race. This way of incorporating CE towards transnational history helps us in writing and reading history critically.

8.3 Sewell and CE

Much of Sewell's work in *Logics of History* can to a large extent characterized as doing CE, as the 5th chapter of the book is working on reconfiguring the concept of 'culture' while the final chapter works on refiguring the 'social'. In his work on 'culture' he argues that the concept remains useful but that it needs both clarification and re-working. [328] The historiographical and intellectual transformations of the New Social History and Cultural (linguistic) turn twisted 'culture' into a highly volatile concept, sharply contrasting preceding notions of culture which primarily centered on anthropology(ical enterprise). [329] Paradoxically, as discourse on 'culture' expanded, anthropology distances itself as a discipline from the concept.

Robert Brightmans excellent commentary on disputes in anthropology on culture showed how "lexical avoidance behavior", by placing the concept in quotation marks, refuse the usage of

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[326] Eklund, "Variance Theses in Ontology and Metaethics, pp. 1-2.
[327] Ikirye, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, p. 865.
[328] Sewell, *Logics of History,* p. 152.
[329] Ibid, pp. 152-153.

'culture' as a noun or replacing it with lexemes such as "habitus", "hegemony" or "discourse", became prominent for anthropological critics in the 1980s and 1990s.[330] Sewell argues, by pointing to James Clifford's lament that "culture is a deeply compromised concept that I cannot yet to without", that 'culture' requires modification and re-articulation.[331]

Sewell notes that Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* was probably the first work that conceptualized culture as a realm of agency. Sewell criticizes this identification of culture with agency while contrasting it with structure as it perpetuates a determinist materialism. This, according to Sewell, exaggerates the 'implacability of socioeconomic determinations and the free play of symbolic action' as the socioeconomic and cultural processes are blends of structure and agency.[332] For instance, doing stand-up comedy is necessarily constrained by structures of cultures such as linguistics and visual and social conventions, while economic actions such as repairing, or manufacturing vehicles requires exercising creativity and agency. Thus, since Thompson works with this conception of 'culture', he perpetuates the same form of determinist materialism that the *Making of the English Working Class* was arguably opposing to in the first place.[333]

While Sewell criticizes the concept(s) of 'culture' in chapter 5, it is in the final chapter on the refiguring of the 'social' in social science that he proposes applicable change the concept 'social'. He notes that while questions of the 'social' are ontological questions, the social sciences have far more developed methodologies than ontologies.[334] It is worth remembering the causal connection with ontology underlying both epistemology and methodology here. Sewell examines the history and use of 'social' and concludes that the concept is "an exceptionally complex or polysemic concept" and that we should appreciate the vagueness of the term.[335]

He cites Keith Baker in claiming that the concept of society has replaced religion "as the ultimate ground of order", since the enlightenment. [336] Thus, the 'social' refers to a sign conventionally understood as signifying 'the really real' but not the 'really real'. It provides an ontological grounding for human life, and because contemporary scholars inherit the disenchanted

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[330] Brightman, "Forget Culture: Replacement, Transcendence, Relexification", p. 510.
[331] Sewell, *Logics of History,* pp. 155-156.
[332] Ibid., pp. 158-159.
[333] Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 159.
[334] Ibid., pp. 319-320.
[335] Ibid., pp. 324.
[336] Baker, "Enlightenment and the Institution of Society: Notes for a Conceptual History", p. 113. Cited in; Sewell, *Logics of History,* p. 325.

world from the Enlightenment, ontological questions and anxieties such a world poses become unavoidable.[337]

He argues that just as the 'social' functions as a generalized signifier of the 'really real,' 'history' is "precisely such a term", as well. The problems accompanying such a generalized ontology cannot be avoided by re-directing 'social' to 'cultural' as in 'cultural history', as this has come to carry equally much ontological baggage.[338] What he proposes to escape this 'epistemic murk' as he calls it, is to refigure the 'social' since the constant use of the concept leaves us stuck with it. He concludes the book, stating that 'the social' in social science is:

> "…a complex and inescapable ontological ground of our common life as humans. It is best understood as, first, an articulated, evolving web of semiotic practices that, second, builds up and transforms a range of physical frameworks that both provide matrices for these practices and constrain their consequences. The fundamental method for analyzing the social, so understood, is interpretive- that is, explicating performances by reconstructing the semiotic codes that enable their production."[339]

In this, he argues that we must resort pragmatically to methods with the purpose of de-reification of social life, in revealing blind social forces and dumb are in reality intelligible as products of semiotically generated action.[340] By reconstructing and analyzing semiotic codes, we are examining communicative meaning in order to reveal underlying, hidden social forces and social coercions. This is precisely what much of CE entails, especially the work of Haslanger, and also what Sewell does himself when he is 'refiguring the social'. Thus, the argument is, the reconstruction of these codes, which historians are primarily concerned with, should also take into account the ethical consequences of this reconstruction and this should in turn play a role in how we evaluate these reconstructions. Transnational history is concerned with revealing underlying power structures and is interlinked with efforts to decolonize history, which doing CE may contribute towards.

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[337] Sewell, *Logics of History*, pp. 326-327.
[338] Ibid., p. 327.
[339] Sewell, *Logics of History*, p. 369.
[340] Ibid., pp. 369.

8.4 Social Construction

As discussed in section 5.4, (social) constructionism is central to writing history. This idea of social construction is also an important tool in contemporary social theory, as accounts of gender, race, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. systematically challenge everyday assumptions of 'what is natural'.[341] Furthermore, social constructionism can rely on externalist accounts of meaning to argue that CE is not changing the subject, but rather revealing what we mean in an insightful way. Take the example of 'parent', in which we may assume we are expressing the concept of immediate progenitor. Rather, conceptual analysis that the term rather is expressing something like primary caregiver. Point being, the constructionist account shows how assumptions of meaning are false, according to our practice, and thus reveals an existing meaning rather than proposing a new one.[342] Haslanger argues that incomplete understandings of meaning are often irrelevant, but the indeterminacy "allows for confusion and mystification; one goal of social theory, as I see it, is to clarify meanings with social justice in mind". [343] An important point here is that she sees amelioration, or CE, not just as normatively useful but also as a kind analytical revelation. The analytical approach to questions such as "What is gender?" or "What is race?" should begin by considering the pragmatics of our talk when employing these terms. Are they effective tools or would other concepts serve a better purpose? Haslanger argues that the responsibility is ours to define them for our purposes.[344] Doing this kind of analysis can perhaps be one answer to the question Chakrabarty poses at the end of *Provincializing Europe,* on "how we might find a form of social thought that embraces analytic reason in pursuit of social justice".[345]

Haslanger argues that "races are (roughly) those groups that are situated hierarchically due to the interpretation of their physical features as evidence of their ancestral links to a particular geographical region. As with gender, the social relations that constitute race vary cross-culturally and transhistorically, but there are structural parallels across these different contexts". [346] She proposes that we should get rid of these "color" hierarchies. Thus, if Haslanger is right, when

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[341] Haslanger, *Resisting Reality*, pp. 3-4.
[342] Haslanger, "What good are our intuitions?", p. 110.
[343] Haslanger, *Resisting Reality*, p. 15.
[344] Haslanger, "Gender and Race: (What) Are they? (What) Do we want them to be?", pp. 33-34.
[345] Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, pp. 240-241.
[346] Haslanger, *Resisting Reality,* pp. 6-8.

history is concerned with social construction and study races or racialism, it is upholding these color hierarchies.

8.5 Conceptual Disputes

Central to the importance of CE is the idea of 'verbal disputes.' In the paper 'Verbal Disputes', philosopher David Chalmers characterizes this as disputes which are not necessarily about anything substantive or a substantive fact, but rather disputes where language does not hold common ground.[347] While he holds a fairly radical position in that he claims that most ontological questions such as on relationships between the ideational and material, structure and agency and holism and individualism are merely verbal disputes, the idea of verbal disputes is also applicable to use in history.[348]

In section 4.5 on decolonization and 4.6 on history as conceptualization, the concept of 'empire' was touched upon. It was stated that it was central to analyze 'empire' when trying to understand our colonial heritage and work with issues on the 'decolonization of history'. Leake argued that little discussion or reflection was devoted to understanding the processes of empire(s) and its ending, despite being responsible for the systems of inequality which are influencing institutions today.[349] In "Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", Jordheim and Neumann argue that 'empire' has returned to the grand stage of world politics and has become a self-referential concept.[350] They study a case from debates on American foreign policy in 2003, between British historian Niall Ferguson and American historian Robert Kagan, on the relatively simple, yet controversial claim: "The United States is, and should be, an empire".[351]

Jordheim and Neumann note that the issue in the debate is not primarily on American foreign politics, but rather about the historical and semantic contents of 'empire' as a concept. They refer to Ferguson's historical work as largely dedicated towards bringing forth advantages and positive sides of imperial reign and Kagan's inclusion to a tradition of American conservatives insisting on the United States as the home of freedom, and traditional enemy of imperial power. Ferguson attacks Kagan's insistence on using 'hegemon', stating that: "I am hegemon. You are a

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[347] Chalmers, "Verbal Disputes", pp. 3-6.
[348] Ibid., pp. 16-22, 45.
[349] Leake in Behm et al., «Decolonizing History", pp. 170-171.
[350] Jordheim and Neumann, «Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", pp. 169-170.
[351] Ibid., pp. 170.

power. He is an empire. We are nation-building. You are occupying. They are colonizing.", implying that the issue at hand indeed is a linguistic and conceptual one. Concepts such as 'empire', 'state', 'hegemon' are not merely analytical designations of political phenomena, they are constitutive parts of politics itself.[352] The debate is not concerned with features of American economic, military, cultural dominance in general, but what to call it.

Debates on empire were not new in 2003 and examining the semantic and conceptual processes preceding the debate between Ferguson and Kaplan is useful. In 1999, David Rieff argued that a new sort of imperialism was necessary to deal with humanitarian crises of our age, claiming that US foreign policy should adopt a 'liberal imperialism'.[353] Further, arguments have been arguing for the United States to be 'the New Rome' by discussing the historical roots of semantics on 'empire' and 'imperialism'.[354] Jordheim and Neumann argue that while debates like these may be about globalization, the post-Cold War world etc., they are in "a very central sense a debate about language".[355] While there has been a variety of suggestions of what to call the new hegemonic power of the US, the conceptual innovations can rarely account for the long political and social histories of concepts such as 'empire' and 'imperialism'. Thus, Jordheim and Neumann argue that while it is safer to invent a new term, the effect and impact is innumerably superior if one succeeded in appropriating and change an existing concept which ties into existing patterns of understanding.[356] For instance, the term 'hegemon' presupposes a state system in which states can be 'leading', while the term 'empire' could alter the view the world has on the United States forever, if applied.

This convergence between historical phenomena and linguistic representation was also the topic in the debate between Ferguson and Kagan. Ferguson attempted to clarify the debate by enumerating concepts from the foreign policy debate such as 'hegemon', 'empire' 'power', before concluding declaring that it was clearly a semantic question, stating that: "if it quacks like a duck, it probably is a duck. If it quacks like an empire, it probably is an empire". However, the debate continued and was sporadically interfered with the moderator, Radek Sikorski, reached for the dictionaries.[357] Point being, this exemplifies not just a political tug-of-war of what politics was or

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[352] Jordheim and Neumann, "Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", pp. 170.
[353] Rieff, « New Age of Liberal Imperialism", p. 10.
[354] Bender, «America: The New Roman Empire?", p. 81; Bacevich, "New Rome, New Jerusalem", pp. 50-58.
[355] Jordheim & Neumann, «Empire, imperialism and conceptual history", p. 171.
[356] Ibid., p. 172.
[357] Ibid., p. 174.

whether the system of states should remain, and the United States embrace the role of an imperial power. It also exemplifies how the semantic debates are largely concerned with the *should*. Thus, when studying historical accounts, we should be emphasizing analysis of what the author thought she was doing and what she intended to do.[358]

9. Conclusion

In drawing this thesis to an end, its time to take stock over what has been discussed. Section 2 outlined what *kind of activity* or which *kinds of issues* CE was addressing. This was illustrated in a brief presentation of four paradigmatic cases of CE, which discussed concepts such as 'man', 'woman', 'truth', and 'race'.

In section 3 I have argued that transnational history should be seen as a sort of umbrella perspective, focused on understanding historical and social process not only within customary, delineated spaces or vessels such as states, nations, regions etc. Then, following Spiegel, we saw that the changes of the various historiographical turns were responses to 'semiotic challenges' stemming from philosophical investigations of language and anthropological explorations of culture. The metaphor of society or, 'the really real' and language of Sewell was raised.

The short description of (new) social history in section 3.1 emphasized how social history was to a large extent interested in uncovering previously ignored categories and capture the complete sphere of ordinary people's lives. This was done by a review of possible changes to the methodology, specifically by appealing to a distinct theoretical and epistemic outlook focused on 'the social'. However, as Sewell argued the concept of 'the social' requires refurbishment, much because of its excessive ontological baggage. The cultural turn was seen as a reaction and rejection of the naïve objectivism of social history and emphasized the recognition that economic and social structures were themselves products of interpretive work by human actors.

Section 4 problematized the definition of transnational history as a "the interconnectedness of human history as a whole" and took transnational history's 'openness as a historical concept' to be a positive feature. It was noted that by focusing on circulation could avoid an overreliance on grand narrative and binary models of domination and resistance. Chakrabarty's argument that

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[358] E.g. Skinner, *Meaning and Context*, 1988)

political modernity necessarily is impossible to *think* of without invoking certain western categories and concepts is important. Connelly argued that the narrative technique was essential, and it was noted how the most energetic precursors to transnational history came from scholars writing on issues of class, race and gender.

Section 4.1 presented Sewell's critique on lack of reflection on social-theoretical concepts applied by historians and what he claimed was a sort of 'narrative-overconfidence'. This discussed Sewell's claim that interdisciplinary work and addressing conceptual questions at the adequate conceptual level was important and often neglected. In section 4.2 an attempt was made to argue for the entangled nature of transnational history and efforts do decolonize history. This saw 'race' as a possible key-problematic in efforts to decolonize history and concluded that 'decolonizing the syllabus' in terms of representation of authors was not enough. Though, this thesis argues for a decolonization of the syllabus in a more literal sense. Section 4.3. delineated the role of conceptualization in history and perceived conceptual history as a methodological tool for history, rather than a discipline in its own right.

Sections 5 through 7 addressed Kuukkanen's proposal in *A Postnarrativist Philosophy of Historiography*. The main argument here was that historiography should be seen as a performative practice, rather than a truth-functional one, and be evaluated as such. This addressed the persistent dilemma between absolutist historical realism and relativist postmodernism and offered an evaluative framework for historiography. This was done by first going through a short history of narrativism in sections 5.2 and 5.3 which emphasized the shift of focus towards histories as linguistic and rhetorical constructions. Subsequently, section 5.4 discussed the three overarching features of narrativism, namely: representationalism, constructivism and holism. The discussion on representationalism concluded that a central tenet of narrativism was that history should attempt to describe to re-present the past, as close to correspondence of historical reality as possible, even though complete correspondence is impossible. The discussion on constructivism showed that it is the necessary task of the historian is to construct the past and emphasized the subjective role of the historian due to the lack of 'translation rules.' The discussion on holism illustrated how historical works presented synthesizing views that provided stipulations that could by definition not be falsified as they provide the definitional criteria themselves.

Section 5.5 elaborated on the discussion between representationalism and non-representationalism. It argued that the 'aspect' theory of representation in history would inflate our

ontology and that representationalism, as such, is an unreasonable commitment in historical theory. This stance provides more ontological freedom in a sense, which is an important condition for the role of CE in historiography. This rejection of representationalism rests on the claim that historical works should be seen as argumentative interventions in historical discourse. Historical works themselves are complex and rational accounts of informal arguments, which combines both the narrative and descriptive form, which was argued in section 5.6. This was illustrated by the analysis of *Sleepwalkers* and *The Making of the English Working Class*, which emphasized the diversity of argumentation.

The following section discussed colligatory concepts in historiography and perceived them as a central feature of historiography. The idea is that they produce novel historiographical information by integrating information, which cannot be truth-functional but still be accountable for evaluation. Here it was argued that the criteria that Kuukkanen presents for evaluation of colligatory concepts should be expanded to account for normative effects as well, particularly for transnational history. The section concluded that there is no problem of 'what history really is', but rather that we can never know what it. Thus, it proposed that while there are no absolute and correct historical interpretation, historical works can still be seen as more or less cognitively justified.

The account of the tri-partite theory of justification Kuukkanen claims that historical knowledge is evaluated by a rhetorical, discursive and epistemic dimension. However, this thesis argues that Kuukkanen's appeal to 'rationality', as providing prospects for community transcendence in historiographical arguments is a mistake, as this becomes a universalistic claim opposing Kuukkanen's own thesis. Rather, this thesis argues that 'rationality' should not be seen as universally governing but should rather be taken much more pragmatically. The main claim being that historiography should be seen as a rational, argumentative, and performative practice, rather than truth-functional. Skinner's theory of speech acts argued that every serious utterance must always be viewed as arguments.

Section 8 argued for the importance of incorporating and working with CE in transnational history, based on the claim that historiography and transnational history is a performative practice. This was done by first presenting general arguments for CE before moving onto more specific claims for transnational history, especially concerning 'race' and 'gender'. It was argued that a substantial part of what Sewel proposes and does in *Logics of History* is in fact CE. This underlined

his work on the concepts of 'culture(s)' and 'the social'. Section 8.4 underlined the importance of social construction in historiography and discussed the prospects of analytic reasoning with social justice in mind. The final section discussed 'verbal disputes' and demonstrated how these both can cloud discourse. By referring to Skinner, this also argued how conceptual analysis can reveal underlying political and moral intents.

I will conclude this thesis by arguing that the statue of Edward Colston described in the introduction, now being at the bottom of Bristol harbor is in fact historically interesting. While we could learn something about Colston from the statue, we can learn a lot more from why it's in the lake now. Similarly, if we disregard our assumptions of our representational devices, as they too are inheritances from a time long-lost, we might be able to see the past in a new and fruitful way.

This thesis asked whether historiography should be seen and evaluated as a performative practice. By analyzing Kuukkanen's proposition of a 'postnarrativist' historiography, it concludes that historiography should be seen as rational, performative and argumentative interventions in an ongoing historical discourse. A plausible objection to this conclusion is that while it is often the case that historical writings are argumentative interventions, there are also historical writings which describe, evoke a sense of wonder or indignation, or try to move us to act. However, if we take Skinner's speech act theory seriously, this objection loses much of its strength.

In light of this conclusion, this thesis also concludes that transnational history would improve its performativity by interdisciplinary work by incorporating the philosophical methodology of CE. If transnational history is concerned with the interconnectedness of human history as a whole, by going beyond politically and geographically defined spaces, it should have the upmost skepticism of concepts that have been accumulating historical and political baggage within these spaces. In doing so, we might discover new analytic ways to gain knowledge of the past, while altering the present with social justice in mind.

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