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RHETORICAL AND TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONCEPTUAL CHANGE¹

Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck

My aim in this paper is to intervene in the contemporary discussion on conceptual change. As the readers may have already guessed, the two perspectives indicated in my title can be personalized as the ‘research programmes’ of Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck. The main point of the present paper is to use myself as a medium in provoking a debate between Koselleck and Skinner by sketching a perspective, which allow to treat their approaches as commensurable. I decided to present the paper as theses, accentuating their respective profiles. I am currently writing a major study on this topic in German, and I will present the more detailed quotations and more specific chains of argument there (some of them are also presented in Palonen 1997a and 1997b).

Conceptual Change as a Problem

1. To speak of ‘conceptual change’ is, of course, ambiguous. I am only concerned with the political aspects of concepts: for me the

words ‘political’ and ‘interesting’ are more or less synonymous. Furthermore, I will not engage in boring philosophical and linguistic debates concerning the concept of concept, but I subscribe to a rather pragmatic view, according to which concepts refer to a complex of their vocabularies, meanings and references to the world.

2. From my Weberian nominalistic perspective it is, in principle, easy to understand that concepts do change. A central thesis of Weber’s famous *Objektivität* article (1904) is his original combination of the Neo-Kantian thesis of the inexhaustibility of reality by any attempts at conceptualization with the Nietzschean thesis of the inevitability of such conceptualizations, as partial and partisan perspectives for understanding the phenomenon. The concepts cannot be extrapolated from ‘reality’ but are to be constructed and constantly revised by human agents in order to better understand the world (for Weber as a sort of precursor of the history of concepts cf. Palonen 1999a).

3. Why, then, do concepts change? It is easy to come up with a generalized answer: a concept is liable to change because it consists of different elements. Some such elements are: naming, signifying and referring to the ‘*Sache*’ in Koselleck’s linguistic triangle (e.g. Koselleck 1972), or locutions, illocutions and perlocutions in Skinner’s Austinian vocabulary (e.g. Skinner 1970). When the concepts are used, these elements are likely to change without necessarily needing to indicate specific grounds for this change. Each of the different conceptual elements do change in different manners and rhythms, and this means that the relations of these to other elements changes as well. There are no general criteria for appraising the mode or the significance of changes in the conceptual elements.

4. It is, of course, impossible to study all of the elements of constantly changing concepts. Any attempt to do so leads us to be captured by a global framework in which changes are related to some unchanging superior entity. This insight can also be seen in Koselleck’s recent distantiating of ontological misinterpretations of his *Sattelzeit* thesis (cf. Koselleck 1994, 1996, 1998). The Weberian alternative accentuates, by *einseitige Steigerung* (Weber 1904, 194-195), a definite interpretative profile for understanding conceptual changes.

5. The next question is: what, then, does actually change when concepts change? It is my point in this paper to claim that there are

two separate instances, to which change can be related, language and time. The problem of conceptual change can, therefore, be approached from opposite directions, each of which illuminate the change itself in somewhat of a different light.

6. Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck are both adversaries of Hegelian 'totalitarian' thinking and proponents of a perspectivistic view (cf. Skinner 1974b, Koselleck 1980b). By simplifying their approaches to represent two ideal types, my thesis is that Skinner advocates a linguistic, more specifically: a rhetorical, view on conceptual change, while Koselleck approaches the problematic in terms of a 'theory of historical times'. Or to put it negatively: time for Skinner is mainly a background for the changing rhetoric of concepts while for Koselleck rhetoric is only an instrument for expressing temporal changes in the concepts. These distinctions remain relative and in many cases difficult to make at all, but I think their perspectives deserve a closer look as ideal typical alternatives.

7. I think it makes no sense to rank the two perspectives in general terms. The dual character of conceptual change makes both perspectives highly legitimate as profiles of interpretation. Both perspectives are equally indispensable for the practice of a historian of political concepts, and we should have both at our disposal. However, it is hard, if not impossible, to use both of them simultaneously. Which of them is to be preferred or how they are to be combined in practice, depends on the problematic and the materials analyzed.

8. It is also important to emphasize the common elements in Skinner's and Koselleck's approaches. Max Weber wrote almost 100 years ago: "Stets wiederholen sich Versuche, den 'eigentlichen', 'wahren' Sinn historischer Begriffe festzustellen, und niemals gelangen sie zu Ende" (Weber 1904, 206). Despite this clear insight, Skinner and Koselleck remain among the few dissidents in the contemporary academic world in that they consider the changing of political concepts not only inevitable, but also important, omnipresent and, in principle, not something to be regretted. For them conceptual change is neither a by-product of 'evolution', which will one day reach its final stage, nor a reflection of 'deeper forces'. Both of them are also equally removed from what I would like to call an intellectual conspiracy theory of explaining conceptual change in terms of certain 'influences'.

9. Both Koselleck and Skinner thus insist on the ‘reality’ and significance of conceptual change in political and social life. Both understand the historical and political character of the use of concepts as expressions of the contingency in the use of concepts. To Koselleck and Skinner, this contingency is not at all superficial, secondary or residual, but is rather a crucial heuristic key for the intelligibility of the use of concepts in general. This reappraisal of contingency, beginning with Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Weber, is really an intellectual revolution of the twentieth century. Skinner’s and Koselleck’s analyses of conceptual change can be read as contributions to this revolution by extending contingency to concepts, to a category which is still presented in textbooks as one of the strongholds in the fight against change, history and politics.

10. A less obvious common element between Koselleck and Skinner can be detected in their style of writing political theory in the form of historical case studies, which link conceptual problems to the practice of political struggles and controversies. Unlike the mainstream of normative theorists and philosophers, Skinner and Koselleck oppose the elimination, minimization, functionalization or normalization of politics. They both understand the activities of politicking and politicization as inherent aspects of the understanding of conceptual changes.

There are, thus, good reasons for considering Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck as closely related theorists. My strategy of discussion of their converse ideal types departs from the presentation of each perspective with a few quotations or paraphrases from each author’s programmatic texts. I mainly present well-known formulas, but which I think are worth renewed discussion. I have found it easier to break with the generational order and start with Skinner’s work and then switch to Koselleck’s.

The Rhetorical Perspective: Quentin Skinner

11. The acceptance of a certain ambiguity and the corresponding historicity of concepts was already detectable in the ancient rhetoric and sophistics (cf. Cassin 1995). Historical approaches to language

in the 20th century can be, in Saussurean terms, characterized by their common insistence of the priority of *la parole* over *la langue*. Hermeneutics, speech act theory and the new rhetoric are the most prominent variants of such approaches. Within this general horizon of discussion, Quentin Skinner has advocated a perspective of 'linguistic action', an expression first used by him in his article *Performing linguistic actions* (Skinner 1971) and explicated in relative detail in his recent 'methological' contributions (Skinner 1996a, 1996b, 7-8). He understands that "... any text is always primarily an intervention in an argument, and the most interesting question is always to ask about the character of the intervention" (Skinner 1997, 71-72).

12. In his early work Quentin Skinner was not a theorist of conceptual change – this topic only begins to appear in his work in the early seventies – but he had already emphasized differences, distinctions and disjunctions between concepts from different contexts. Following Collingwood he was always convinced that the past was "foreign country", as he put it later (Skinner 1971, 137), and used this effectively as an instrument of critique (cf. already Skinner 1964). The contextual and conventional element has enabled him to mark the horizon of commonplaces, a background of linguistic actions. This also explicitly concerns the conventional use of concepts, as Skinner writes in this critical passage: "The historians of our past still tend, perhaps in consequence, to be much less aware than the social anthropologists have become about the danger that an application of familiar concepts and conventions may actually be self-defeating if the project is the understanding of the past" (Skinner 1971, 136). The point of emphasizing historical differences in conceptual conventions can be seen as an attempt to clarify unintended aspects of contingency in the use of concepts.

13. For Skinner, understanding conceptual changes in terms of linguistic actions meant, above all, accepting the famous Wittgensteinian formula: "the meaning of the idea must *be* its uses to refer in various ways" (Skinner 1969, 55). As a corollary of this thesis, he wrote against A.O. Lovejoy: "there is no history of the idea to be written, but only a history necessarily focused on the various agents who used the idea, and their varying situations and intentions in using it" (op. cit., 56). This polemic is not directed against the history of concepts, but it claims, rather, that concepts should not be

mixed with ideas in the Lovejoyan sense. The point of studying conceptual changes should be analyzed in terms of linguistic actions concerning the various and changing uses of the concepts. As Skinner writes, in another critique of Lovejoy: “in focusing on ideas rather than their uses in argument, it has seemed insensitive to the strongly contrasting ways in which a given concept can be put to work by different writers in different historical periods” (Skinner 1985, 50). The perspective of linguistic action was also obvious, when in his *Reply* to the critics he writes: “I remain unrepentant in my belief that there can be no histories of concepts as such; there can only be histories of their uses in argument” (Skinner 1988, 283). As Skinner’s own studies on the concepts of state (1989) and liberty (e.g. 1998) demonstrate, this thesis is not at all directed against the kind of histories of single concepts which are practised in the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, even if they are free from the lexicon conventions which regulate the articles in the GG.

14. Another perspective of Skinner’s historical analyses of ‘linguistic action’ was, of course, the Austinian speech acts. The use of a concept in an argument is an illocutionary act, and the art of using the concept serves as a ‘move’ of the agent to mark a certain ‘point’ (cf. Skinner 1973, 1974c, 1988). Skinner is above all interested in illocutionary acts, and in a sense he continues the Weberian programme of the desubstantiation of concepts by means of the speech act theory. For Skinner, concepts are not stable entities, they can be changed at any moment, and they exist only ‘in movement’, that is, when they are used as moves, as political instruments of action. From this perspective we can also better understand his analyses of conceptual changes in terms of legitimation, presented with the two paradigms of the apologist (Skinner 1973) and the innovative ideologist (Skinner 1974a,c).

15. The legitimacy perspective is closely linked to Skinner’s claim, adopted from John Searle, of the indirectly normative character of key political concepts, such as democracy in the contemporary world (cf. Skinner 1973). “The special characteristic of this range of descriptive terms is thus that they ... are standardly used, that is, to perform such as as commending... or else of condemning ... the action or state of affairs which they are also employed to describe” (Skinner 1974c, 293). Skinner views the problems of legitimating

conceptual change as threefold, i.e. as concerning “the nature and range of the criteria”, “the range of reference” and “the range of attitudes” towards the concept (Skinner 1979, 209-210). In this perspective, all concepts are treated as potentially normative and the problematic of conceptual change is thus diversified according to the levels referring to the specific strategies and tactics of the agents, used in order to legitimize ideological change or apology.

16. The legitimacy and normative dimensions of conceptual change are indications of the primacy of political action over theorizing on it. “For I take it that the political life itself sets the main problems for the political theorist, causing a certain range of issues to appear problematic, and a corresponding range of question to become the leading subjects of debate” (Skinner 1978 I, xi). What characterizes Skinner’s *Foundations*, including his analysis of the aspects of the formation of the concept of the state (Skinner 1978 II, 349-378, cf. Skinner 1989), is the possibility of breaking down closed ideological blocks and replacing them with conceptual combinations of diverse intellectual origins. Thus, Skinner does not devalue the concepts, but rather his point is to make their political significance explicit: concepts serve as strategic instruments for political action. They shape the horizon of the political possibilities in the situation, within which the agent has to form a policy, but can also be used in critical situations as a means of politicization, of revising the horizon of the possible and by this means revising the range of policy choices. One of Skinner’s most important debts to Weberian nominalism is thus his refusal to functionalize political action in any supra-political instances, including concepts.

17. Since the *Foundations*, the *ars rhetorica* has been a thematic object for Skinner. His *Reason and Rhetoric in the Philosophy of Hobbes* is to be understood as much as a study rehabilitating the rhetorical dimension in the Renaissance culture as a study of Hobbes as an author who contributed to the devaluation of this tradition by using its own instruments. Skinner’s perspective on the use of language as an instrument of politicking, combining the Weberian approach with the speech act theory, can, however, be counted as rhetorical in a wider sense. Linguistic action is just another name for discussing conceptual changes from a rhetorical perspective. The rhetorical principle of arguing in *utramque partem* (Skinner 1996b, e.g. 97-99) ac-

centuates the political contestability of concepts.

18. Skinner's favourite instrument for analyzing conceptual changes in the rhetorical redescription, as it is paradigmatically expressed in the scheme of classical rhetoric called *paradiastole* (Cf. Skinner 1991, 1996b). Skinner's explicit interest is to analyze the attitudes towards these rhetorical redescriptions in the Roman and Renaissance rhetoric. While Hobbes was a fierce opponent of this scheme, considering it a as a paradigm for rhetoric's liability to ambiguity and fluidity of concepts, others, like Machiavelli, were ready to utilize it in the acceptance of tacit conceptual modifications and revisions. The rhetorical redescription thus offers Skinner a historical perspective for the interpretation of normative and legitimacy problems of conceptual change from the perspective of linguistic action (cf. esp. Skinner 1974c, 1979). The particular point of the schema is to enable a tacit re-evaluation of the concepts. Paraphrasing Quintilian Skinner writes: "We simply replace whatever descriptions our opponents may have offered with a different set of terms that serve to describe the action with no less plausibility, but place it at the same time in a different moral light. We seek to persuade our hearers to accept our redescription, and hence to adopt a new emotional attitude towards the action involved – either one of increased sympathy or acquired moral outrage" (Skinner 1996b, 145). This *paradiastolic* redescription may concern the naming, meaning or significance of the concepts, and the normative dimension may consist either of devaluating virtues or of revaluating vices.

19. In his articles from the seventies Skinner still works with the assumption of a standard meaning, in other words with a kind of consensual view on the use of concepts, while changing them requires a special legitimation. The turn towards a rhetorical perspective has made the assumption of a standard meaning obsolete to Skinner: all attempts to restrict the use of a concept to a specific meaning are contestable, and the rhetorical redescription presents a perspective for moves, tactics and strategies to modify the normative dimension of concepts. Instead of a standard core, understood as extendable in various directions, the concepts have inherent relations to their 'neighbours', although with different normative connotations, and linguistic actions with concepts try to modify its normative component in relation to its 'neighbourhood'.

20. In the ancient world, the use of *paradiastole* remained within a range of limited, pre-given alternatives. Renaissance authors, such as Machiavelli, who were already more radical, used it “as a means of depreciating and undermining the so-called ‘princely virtues’ of clemency and liberality” (Skinner 1996b, 170). The Nietzschean *Umwertung der Werte* can be interpreted as a modern paradigm for changing the paradiastolic reappraisal of concepts. In a sense, to insist à la Skinner on the mutability of the concepts and on the contestable and political character of value choices, signifies that this *Umwertung der Werte* refers also to the special *Wertbeziehung* of the study of conceptual changes in general.

The Temporal Perspective: Reinhart Koselleck

21. Reinhart Koselleck became a historian of concepts during his participation in the modest lexicon project, which then became the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. His *Begriffsgeschichte* was initially a program for composing this lexicon: “Die Auflösung der alten, die Entstehung der modernen Welt soll in der Geschichte ihrer begrifflichen Erfassung untersucht werden” (Koselleck 1967c, 81). Originally this programme did not have any inherent relation to time. However, in his *Habilitation* thesis on Prussia, Koselleck, probably inspired by the presence of the problematic in his primary sources, already treats time as a special topic and speaks of “verschiedene Schichten geschichtlicher Zeit” (Koselleck 1967b, 14). A “theory of historical times” soon became the specific interpretative perspective, which gives an original profile of the Koselleckian programme for understanding conceptual changes.

22. The new collective noun *Geschichte*, formed between 1760 and 1780, made possible by the new experience of a specific historical time, and which also temporalized the concept of history, meant that “eine Verzeitlichung der Geschichte, die sich seitdem von der natural gebunden Chronologie trennt” (Koselleck 1967a, 207). Koselleck also sees a theory of historical times as the instance which gives to historiography its object: “Nur die temporalen, und d.h. die den Ereigniszusammenhängen innewohnenden, jedenfalls an ihnen auf-

zeigbaren Strukturen können den historischen Erfahrungsraum adäquat als eigenen Forschungsbereich gliedern” (Koselleck 1971, 16). The temporalization of concepts is a special case of the temporalization of history.

23. The temporalization of concepts means a shift in the very paradigm of concepts from space-oriented concepts or “topology” to the new ‘concepts of movement’, to the programme, “Begriffe der politischen Sprache nunmehr auf ihren potentiellen Bewegungscharakter hin zu lesen und zu befragen” (Koselleck 1972c, 14, cf. 1976, 31-32). This shift marks a definite epochal shift in history. For this period he uses the famous figure of a *Sattelzeit*, originally introduced in this passage: “Der heuristische Vorgriff führt sozusagen eine ‘Sattel-Zeit’ ein, in der sich die Herkunft unserer Präsenz wandelt”(Koselleck 1967c, 82).

24. How, then, are we to understand how concepts become temporalized? The obvious point is to insist that they have a new relation to time: time is not only the lapse of the *chronos*-time, but also an element in the use of concepts. Koselleck speaks of a new “Sinnbezirk der Zeit” (Koselleck 1977, 336). In the *Neuzeit* article he also insists on the opening of a new temporal playground besides the spatial one. This change makes a historical force of time itself: “Die Zeit bleibt nicht nur die Form, in der sich alle Geschichten abspielen, sie gewinnt selber eine geschichtliche Qualität. Nicht mehr in der Zeit, sondern durch die Zeit vollzieht sich dann die Geschichte. Die Zeit wird dynamisiert zu einer Kraft der Geschichte selber” (op.cit., 321).

25. Temporalization concerns not only the meaning (*Bedeutung*) of the concepts but often also their linguistic form – the “isms” are Koselleck’s paradigm of new vocabularies referring to temporalization (cf. op.cit., 340). Temporalization, furthermore, allows the use of concepts not only as indicators but also as ‘factors’ in history: “Political and social concepts are becoming the navigational instruments of historical movement” (Koselleck 1983, 124). Koselleck also refers to Kant’s requirement of writing chronology according to history and not vice versa (1971, 15) and quotes Herder’s dictum “Eigentlich hat jedes veränderliche Ding das Maß seiner Zeit in sich” (1977, 323). Thus, he makes temporalities dependent on the object studied which also requires that we distinguish between the temporal specificities of conceptual changes.

26. In the temporal playground Koselleck distinguishes between different layers according to the variable speed of change, “einen zeitlichen Veränderungskoeffizienten” Koselleck 1977, 339) or “Dauer, Verzögerung oder Beschleunigung” as modalities of change (Koselleck 1972c, 17). Koselleck uses a variety of temporal distinctions in structuring the aspects and dimensions of the temporal playground, and all this also enables the agents ‘to play with time’, not in the trivial sense of football reporters but by using a rich variety of temporal operations. In the retrospective preface of 1975, Koselleck writes on his *Preußen* book: “Die theoretische Leitfrage zielt immer wieder auf zeitliche Verlaufsweisen und auf zeitliche Differenzierungen, die sich aus den wechselseitigen Beziehungen der verschiedenen Handlungseinheiten und Sachverhalte ergeben” (Koselleck 1975b, 5). All of these kinds of distinctions could, expressed in Skinnerian terms, be used as moves in introducing conceptual changes.

27. By what means, then, can the form of concepts be altered in their relation to time? It seems that Koselleck uses the concept of tempo-ralization in three related but still different senses: metaphorization, denaturalization and reorientation of the temporal experience. But for the temporalization of the concepts the metaphorization of the spatial meanings of the concepts appears as the primary operation. Characteristic of the historical disciplines is, “daß sie alle ihre Kategorien dem natürlichen und räumlichen Bereich entlehnen muß. Wir leben von einer naturalen Metaphorik und können dieser Metaphorik gar nicht entrinnen, ... , weil die Zeit nicht anschaulich ist.” (Koselleck 1972c, 15; cf. Koselleck 1971, 15). He does not claim that time itself has been made visible, but, rather, emphasizes a change in the originally spatially used concepts, in which their metaphorical and temporal sense has become dominant. Most of the concepts to which we now assign a temporal connotation originally had spatial meanings, which have been reinterpreted temporally: “Bewegung enthält den Weg, der zurückgelegt wird, so der Fortschritt das räumliche Fortschreiten von hier nach dort, im Verfall oder Niedergang wird die Strecke nach unten angezeigt, aber auch Revolution hat seine anfänglich räumliche Bedeutung im kreisenden Umlauf der Sterne” (Koselleck 1980a, 216). In this

sense the temporalization of the concepts is a special case of the desubstantiation of concepts.

28. Concepts are thus, according to Koselleck, temporalized by metaphorization, because no 'ordinary' or 'direct' way to express their temporality and historicity exists. Conceptual change also concerns the relations between metaphors and temporalities. When there is a temporalizing shift in meaning, the spatial relations expressed by concepts can also be understood as metaphorical, alluding to a relative freezing of temporality. In post-*Sattelzeit* political language we have, so to speak, a choice between spatial and temporal metaphors, which refer to differences in the readiness to accept the continuous mutability of concepts. Temporalization also marks a desubstantiation of historical agents and allows for the understanding of changes in the constellations of agency: "Stellt man die Temporalfrage an derartige Subjekte, so lösen sie sich sehr schnell auf, und es stellt sich heraus, daß der intersubjektive Zusammenhang das eigentliche Thema historischer Forschung ist. Ein solcher Zusammenhang läßt sich aber nur temporal beschreiben. Die Entsubstanzialisierung unserer Kategorien führt zu einer Verzeitlichung ihrer Bedeutung" (Koselleck 1972c, 18).

29. A temporalization of human experience can also be understood as an extension of the present time. This is perhaps the most important aspect of the famous Koselleckian distinction between the space of experience and the horizon of expectation, as meta-historical "Erkenntniskategorien, die die Möglichkeit einer Geschichte begründen helfen" (Koselleck 1976, 14). The decisive point is that both experience and expectation refer to the present: "Erfahrung ist die gegenwärtige Vergangenheit" and "auch Erwartung vollzieht sich im Heute, ist vergegenwärtigte Zukunft" (op.cit., 17). The historical thesis of temporalization of concepts marks a change in the relationship of this conceptual distinction. For a theory of political times Koselleck's perhaps most interesting idea (adopted from Luhmann) is, however, to give all temporal dimensions their own present, past and future (Koselleck 1988, 19). This distinction classifies the playground of historical time in a way in which it could be used to analyze conceptual changes. It divides the experience of temporalization into different modalities and also allows us to distinguish between types of shifting tempo-

ral horizons as well as between temporal intensities in the historicity.

30. Since the early seventies Koselleck has attempted to relativize temporalization by means of a historical anthropology, by which he tries to detect meta-historical criteria of *Geschichtlichkeit* (Koselleck 1971, 14). As early as 1972 he suggests a list of conceptual pairs: "Ich erinnere an 'Herr und Knecht', 'Freund und Feind' oder an die Heteronomie der Zwecke oder an die wechselnden Relationen von Zeit und Raum im Hinblick auf Handlungseinheiten und Machtpotential oder an das anthropologische Substrat des politischen Generationswechsels. ... sie verweisen auf jene Endlichkeit, die Geschichte sozusagen in Bewegung versetzt, ohne daß der Inhalt oder die Richtung solcher Bewegungen damit irgendwie erfaßt wurde" (Koselleck 1972c, 11). Through an anthropological interpretation of Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* Koselleck further thematizes this dimension (Koselleck 1987). He complements the minimal temporal distinction between before and after by distinguishing between birth and death as well as through the spatial figures of inside and outside or above and below (Koselleck 1989, 658-660). The presentation of these categories as diametrically opposed pairs as well as the possibility of the historization of these categories are indicative of their political potentials. Still, these categories are presented by Koselleck as pre-linguistic and based on 'biological foundations' (cf. also Koselleck 1995).

It is impossible to say, based on my aforementioned explications, to what extent the two perspectives of conceptual change are incompatible, incommensurable, complementary, combinable or only simultaneously inapplicable in relation to each other. My own imagined objections between the two perspectives are discussed in the horizon of this general problematic.

Objections to Skinner

31. My obvious Koselleckian question to Skinner is, why does he not accentuate the temporal dimensions of linguistic action? Are the conceptual problems of ideological innovation and apology, for ex-

ample, not inherently questions of time, of 'timing' the moves or composing a strategic 'rhythm' of successive moves? Or, could we not construct different temporal dimensions, different relations to the present, past and future, as distinguishing criteria for the appraisal of, for example, conceptions of liberty? Or could we add this aspect of the historical analysis to the struggle between their proponents? The ancient Sophist and rhetorical tradition was, as emphasized by Barbara Cassin (1995), highly conscious of the play with time. Might we expect that Skinner's transition from speech act theory to the study of rhetoric redescrptions would also mean a new interest in the politics of time and in the temporality of conceptual changes?

32. What are Skinner's reasons for de-emphasizing these temporal questions? I want to suggest just one tacit presupposition: he speaks of conceptual changes in the language of spatial metaphors, with the figure of 'range' as the paradigm. The concept thus has a certain extension, and linguistic action is analyzed in terms of the various changing aspects of this extension. It is not the qualities of a concept that are moved by actions, but rather its 'range' in relation to its 'standard meaning' or, in Skinner's recent work, to its 'neighbourhood'. Of course, this can be understood metaphorically as something which can also be applied to temporal playgrounds, and surely Skinner does this by accentuating breaks with conventions, for example, in the mixtures of historically relevant vocabularies among the early Protestants. The use of spatial metaphors seems to refer to his distinction between linguistic action and meaning: the moves and their points concern only the (illocutionary) action, to which the (perlocutionary) questions of meaning remain subordinated. The relative neglect of the possibility of including time into the very meaning of a concept, for example by using verbalizations, might be a consequence of this distinction. By verbalizing concepts we can, however, radicalize the Weberian nominalistic programme, for example by understanding politics as a correlate of the two movements of politicization and politicking.

33. For Skinner the temporality of a linguistic action is concentrated in moves which aim at marking specific points. From the Koselleckian perspective this temporal paradigm appears to be quite 'pointillist': it turns the history of conceptual changes a history of

sudden and successive *kairos* situations, which are more or less successfully captured and used by political agents. The slower, long and medium term history of the *chronos* time is much less accentuated. I myself am sympathetic to this pointillist view, as one which accentuates the moment of political action and regards the discourse on processes, functions etc. with suspicion. For Skinner, the counter-concept to 'point' is convention, a concept which he seems to leave either as existing or as broken. However, the temporal problems of conventionalization and deconventionalization would be politically highly interesting. A study of rhetorical redescriptions in terms of the styles and rhythms of would be an interesting step into a temporalizing direction.

Objections to Koselleck

34. My first Skinnerian objection to Koselleck's view on conceptual change is typical of an analytic philosopher. Koselleck's ideas on theories of historical times and the temporalization of concepts are highly suggestive, but they remain sketchy and require more specific distinctions between the different aspects of time. I would have expected, in particular, a discussion on the temporalization of temporalization. It seems that temporalization is something something obtained by step by step radicalization, as the acceleration thesis clearly formulates (cf. e.g. Koselleck 1985). But can we speak of a primary and several secondary steps in temporalization? What is the specific relation of the temporalization of concepts to the temporalization of history in general? Is there just one form of temporalization of concepts or does the plurality of historical times also refer to plural forms of the temporalization of concepts (for Weber's temporalization of concepts cf. Palonen 1999b)? Could we, in particular, look for new forms of temporal experience now, in a time in which the old paradigm, progress, has lost its plausibility?

35. A further objection concerns the formulations of time as a force in history, as well as the idea of different phenomena as having 'a time of their own'. Are not such expressions remnants of a philosophy of history, rightly criticized by Koselleck in its Enlighten-

ment and Hegelian varieties? Does metaphorization not lead to a resubstantialization of concepts, when 'time' or 'times' begin to appear as historical agents, superior to human agents? I think the processualist view on history and the trans-individual structures of temporality and of conceptual change tend to lean towards a questionable objectification of time. The idea of playing with time as the moment of action, rather, is the point which demands closer consideration.

36. My gravest doubts about Koselleck's discussion of historical times concern his search for historical anthropology. He looks for the borderlines between natural and historical times, but often in a manner which also comes close to a naturalization of historical times. The Gadamer essay (Koselleck 1987), with its attempts to detect anthropological structures which are 'beyond' history, looks doubtful – as if Koselleck himself had become afraid of the consequences of temporalization. He tries to formulate spatial presuppositions, which cannot themselves be temporalized by metaphorization. Koselleck's examples of pre-linguistic limit-situations are interesting, if considered heuristically, not as 'foundations' but as deep ideological structures which are worth questioning, historializing and politicizing. Would not for example a conscious blurring of the inside/outside or above/below distinctions be an interesting political move? Temporalization-by-metaphorization could be interpreted as a rhetorical view in which all such distinctions and classifications are human constructions, which must be invented and legitimated.

Chances of Complementarity

37. Comparing these mutual objections, I think that it becomes possible to make the Skinnerian and Koselleckian approaches complementary to each other. This could be done either by including temporal elements of the Koselleckian inspiration to the Skinnerian programme of linguistic action, or by a consequent nominalization of the Koselleckian programme into one of temporal action. Metaphorization can be regarded as a special sort of rhetorical strategy for temporalization, while the normative re-evaluation of concepts can also be regarded as a special case of temporalization.

38. The point is, however, that even by making these moves we cannot include the two programmes into a more comprehensive whole. On the contrary, the problems always differ depending on the angle from which conceptual change is approached, and the singularity of the profiles can be strengthened by incorporating elements from the opposite perspective.

Notes

- ¹ A slightly revised version of a paper read, at the presence of Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck, at the Planning Meeting "Conceptual Changes in European Political Cultures". The Finnish Institute in London, 18-20 June 1998.

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