

contributions

number 1, volume 1 :: march, 2005

# contributions

to the history  
of concepts

number 1, volume 1 :: march, 2005

IUPERJ



The History of Political  
and Social Concepts Group

# contributions

to the history  
of concepts

ISSN :: 1807-9326

Contributions to the History of Concepts is a biannual publication of the Grupo de Pesquisa em História dos Conceitos e Teoria Política e Social of the Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ) — a graduate institute of Universidade Candido Mendes (UCAM) — and of the History of Political and Social Concepts Group (HPSCG). Its goal is to publish methodological and substantive research on the history of concepts and related disciplines, such as the history of political thought, intellectual history, and political theory, and to contribute to the dissemination of information about scholarship, publications, and events in these fields of inquiry.

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## THE EXPANDING HORIZONS OF CONCEPTUAL HISTORY: A NEW FORUM

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Not long ago, conceptual history was an approach restricted to German-speaking academic circles and to very few scholars worldwide. This situation has markedly changed in the last two decades, primarily of the appearance of research projects for studying concepts in historical perspective in other European countries — such as Finland, Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Italy, France, and Spain — and because of Melvin Richter's endeavor in promoting an encounter between German *Begriffsgeschichte* and English speaking approaches for the historical study of political languages, discourses, and rhetoric. The History of Political and Social Concepts Group (HPSCG) is among the most significant results of these developments.

The HPSCG was created in 1998, during a conference organized by the Finnish Institute in London subtitled: "A Planning Meeting for Cooperation between Scholars and Research Projects." In the words of one of its organizers, the goal of that meeting was "to establish a forum where the many different approaches to conceptual history" could be "discussed, intellectual and organizational experiences shared, and comparative studies prepared."

The participants at that conference agreed to form an international society that would meet regularly, publish a newsletter, and establish an e-mail network. Since the foundation of the HPSCG, meetings have been organized annually, each time in a different country, and in collaboration with local scholars and institutions. The newsletter was edited from 1998 to 2001 by Karin Tilmans, Wyger Velema, and Freya Sierhuis at the Huizinga Instituut of the University of Amsterdam; then, from 2001 to 2003, Henrik Stenius, Kari Saastamoinen, Suvi Ervamaa, and Jani Marjanen at the Renvall Institute for Area and Cultural Studies at the University of Helsinki, were responsible for editorship. Meanwhile, the HPSCG kept enlarging its mailing list of group members and other scholars interested in conceptual history and related disciplines. The newsletter published articles and essays on

methodological and substantive research and also disseminated news about conferences, new research projects and works in progress, publications, and other related matters.

The second international conference was held at the École Normale Supérieure de Saint-Cloud, Paris, 1999. In the following years meetings were held in Copenhagen (2000), Tampere (2001), Amsterdam (2002), Bilbao (2003), and finally in Rio de Janeiro (2004). As HPSCG's membership increased, its goals expanded. Members also organized smaller events and conferences in several European countries and in the United States. This process led also to disciplinary encounters between the methodological approach of German *Begriffsgeschichte* and other ways of doing historical research such as metaphorology, the theory of iconology, historical semantics, the history of ideas, etc.

At the last of HPSCG's executive committee meeting, held during the VII International Conference in Rio de Janeiro, the members decided that it was time to launch a publication with more ambitious goals. The name, chosen after much discussion, was *Contributions to the History of Concepts*. It is indeed a risk to name a periodical publication after a discipline. Given that the subject matter and linguistic focus of conceptual history is common to a number of other historical disciplines, that choice might suggest excessive disciplinary orthodoxy and a bit of narrow-mindedness. However, nothing could be farther from the truth. *Contributions* is animated by the spirit of conversation among disciplines and of methodological encounters and exchanges. Conceptual history is certainly *Contributions'* central focus but not its only one. Furthermore, the international profile of the HPSCG and of *Contributions'* Editorial Board calls for a high level of tolerance and openness to the diverse scholarly traditions of different national contexts.

For now *Contributions* will only publish texts in English. This *lingua franca* of today's world has been a major instrument in the international reception of *Begriffsgeschichte*, allowing for the rapid circulation of texts, and the successful organization of international events where scholars from different national contexts can easily exchange works, ideas, and contacts, and for daily electronic communication. Nonetheless, this immense benefit does not come without adverse consequences, particularly when the subjects discussed are not methodological but substantive historical cases. We should be the last ones to deny the linguistic embeddedness of concepts, their dependence on the entire linguistic context in which they operate. Thus, translating a study

of a particular concept from another language into English entails severe limitations for understanding what is being said and, of course, what is not being said. The ideal solution to this conundrum would be to accept and publish articles in several languages. Although as of now *Contributions* does not have the resources to implement this policy, this is a goal that will be worthwhile pursuing in the future.

In continuing with the tradition established by the *Newsletter*, *Contributions* publishes articles and book reviews on subjects that are pertinent to conceptual history and neighboring fields of inquiry (history of political and social thought, intellectual history, etc). The new publication also allows for authors to submit short summations of their recently published books. In addition, it has sections on news and announcements, annotated bibliographical references and lists, and conference reports.

*Contributions* will be issued biannually both in printed-paper and in PDF format. The electronic format enables readers to print the issue using regular computer printers and thus be easily assembled into a brochure format. Alternatively, the PDF file can also be read on the computer screen. The idea behind this two-fold strategy is to promote wider circulation, a necessary measure given the international profile of the publication. Paper copies will be mailed to members of the HPSG, members of *Contributions'* editorial board, authors, and subscribers.

The support of the Instituto Universitário de Pesquisas do Rio de Janeiro (IUPERJ) is crucial to the success of this enterprise. IUPERJ provides the whole infrastructure for editing *Contributions*. Without its sponsorship and the incentive and collaboration of its Board of Directors, faculty, and staff this publication would not be possible.

*Contributions* is specially indebted to the careful and competent work of Thiago Gomide Nasser and Katarina Wolter.

Finally, we would like to thank the members of the HPSCG, specially Melvin Richter, Kari Palonen, and Martin Burke, who have been extremely supportive of this whole enterprise from its inception.

We hope you have an enjoyable reading.

João Feres Júnior  
Sandro Chignola



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**MORE THAN A TWO-WAY TRAFFIC:  
ANALYZING, TRANSLATING, AND  
COMPARING POLITICAL CONCEPTS  
FROM OTHER CULTURES<sup>1</sup>**

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Melvin Richter

The City University of New York, USA

Let me begin by sketching what I propose to do in this talk and explaining my title. When I decided to come to this meeting, it was because I hoped to learn more than the little I know about patterns of thought, past and present, in this part of the world. Rather to my surprise, I was then asked to open the discussion, thus creating the embarrassing probability that I would talk nonsense about subjects I could not claim to know. It then occurred to me that possibly I might contribute to the conference by discussing the circulation of concepts between Europe and another part of the world, on which I once worked. My first published paper was on *min ch'uan* (the power of the people), a concept crucial to Sun Yat Sen's political thought.<sup>2</sup> I began my graduate work in Asian studies, with particular reference to China, where I had once served after learning Mandarin. More to the point, in my recent work on the theory and practice of the translation of political and social concepts, I have discovered that Asian studies have been the site of many theoretical and historical studies of translation as a complex act of intercultural communication.

Although it may seem somewhat perverse to begin a conference on transatlantic dialogues by discussing those better described as transpacific, I shall argue that the issues, methodological and substantive, raised in this body of work in Asian studies, are equally applicable to the subject of this meeting, and add a needed comparative dimension. Perhaps the greatest single difference from South and Central America is that, unlike Asian conceptual transfers from European to non-European languages, New World borrowings and adaptations came from Spanish and Portuguese as used in the metropolitan power to their colonies, and to their later status as independent nations.

A word about my title: many, perhaps most, studies of the circulation of concepts between Europe and the once New World have focused on one side

of the exchange, emphasizing European perceptions and conceptualizations. One criticism of this approach is that it denies a voice to all those peoples and cultures perceived and evaluated by Europeans. Can this be remedied? Presumably this might and has been done by studies not only of how non-European societies understood themselves but also of their views of Europeans at home and abroad. These can be reconstructed from individual diaries, travel books, and literary accounts, as well as reports of governmental commissions such as those sent to Europe and North America by China and Japan in the nineteenth century. By using such sources, it becomes possible to chart the circulation of concepts in terms of a two, rather than a one-way traffic. But is this enough?

When we discuss the circulation of concepts, we are apt to do so in terms of whether the transfer from a European text to the translation in another language or setting is an accurate transcription of the original. When I wrote on Sun Yat Sen's concept of people's power, I made just this mistake by concluding that Sun had produced a defective version of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's original formulation in the *Contrat Social*. An alternative mode of proceeding, and one which applies equally well to transatlantic conceptual transfers, has been provided by Joachim Kurtz, an editor of the important studies aptly called *New Terms for New Ideas. Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China*. Kurtz writes:

*Modern Chinese discourses, no matter whether on social or ideological questions . . . are articulated to a large extent in terms that were coined and normalized as translations of Western or Western-derived notions. Yet far from serving as simple equivalents of imported ways of understanding, many terms of foreign origin have unfolded a life of their own in modern Chinese contexts. More often than not, they have acquired new meanings that creatively alter, extend, or even undermine established European conceptions. In order to comprehend the resulting semantic and conceptual differences, historians of thought must pay close attention to the multilayered process of translation and appropriation from which these terms have emerged.<sup>3</sup>*

Such analysis of conceptual transfer and change must be placed within the context of intercultural communication under the conditions of radical inequality in the power of participants. Often, as in nineteenth century China,

such translation and adaptation of political concepts took place amidst unprecedented rapid and violent change, much of it produced by foreign aggression, first Western and then Japanese. It became increasingly clear that acquiring modern western knowledge was crucial to Chinese national power and independence. Yet there was no consensus on whether western political arrangements were on the same level of importance to the superior power of foreigners as were their physical sciences and technology. Nor could translators distinguish between political concepts, which were contested in the west, and scientific terms, about which there was relatively little disagreement.

Yan Fu, among the most important nineteenth century translators, became convinced that if China were to survive, it had to adopt western political ideas. In the late 1890s, he began translating a series of works, which although they may seem unconnected to us, he thought to form an unified and politically indispensable body of doctrine: T. H. Huxley's *Evolution and Ethics*; Herbert Spencer's *The Study of Sociology*; Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations*; J.S. Mill's *On Liberty and System of Logic*; and Montesquieu's *The Spirit of Laws*. For all of these books, Yan Fu had to create a political vocabulary both by creating neologisms and assigning new meanings to existing words and terms. And to gain and hold his audience, this had to be done in a style at once comprehensible and pleasing to the literati who constituted his audience.<sup>4</sup>

The complexity of this multi-faceted process of exchange and adaptation, as well as the unexpected insights it provided was first analyzed in a pioneer study of Yan Fu which unearthed the reasoning that justified the authors he chose for his canon of essential western theorists.<sup>5</sup> What unified them, he thought, was their respect for wealth and power, both of which had now become essential to the survival of China as a sovereign nation. Thus Yan Fu's grouping of western theorists into a canon derived from his arguably valid understanding of them from a point of view that would not have occurred to those within western political traditions.

## I

What I shall now seek to do in this paper is to identify some of the problems involved in applying the analysis of this "multilayered process of translation and appropriation" to what Reinhart Koselleck has called basic political concepts (*Grundbegriffe*):

As distinguished from concepts in general, a basic concept . . . is an inescapable, irreplaceable part of the political and social vocabulary. Only after a concept has attained this status does it become crystallized in a single word or term such as “revolution,” “state,” “civil society,” or “democracy.” Basic concepts combine manifold experiences and expectations in such a way that they become indispensable to any formulation of the most urgent issues of a given time. [T]hey are always both controversial and contested.<sup>6</sup>

As a method, this calls attention not only to great theorists, but also to the other sites and media where political controversies are and have been conducted. This includes even those sources sometimes considered to be neutral such as dictionaries, lexicons, and treatises on language and correct usage. First to be discussed will be a brief history of “liberty,” and “democracy,” two political concepts introduced into Chinese political discourse in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from western sources. In accordance with the methods of conceptual history, these will be treated: 1) as basic political concepts; 2) as always contested; 3) as possessing a long history, including the changing boundaries separating them from near synonyms in both the source and target languages; 4) as often producing political consequences unanticipated and undesired by those coining the term; 5) as deployed not only by major theorists and political leaders, but also by pamphleteers, journalists, and other publicists and propagandists in and out of government.

What happens when the attempt is made to translate the basic political concepts of one society, phrased in its natural language, to another society with an altogether different history, set of institutions and religions, political culture, and language? The barriers to comprehension by both translator and audience are formidable. What is basic to the source polity is alien to the target of the translation: another society, the natural language of which may differ fundamentally from that of the source. So too the manifold experiences and expectations which have shaped the basic political concepts being translated may find little or no resonance elsewhere. Do all these considerations make the translator’s task impossible? This is what has been suggested by some theories, based on linguistic or cultural determinisms. Yet it is worth investigating the possibility that a more likely outcome is partial understanding combined with some misunderstanding of what is being translated in a more or less creative adaptation to the new context. It is here that the “multilayered process

of translation and appropriation” in nineteenth and early twentieth century China merits analysis. For given the powerful traditions of an ancient political culture, in which China was the dominant empire and other countries were styled “barbarians,” it was not easy for the Confucian elite to understand, much less apply, concepts deriving from political and religious systems so different from their own.

What could, what did western concepts of political liberty and democracy mean to literate nineteenth and early twentieth century Chinese? Even in the West, these were contested concepts, with no single, undisputed meaning, much less consensus on their positive or negative valence. The problem of translation was compounded by the fact that the imported political concepts did not match those previously accepted in Chinese discourse. How reliable were the first Chinese-English dictionaries by English and American missionaries? In one appearing between 1815-1823, “liberty” was rendered in a Chinese phrase meaning “the principle of self-determination.” To this were added in another work of 1847, the clarifying terms, “to feel free and comfortable” and “to be left to one’s own will.” A third dictionary, published between 1866-1869 offered a series of additional synonyms: “self-determination,” “unrestrained,” “right of self-government,” “being allowed to follow one’s intentions,” “being allowed to act within the law.” “Political liberty” was translated as “the right of a state to govern itself.”

In these dictionaries, the Chinese characters designating “liberty” were taken from ancient texts which were unrelated even to the political or philosophical vocabulary of their remote period. In nineteenth and early twentieth century China, some of these ancient meanings were still of legitimate usage, and thus could easily be confused with western notions of liberty.<sup>7</sup> This was a difficulty created by the Chinese language, the users of which tended to create replicas of western terms by means of native morphemes often taken from a historically remote period. Elsewhere neologisms could be constructed *de novo*. Or else, as in early Meiji Japan, the situation could be even more complex, for there the translation of western political terms was for the most part done by using Chinese characters.<sup>8</sup>

Yet, despite all the obstacles to understanding Western concepts of political liberty, there were Chinese who made the effort to do so. An 1887 newspaper editorial “On the principles of liberty and mutual love in the West” sought to explicate this unfamiliar concept:

What is called “liberty” in the West is the fact that the ruler and the people are close. ... ; that above and below communicate. ... Thus, the so-called matters of state are jointly carried out by the ruler and the common people. ... Now, if the common people are just and respect the laws, if they are cautious and full of self-respect, and fear the punishments, then they will never in their lifetimes have to attend a civil law suit at court. ... ; if they indulge in studies and eat meat in the evenings, if they drive around in carriages, innocently gain riches and indulge in peace and tranquility, then what harm would there be done even to poor and ordinary people? This is called “liberty.”<sup>9</sup>

This might be called a sympathetic partial understanding combined with an approximately equal misunderstanding or incomprehension of the western concept of liberty, which it conflates on some points with democracy. Obviously the author did not connect institutions incorporating elected officials and representative government to political liberty, or see any relation between it and theories of rights enjoyed by citizens. The inherited structures of imperial China still constituted for the writer the paradigm of political organization. After Yan Fu lived in England, he declared that the presence or absence of liberty was what differentiated China from the west: “In fact, all the sages in ancient Chinese history were afraid of the doctrine and therefore never established it.”<sup>10</sup> The students who rebelled in the May 4 movement of 1919 knew western concepts of liberty through Yan Fu’s seminal translations, including that of J.S. Mill’s *On Liberty*.

As for the no less contested concept of democracy, the Chinese were not at first well served by English-Chinese dictionaries written by missionaries distrustful of political democracy in the west. The Morrison dictionary of 1815-1823 stated that democracy “is improper, since it is improper to be without a leader.” However, because there was no single term in Chinese for “democracy,” Morrison had to use a full sentence to express his verdict: “if it is improper that nobody leads, it is equally improper that a multitude of people govern [in a] disorderly [way].” The 1847 Medhurst dictionary, provided additional pejorative definitions: “disorderly administration by many” and “government by the rabble.” The 1866-1869 Lobscheid, while offering “government by the people,” adds “abuse of power by the common people.” Finally, a neutral definition of democracy appeared in a 1902 dictionary: as “control of state affairs by the common people.” Now the Chinese word for

democracy became *minzhu*. This, in the Chinese classics, had originally meant “lord of the people.” Thus because of Chinese linguistic usage a potentially confusing neologism was created by giving an ancient name to a modern political regime. Still another source of ambiguity was the use of *minzhu* to mean the head of a democratic state.

Taken together, these varying uses of the characters now designating “democracy” indicate how significant can be the history and persisting characteristics of a given natural language. Nevertheless, the conclusion of most recent scholarship about the development of Chinese as a language, spoken and written, seem to rule out strong forms of linguistic determinism. Such theories were once used to argue that many forms of knowledge, such as modern physics, could not be developed in China because of the language.

Another type of determinism derives its conclusion from the allegedly unbridgeable diversity of cultures and historical traditions. On this view, best known in the version of Benjamin Lee Whorf, concepts deriving from one society are said to be incommensurable with those of another, and hence untranslatable into the recipient language.<sup>11</sup> However, this striking assertion has not been accepted by linguists. Yet, when rephrased in terms of cultural relativism, such theories continue to attract many adherents. The question of whether acknowledging the diversity among cultures necessarily entails complete cultural relativism is too complex to be discussed here. But a recent book disputing that claim is worth mentioning: Steven Lukes’s, *Liberals and Cannibals*.<sup>12</sup> Although I find Lukes’s argument persuasive, I shall only mention it before moving on to discuss recent treatments of translation as a historical process.

## II

I propose to do so by beginning with an important essay-review, “The Predicament of Ideas in Culture: Translation and Historiography” first published in *History and Theory*.<sup>13</sup> Its author, Douglas Howland, a specialist in Asian studies, uses recent studies of translation in that field to illuminate the central subject of this meeting: how to describe and explain what happens when concepts formulated in one language and political context are transferred to, or imposed upon users of another language with another political culture and set of historical experiences.<sup>14</sup>

Much as does Ephraim Kurtz in the passage previously cited, Howland treats translation and conceptual transfers in terms of the adaptations required by cultural exchanges:

*We now understand translation in a manner quite different from two decades ago. Translation is no longer a simple transfer of words or texts from one language to another on the model of the bilingual dictionary or the bridging of language differences between peoples. Rather . . . translation has become a translingual act of transcoding cultural material — a complex act of communication.*<sup>15</sup>

Thus discussions of conceptual transfers by historians involve the differences among natural languages, forms of writing and argument, rhetoric, and structures of authority, as well as the media through which concepts are transmitted. It comes as no surprise that fundamental disagreements divide those concerned in identifying and explaining patterns of conceptual transfers and in assessing their significance for such historical developments as colonialism and decolonization. Howland's essay divides the books he treats into two groups, each with its distinctive focus and mode of interpretation. Such differences he attributes to a contrast particularly significant for those historians dealing with the disparate effects of western colonialism and imperialism on the peoples of Asia.

On the one hand, there were states once strong and centralized, such as China and Japan, which were never completely subjugated, colonized, and ruled by an alien bureaucracy and army. On the other hand, just such subordination was the situation of such peoples as those of the Indian subcontinent, whose concepts and styles of thought derived from long established literary, religious, and philosophical traditions. Also turned into colonies were peoples such as the Tagalog in the Philippines, with largely oral traditions, with no previous experience of a strong centralized state, which were subsequently colonized, and ruled, first by the Spanish Empire, and then by the United States.

This type of colonies has for the most part been studied from the perspective of colonial practices, especially the domination of an indigenous population.<sup>16</sup> Such descriptive and explanatory theories share the view that colonial and imperial powers forced their subjects to translate their native language, concepts, and culture into those of the dominating rulers. Crucial to this interpretation are the concepts of representation and identity.

Because subjects are forced by their rulers to use their alien language and representations, the colonial power can construct the identity of those they rule. Thus more or less overtly, the colonized are coerced into perceiving themselves as inferiors, subordinate to their conquerors, and owing obedience to them. Thus in this type of studies, power is said to dictate the forms of representation and identity. Such works tend to use translation metaphorically, that is, as the total process of domination by controlling the way subjects come to understand themselves and their inferior relationship to their alien rulers.

These emphases are either contested or omitted in another group of books treated by Howland.<sup>17</sup> Perhaps because their authors are primarily concerned with nineteenth and early twentieth century China and Japan, or with newly independent states, these books focus less on colonial and post-colonial situations than on the role played by translation in bridging differences among languages, social practices, religions, and political cultures. The paradigm situation is when indigenous agents wish to overcome existing obstacles blocking access for their peoples to western ideas, institutions, science, and technologies.

On which points do these interpretations differ? One school sees colonialism or empire as always producing a conceptual monopoly, with two and only two possible outcomes: either the victims' identification with their masters' language, concepts and representations, or else resistance entailing complete rejection of them. This view has been criticized by Lydia Liu, who pinpoints "the irony that, in the very act of criticizing western domination, one often ends up by reifying the power of the dominator to a degree that the agency of non-western cultures is reduced to a single possibility: resistance."<sup>18</sup> Liu analyzes attempts by native agents to construct new and better idioms for foreign terms: the conditions of possibility for creating new usages based on neologisms and novel linguistic practices. Like Kurtz, Liu stresses the role of creative reinterpretation in the process of translation. Thus, like other scholars emphasizing intercultural communication rather than domination, Liu rejects the common assumption that translation always produces equivalences in the same way as do bilingual dictionaries.

Another characteristic of this second group is their emphasis upon explaining the translation of concepts in intercultural exchanges as a form of action by determinate agents, thus applying to this field the theory developed by Quentin Skinner. Such authors treat concepts as contestable and analyze the functions served by them. Finally, these scholars agree that

we understand concepts and their transfers best through acts of comparison — not the comparison of originals and translated versions, but through comparing the uses of whole sets of concepts.

### III

I end in the hope that despite my focus on Asian studies, that what has emerged from this discussion are the issues that arise when we seek to chart and explain the full spectrum of possibilities when political and social concepts are transferred from one cultural context to another. Surely this process is what ought to be emphasized in our consideration of transatlantic dialogues. The understanding of translation as a complex, multilayered process of intercultural communication more or less flawed by inequalities of power should alert us to the multiple possible outcomes of agency as exercised even in a colonial or semi-colonial setting. Apparent continuities in the use of political and social concepts between Spain and Portugal, on the one side, and what began as their New World colonies, on the other, may disguise significant alterations in meaning and use.

The history of political concepts (*Begriffsgeschichte*) can contribute much towards the analysis and understanding of what may happen in such situations. As has been shown, the characteristics of basic political concepts have to be recognized when dealing with transfers between Europe and the New World, the subject of this meeting. Comparative analyses, such as conceptual transfers from western to Asian peoples, will both contribute to and profit from bringing together the methods of conceptual history and the history of translation in various times and settings. Our 2005 meeting in New York will attempt to do so.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>This is a revised version of the opening lecture delivered by Melvin Richter at the VII International Conference of the History of Concepts: Transatlantic Dialogues, Rio de Janeiro, 3-7 July, 2004. This text will also appear in the upcoming issue of *Redescriptions: Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History*.

<sup>2</sup>Melvin Richter (1947), 136-74.

<sup>3</sup>Michael Lackner et. al. (2001), 147.

<sup>4</sup>See David Wright (2001), 235-255.

<sup>5</sup>Benjamin Schwartz (1964).

<sup>6</sup>Reinhart Koselleck (1996), 64.

<sup>7</sup>Xiong Yuezhi (2001), 69-70.

<sup>8</sup>For a valuable and detailed analysis of the linguistic problems of translating Western political and social concepts into Japanese, see Douglas R. Howland (2002), 61-93.

<sup>9</sup>Douglas R. Howland (2002), 71.

<sup>10</sup>Douglas R. Howland (2002), 72.

<sup>11</sup>Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956).

<sup>12</sup>Steven Lukes (2003).

<sup>13</sup>Douglas R. Howland (2003), 45-60.

<sup>14</sup>See also the brief but penetrating statements on translation and communication by Kari Palonen (2004).

<sup>15</sup>Douglas R. Howland (2003), 45.

<sup>16</sup>This group of books includes Eric Cheyfitz (1991), Tejaswini Niranjana (1992), and Vicente L. Rafael (1998).

<sup>17</sup>Lydia H. Liu (1995); Naoki Sakai (1997); Frederic C. Schaffer (1998).

<sup>18</sup>Lydia H. Liu (1995), xv-xvi.

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**ABSTRACT**

In this article, the author examines the case of the Chinese reception of Western political and social concepts as an example to discuss the substantive issues involved in the circulation of concepts between Europe and other parts of the world. Translation and adaptation are key steps in this process of circulation. The question however is not to investigate whether the transposed concept is an accurate transcription of the original, but to understand how this concept acquires new meanings and rhetorical functions within the political and ideological disputes of the society to which it has been transposed. Thus, translation should be understood as a complex, multilayered process of intercultural communication whose result is affected by inequalities of power, but still open to multiple outcomes of agency, even when exercised in colonial or semi-colonial settings.

**KEYWORDS**

History of concepts, translation, reception, colonialism, China.

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## DISCOURSE AND DIFFUSION<sup>1</sup>

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We have a problem. Two historical genres, intellectual history and the history of books, seem to be made for each other, yet they have gone their separate ways — intellectual history toward discourse analysis, book history toward the study of diffusion. Of course, they have forked, branched, and blossomed in other ways as well. But the split between the studies of discourse and diffusion can be taken as symptomatic of a general tendency in the human sciences, one that leads to divergence and fragmentation rather than convergence and collaboration. How can intellectual history and book history be brought together?

Historians who study the diffusion of books commonly run into a difficulty: the best-sellers of the past may serve as an index of public taste, but they also may be trivial, and they do not necessarily lead to explanations of important events such as the Reformation and the French Revolution. General arguments in book history tend to be riddled with weak links. Historians may determine what books people bought, but they find it difficult to know how those books were read, how the readings became assimilated in views of subjects like politics and religion, how those views came together in the formation of public opinion, and how public opinion impinged on actions and events. Each of those phenomena may be susceptible to study in itself, but they cannot be strung together along lines of causality. The very notion of causal linkage may be misconceived.

Discourse analysis also disappoints those who want to connect monographical insights with general interpretations. It tends to be confined within a narrow band of evidence. Unlike the older history of ideas, it concentrates on intertextuality rather than the exegesis of isolated texts. It attempts to show what words do when they appear in print as a response to other printed words. But its emphasis on word play can become so esoteric as to remove itself from research on anyone outside an intellectual elite. It may

have implications for interpreting the power games played by a few political figures. But it does not offer much to historians trying to understand the values and views of ordinary people caught up in the patterns of everyday life. Instead of joining forces with its naturally allies in social and cultural history, discourse analysis sometimes resembles the fine-grained history of ideas that it was intended to refute.

No one would dispute the importance of understanding a great book like Hobbes's *Leviathan*. Nor would anyone dismiss the need to know what books reached readers at a crucial time such as the two decades before the French Revolution. How then can these two approaches to books be made to converge? Can one be grafted onto the other? In a recent paper Noel Malcolm stressed Hobbes's "project of cultural transformation," something that included the history of books. Hobbes thought of *Leviathan* as an instrument of change, one intended initially for use by princes, but one that would ultimately be studied in an expanding world of universities and *Gelehrten* and that would promote the spread of reason. Given adequate documentation — combinations of the information available in D. G. Wing's *Short-title Catalogue* and the papers of the Stationers' Company — it should be possible to situate *Leviathan* within the general pattern of literary culture in England during the 1650s. Similarly, it should be possible to subject a French best-seller like Mercier's *L'An Deux Mille Quatre Cent Quarante* to close textual and intertextual analysis. But the results probably would be disappointing. *Leviathan* would not score well on a retrospectively reconstructed best-seller list for the 1650s, and *L'An Deux Mille Quatre Cent Quarante* would seem like little more than vulgarized Rousseau.

The historical significance of those two books cannot be determined without resort to different modes of interpretation. *Leviathan* shows an argument being deployed against other arguments with all the force of logic and rhetoric then available in order to make claims about the rightful distribution of power during a period of political turmoil. *L'An Deux Mille Quatre Cent Quarante* expresses a set of attitudes, both utopian and politically engaged, that undercut the general public's faith in the legitimacy of the government during the critical last years of Louis XV's reign. One text slices through competing arguments; another expresses a vague but powerful climate of opinion. They need to be understood in different ways, not reduced to some common hermeneutical denominator.

What strategy will work, then, in order to make the studies of discourse and diffusion reinforce each other? Any attempt to devise a single formula is

likely to fail, but one can begin by considering what the two approaches have in common. Both reject the notion of a book as a container of ideas—that is, something the reader can simply open in order to extract its conceptual contents. Both understand meaning contextually — that is, as an activity by readers as well as authors, who appropriate and fashion language in their own ways and in response to others.

In discourse analysis, the fashioning of language is understood as speech acts, which advance arguments within shared linguistic conventions and a particular political setting. In his *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, Locke breaks with the rhetoric deployed in an earlier age by Filmer and provides a new language to be used against arguments that would justify the accession of a Catholic to the throne under James II. Diffusion studies show how thematic currents run through a general literary landscape, marking ideological boundaries. The *Vie Privée de Louis XV*, for example, draws on a large corpus of earlier political libels, often by lifting entire passages, in order to provide a picture of contemporary history that made the reign of Louis XV look despotic to readers wary of despotism under Louis XVI. Both books mobilized opposition to an impending threat from the throne, but they operated in different ways and need to be understood differently.

How can such different modes of understanding be brought together? Some examples taken from book history illustrate the possibilities. They concern the book itself as an expressive medium, the nature of reading as an interpretive activity, and the character of publishing as a way of tapping literary demand.

Taking their cue from bibliographers, book historians often insist that authors do not write books. They write texts, which printers make into books. Typography may inflect the meaning of a text in fundamental ways, ways that constrain the sense made of it by readers. In red-letter editions of the Bible, the words of Christ stand out with peculiar force, compelling the reader to attribute more authority to them than to the surrounding language printed in black. Early Bibles did not have the same typographical articulation as later ones, so the texts lent themselves to different modes of reading. Only after the text was cut up by headings and numbered paragraphs did it become possible to “quote chapter and verse” and to perceive messages contained within specific boundaries of print. No original manuscripts of Shakespeare’s plays have survived, and the texts of the earliest editions contain so many garbled passages that they can be interpreted in radically different ways. But

bibliographical analysis makes it possible to arrive at some fairly definitive readings and also to be aware of their limitations. We now have two *King Lear*s, each one bibliographically sound yet incompatible with the other. By limiting himself to typographical evidence, D. F. McKenzie demonstrated that the general character of Congreve's plays changed substantially when the scrappy, Elizabethan-type quarto editions were replaced by the majestic, neoclassical Works in octavo of 1710. Bibliographical analysis could complement discourse analysis by showing how speech acts were translated into typographical acts in the printing shop and ultimately into active constructions of meaning on the part of readers.

The history of reading has extended the notion of context beyond the limits of linguistic moves in a shared game of political discourse, but it, too, has an element of gamesmanship to it. Literary journals in France during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries featured word games — *mots d'énigme*, *logogriphe*s, *bouts rimes* — which predisposed readers to develop a variety of reading that resembled deciphering and puzzle-solving. Those techniques became standard modes of interpreting the *romans à dé* that were so popular at the same time. One can reconstruct the interpretations of the readers from notes in margins and from the keys themselves, which also contain annotations. Recent studies of commonplace books have demonstrated other kinds of hermeneutical exercises common in the early modern period. To be sure, reading was such a complex activity that it cannot be reduced to a single formula, not even the notion of a reading revolution that supposedly took place in the late eighteenth century. But historians have demonstrated the existence of certain kinds of reading in specific times and places — for example, the *Lesewut* and *Wertherfieber* that swept through Germany during the period of *Sturm und Drang*.

The history of publishing also offers access to an understanding of how people made sense of books in the past. It can even help historians negotiate a way around anachronism in their pursuit of meaning making. To take another example from the eighteenth century, French publishers commonly used the term "*livres philosophiques*" to describe pornographic as well as irreligious literature. The books themselves often mixed those ingredients in ways that would be unthinkable today. From *Thérèse Philosophe* to *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir* the sex is interspersed with radical materialism. Many philosophes — Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot — combined erotic narratives with philosophical speculation. It is not that they were incapable of recognizing any

distinction between sex and thought but rather that they found sex good for thinking: they did not sort things out into categories that seem self-evident to us. Their understanding of literature had affinities, both elective and economic, with the practices of publishers, who circulated special catalogues of “livres philosophiques” among booksellers, and with the booksellers’ orders, which registered the demand for d’Holbach’s *Système de la Nature* alongside Mercier’s *L’An Deux Mille Quatre Cent Quarante*, Mairobert’s *Anecdotes sur Mme la Comtesse du Barry*, Du Laurens’s *L’Arrétin Moderne*, Raynal’s *Histoire Philosophique*, and Voltaire’s *Pucelle*. These were the best-sellers of the underground book trade according to statistics compiled from the orders. A diffusion study of this kind does not lead to conclusions about eighteenth-century ways of thinking. But taken with other sorts of book history — information about authorship, reading, the practices of censors, the composition of libraries, the concept of literature itself — it shows how the printed word became embedded in a cultural system peculiar to the Ancien Régime.

The notion of an embedded book history has implications for the study of discourse. Consider the example of Voltaire, the supreme philosophe of the Enlightenment. He intervened actively in the publication of his works. He knew every trick of the book trade, devised elaborate strategies for promoting his works, played one publisher off against another, and even collaborated in the pirating of his own books — not to make money, but to spread light. Engagement in the diffusion of the printed word lay at the heart of the Voltairean Enlightenment, just as engagement in the affairs of the world characterized the Enlightenment ideal of the philosophe. As defined in *Le Philosophe*, a key tract of 1743 reworked and reprinted in many later books, including Diderot’s *Encyclopédie* and Voltaire’s *Dictionnaire Philosophique*, the philosophe was a man of the world as well as a man of letters. He subscribed to certain advanced ideas, but he did not combine them in systematic arguments. Instead, he slipped them into conversations with like-minded gentlemen and ladies. They gathered together in salons, country houses, theater loges, opera boxes, promenades in the gardens of the Tuileries and the Palais-Royal, sharing a world of pleasure and politeness: *le Monde*, as they called it. “Superstition” — that is, dogmatic adherence to the teachings of the Church — was banished from the free play of their wit. They subscribed to the cultural ideal that Voltaire expressed in his wittiest poem, *Le Mondain*. It involved a social code as well as a common stock of ideas, and therefore it served perfectly in Voltaire’s strategy for spreading light. He fought prejudice

with prejudice, playing on notions of good taste and good manners peculiar to *le monde*. Instead of treatises, he published novels, facetious anthologies, and “petit pâtés” or bite-sized tracts that could easily be digested by the elite. He made them laugh, but laughter was a weapon: “Il faut mettre les rieurs de notre côté,” he advised his lieutenants. And when the cause called for it, he mobilized passion. After the Calas Affair, “*écrasez l’infâme*” became a rallying cry that shook the world. It did so thanks to the power of print, for Voltaire spent the last thirty years of his life far from the Parisian *monde*. He relied on Swiss publishers and French booksellers to spread the printed word — that is, to diffuse Enlightenment. The Enlightenment itself was a process of diffusion, one interwoven inextricably with the history of books, along with the history of ideas, culture, and society.

Can discourse analysis provide a fresh perspective to the history of books? In order to turn the argument around in this fashion, it is useful to consider early-modern political thought.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup>This is a revised version of a paper originally presented by Robert Darnton on December 3, 2004 at “The History of Books and Intellectual History” conference, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Books and Media at Princeton University.

**ABSTRACT**

The article critically explores the different paths chosen by closely related historical disciplines: intellectual history and the history of books. While the former has focused on discourse analysis, the latter has given more attention to the study of diffusion. Historians who study the diffusion of books commonly run into a difficulty: the best-sellers of the past may serve as an indicator of public taste, but they may also be trivial, and they do not necessarily lead to explanations of important events such as the Reformation and the French Revolution. On the other hand, discourse analysis is confined to a narrow band of textual evidence, and thus cannot provide much insight on the values and views of ordinary people caught up in the patterns of everyday life. The author concludes by discussing how the history of books, particularly the history of reading and the history of publishing, can have important implications for the study of discourse.

**KEYWORDS**

Intellectual history, history of books, discourse analysis, diffusion, history of publishing.

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## ON INTELLECTUAL HISTORY AND THE HISTORY OF BOOKS<sup>1</sup>

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These remarks take Robert Darnton's excellent and inspiring paper as their point of departure. I am less concerned, however, with following up Robert's arguments than with drawing a number of contrasts between how I envisage the study of intellectual history and how historians of the book (at least on the evidence of Robert's paper) appear to think about their research.

One obvious contrast lies in the range of topics covered by these two sub-disciplines. To speak of the history of the book is to name a specialized form of enquiry into the production, diffusion and enjoyment of printed and scribally published material. But to speak of intellectual history is to refer to a much less clearly articulated field of research. Some intellectual historians want to make the purview of their subject more or less coterminous with the whole of a society's cultural production. Under the heading of intellectual history they want to include the study of religious and other systems of belief; the study of hypotheses in the sciences, including the social and political sciences; the study of certain aspects of the history of art, including notational methods in music and iconological problems in painting and sculpture; and the study of the history of philosophy in all its manifold branches, including the analysis of moral, social, aesthetic and political theories as well as metaphysical arguments.

Most intellectual historians, it is true, think in less imperialist terms. But perhaps this is only because they cannot hope to challenge the established institutional structures of modern Universities, in which the history of art, the history of science and to some degree the history of religion are principally studied and taught in Departments other than Departments of History. Despite these restrictions, many intellectual historians remain keen to work across such arbitrary divisions, and the greatest of them — from Burckhardt onwards — have given us works that not only range across the centuries but

at the same time speak of developments not merely in philosophy but in social, moral and religious thought. Practised in this way, the sub-discipline of intellectual history is clearly one with boundaries that are at once highly porous and continually liable to expand and contract as academic politics and different research-program change. This must be one reason, I think, and perhaps the most obvious, why it has not always been easy, as Robert Darnton rightly notes, for intellectual historians and historians of the book to get together as easily as one might hope.

This is not to say that intellectual historians are uninterested in the kinds of preoccupations that mark out historians of the book. Or if they are uninterested, then I am sure they are misguided. The recent upsurge of interest in the history of the book has undoubtedly helped intellectual historians to become far more aware of a number of important considerations that they need to treat far more seriously than they have generally done.

Perhaps the most basic point I have in mind here is that the physical appearance of early-modern books affects in various ways how we interpret them. For example, modern editions of the Declarations and Proclamations issued by early-modern governments hardly ever reproduce the difference between Roman and Black-letter type. But it is essential to know which form of type is being used in any given instance, because the use of Black-letter was generally a signal of the special importance of the text in question from the point of view of those who issued it.

For a more important example, consider the implications of the fact that, in the early-modern period, proof-correcting was a continuous process as large texts were run off the press signature by signature. Sometimes we even find so-called cancels in published texts, where a piece of type has been pasted over an earlier word or sentence at the last moment. The crucial implication is that, in the case of such early-modern books, there can be no such thing as a single copy-text. If we wish to create the best possible editions, we need to collate a genuinely representative sample of surviving copies of the texts in question in order to be sure of tracing the correcting process, and thereby coming as close as possible to the words that the author wanted us to read. It is an astonishing fact that this form of research is only just beginning to be undertaken for some of the most important texts that early-modern intellectual historians have often devoted their lives to studying. A vast structure of interpretation in some cases rests on no firm textual foundation at all. This remains true, for example, in the case of both Francis Bacon and Thomas Hobbes, although the situation

is at last in the process of being remedied. That intellectual historians are now beginning to devote systematic effort to repairing these deficiencies is surely a reflection, in large part, of the benign influence exercised by historians of the book.

As I began by intimating, however, I was mainly struck on reading Robert Darnton's paper by a number of contrasts between the two sub-disciplines. I want to pick up and comment on three contrasts that struck me with particular force. One is that intellectual historians often, and perhaps characteristically, pay little attention to a question that seems, on the evidence of Robert's paper, to be of central importance to historians of the book. This is the question of the exact extent of the diffusion of particular books. It is true that some intellectual historians used to be interested in what came to be known in the German tradition as Reception-history. This kind of study is not much undertaken nowadays, for what seem to me excellent methodological reasons, but in its heyday it gave rise to books with titles like *Spinoza in eighteenth-century France*, *Machiavelli in Modern Germany* and so on. It also needs to be stressed that a new and much more sophisticated version of this kind of history is now being written, most magisterially by John Pocock, in which the focus of attention is on the multifarious ways in which books escape their original contexts and play divergent roles in later ideological debates of which their original authors and readers would have known nothing.

These are important qualifications, but it still seems to me right to draw a fairly strong distinction at this point between intellectual historians and historians of the book. Consider, to take a very obvious example, Newton's *Principia Mathematica*. This was probably read and understood in its entirety in the course of the Enlightenment by at most a handful of people. To historians of the book, concerned with questions about diffusion, this is an important and potentially even a disquieting fact. To an intellectual historian, however, concerned with the genesis of Newton's masterpiece and the nature of its arguments about the mechanistic universe, the same fact is of virtually no importance at all. Nor is the fact that Newton's book was so little studied likely to prevent such an historian from concluding that it was one of the greatest works of the European Enlightenment.

This brings me to what appears to be a second and associated difference of outlook between intellectual historians and historians of the book. On the evidence of Robert Darnton's paper, the latter tend to worry that, if a book is read and understood only by a small handful of people, then to make that book

a central object of our own studies would be, as Robert puts it, elitist. And such elitism, it seems to be assumed, is to be avoided. I am not sure what intellectual historians in general would say about this argument, but their practice suggests that they reject it outright. Students of early-modern intellectual history, for example, constantly publish technical monographs on figures such as Galileo, Bacon, Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz and other seventeenth-century thinkers who, while they never reached the best-seller lists, are still taken to be worthy of study in ever greater detail and depth.

But are intellectual historians right implicitly to repudiate the charge of elitism? My own view is that they certainly are, if only because the charge itself embodies such an arrogant form of philistinism. Think, for example, about the painting of decorative tiles in seventeenth-century Delft. This became a major industry, and if we consider how many people bought and appreciated these tiles in Vermeer's Delft, by comparison with the number of people who bought and appreciated Vermeer's paintings, we find thousands on the one hand and a tiny handful on the other. Do these facts somehow make the study of Delft tiles of more importance than the study of Vermeer's paintings? If this is not what the accusation of elitism implies, then I am not sure that I understand the accusation itself. But if this is what it implies, then it seems to me to embody just the kind of philistinism that the humanities exist to challenge, not to embrace.

One further difference between the two sub-disciplines that struck me on reading Robert's paper is that historians of the book appear to be little worried by a question that intellectual historians often fret about a lot. What is the point or purpose of our research? Why do we want the information we dig out? What is it for?

I have little idea what historians of the book tend to say by way of answering these questions, but historians in general often respond by speaking about the importance of memory and the value of satisfying our intellectual curiosity. These have always been powerful reasons for learning about the past, and many intellectual historians are clearly motivated by them as well. Some people, for example, want to know more about Plato, Aquinas, Hobbes, Hegel, and other systematic philosophers simply because they find themselves entranced by their systems of thought. Not everyone experiences such entrancement, of course, and even most historians seem immune to it. But the discipline of intellectual history undoubtedly exists in part to satisfy just this kind of curiosity.

Among intellectual historians, however, there are some — and I count myself among them — who remain unsatisfied with this type of answer, and find themselves drawn to intellectual history because it seems to promise something more like a kind of practical importance. Let me try to illustrate what I have in mind by saying a word about the kind of intellectual history that I myself, in company with a number of recent and present colleagues at the University of Cambridge, have been trying to write. We are interested in the history of the moral and political concepts that are nowadays used to construct and appraise our common world. I am thinking here of colleagues like Annabel Brett and her work on the origins of our understanding of rights, Tim Hochstrasser on the development of theories about natural law, David Runciman on the character of the state, David Armitage on the early-modern concept of Empire, Eric Nelson on early-modern views about the *res publica*, to which I may perhaps be allowed to add a mention of my own recent work on the concept of political representation. (By the way, I ought to add that all the books to which I am alluding here are published in the series I edit called *Ideas in Context*, in which I have been trying to promote this research program.)

The books to which I am referring might all be described as historicist as well as historical in character. By this I mean that they are all imbued with one particular belief, a belief that can most easily be expressed in negative terms. This is that the best way to understand a concept such as liberty, or natural rights, or political representation, or the state, is never going to be to try to offer an analysis of the concept that purports to tell us how the terms that express it ought properly to be applied.

Take the concept of political representation, for example. What does it mean for someone to represent someone else? Does it mean to symbolize them? Or to picture them? Or to typify them? Or to impersonate them? Or some combination of these? Or none of the above? To espouse the negative commitment, as I have called it, is to insist that these are not good questions, not questions that can profitably be asked. Concepts like liberty, or the state, or natural rights, or political representation, have been so deeply embedded in our culture for so long, and have given rise to so many rival theories, that there is no prospect of gaining any significant measure of agreement about what the terms we use to express these concepts really mean (still less what they really mean really). The belief that there is some definitive conceptual analysis to be offered has been one of the governing illusions of recent moral and political

philosophy, and it goes a long way towards explaining why the purported findings of analytical philosophers so often look so purely stipulative.

To understand such concepts, the intellectual historians I have cited agree, what we need to find out is when, and how, and why the vocabulary in which they are expressed originally arose, what purposes this vocabulary was designed to serve, what role it played in argument. What is needed, in short, is a history of concepts.

It is true that many such histories have of late been written, above all by Reinhart Koselleck and his army of associates, who have created an entire research program centered on what Koselleck likes to call *Begriffsgeschichte*. This kind of research, however, is not what I have in mind, or not exclusively what I have in mind. The program in which I am interested is concerned not so much with the history of concepts in themselves as with the history of their acquisition and deployment in argument, the history of what has been done with them, and thus with the changing roles they have played in our culture.

How can this kind of history have the sort of practical value I began by promising? The suggestion is that, by following the kind of archaeological process of research I have sketched, we may be able to uncover when and why certain concepts initially came to be formulated, how they may subsequently have been put to radically different uses, how they may have eventually become confused in the process, and how they came to bequeath to us the often complex and contradictory understandings we now confront.

To take a compelling example of this kind of history, think of Philip Pettit's recent work on the concept of individual liberty. Philip has shown that, for powerful ideological reasons, an originary understanding of the term as an antonym of dependence was replaced by an understanding of the same term as an antonym of interference. With the rise of modern liberal political theory, Philip has also shown, the latter understanding was encouraged to occupy the entire conceptual space, with rival readings being outlawed as either irrelevant or confused.

The example is brief and over-schematized, but it is nevertheless sufficient, I hope, to indicate what I mean by saying that this kind of history can have some practical value for us here and now. By writing about the history of freedom in this way, we can hope to uncover the ideological forces at work both in the original construction of the concept and in its subsequent undermining and replacement. This in turn enables us to see our modern liberal concept of freedom is just that — it is our concept, and a rival to a concept that has largely

been lost to sight. To see that this is so, however, is at once to liberate ourselves from any disposition to suppose that our concept must somehow be the real or the only one, and at the same time to give ourselves the chance to reflect anew on the concept we have lost, and to reconsider what we should think of it. Perhaps, as Pettit ends by suggesting, we should actually embrace it and throw away the concept with which we have been brought up, thereby opening up wholly new perspectives on questions about when we are and are not free, what the additional duties our governments may have to protect our freedom, and other questions so far from being 'merely' historical that I have dared to describe them as having a practical significance.

This, for me, is the promise of intellectual history, and it is I think in part because the subject has been recognized as having this promise that it has come to be more widely practiced in recent times. Or rather, it has come to be more widely practiced in some places, although not in others. Important research of this kind has been done in France: one immediately thinks of Foucault's studies in this idiom, which have had such a powerful impact. Important research of a similar kind has also been done in Canada: one thinks of Jim Tully, and also of Ian Hacking, who is now to be found at Foucault's old stamping-ground, the Collège de France. So too in Australia: here one thinks of Conal Condren, Andrew Fitzmaurice, Steve Gaukroger and many others. And so too England, where a younger generation of intellectual historians, as I have noted, is now busily at work. By contrast, the subject remains relatively marginal in the United States. Why this should be so I do not know, but it is has been one of my underlying aims in these remarks to suggest that it is a matter for regret.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> This is a revised version of Quentin Skinner's response to Robert Darnton's presentation at *The History of Books and Intellectual History* conference, sponsored by the Center for the Study of Books and Media at Princeton University (see previous article).

**ABSTRACT**

This article is a response to Robert Darnton's comments on the relations and tensions between intellectual history and the history of books. The author comments on three arguments presented by Darnton. One is that intellectual historians often pay little attention to a question that seems to be of central importance to historians of the book: diffusion. Skinner argues that, to intellectual historians, the wide diffusion of a particular work is not a sure sign of its importance. Conversely, many of the greatest books of the past were not best-sellers. Another point made by Darnton is that intellectual historians often study books that are read and understood only by a small handful of people, a practice that constitutes a form of elitism. Skinner denies the charge of elitism by arguing that intellectual historians also study lesser-known works, and that this criticism can only be made from a philistine viewpoint. Finally, Skinner comments on the issue of the purpose of intellectual activity, defending the position that it plays the role of critically illuminating the moral and political concepts that are nowadays used to construct and appraise our common world.

**KEYWORDS**

Intellectual history, history of books, discourse analysis, diffusion.

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## THE POLITICS OF CONCEPTUAL HISTORY

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Political agents never have a complete understanding of their own activity. Nonetheless, understanding the agents' self-understanding is a necessary step toward understanding their activity. I want to apply this principle to the history of the History of Political and Social Concepts Group (HPSCG), by writing, in Koselleckian terms, a kind of *Aufschreibung* of this history by one of its initiators.<sup>1</sup> My thesis is that conceptual history is becoming increasingly indispensable due to the historical trends in political practices, particularly because of the relative transition from a politics of answers to given questions to a politics of thematizing the questions themselves.

### WHY THE HISTORY OF CONCEPTS?

The international activities surrounding the history of concepts have grown into a much greater network of activities than any of us could ever have imagined or expected when we launched the idea of holding the first international conference at the Finnish Institute in London in June of 1998. Why has such a simple move in academic politics contributed to such a wide range of activities? What I will offer here are speculations using both my imagination as well as certain tools offered by the history of concepts itself, either of the Koselleckian or of the Skinnerian style.

One of the grounds for the relative success achieved by the HPSCG lies in the launching of an initiative from below by individual scholars. A well-financed and carefully planned long-term research policy run by, for example, one of the various national academic establishments, UNESCO, the EU, or the European Science Foundation would surely not have been able to surpass our accomplishments. They would have inevitably spent too much time on planning and too much money on administration and on ensuring the

participation of “celebrities,” and the content would have been just as boring as the official texts usually are. Were the history of concepts to be offered as one of the main topics of an establishment research policy, say of the EU, I think we would be forced to view such eventual developments with suspicion. The day conceptual history becomes a “normal science” in the Kuhnian sense I would like nothing more to do with it.

A rule of thumb in academic life is never to wait for someone else to propose the organization of something you yourself would like to propose. If you come up with a good idea it is always better to write the proposal for it yourself, even at the cost of being obliged to organise everything.

Nothing is easier to renounce than a new idea without institutional backing; failures need no explanations here. Why was this not the case with our history of concepts? What was the specific rhetorically appealing and persuasive moment in our proposal? Nothing is more difficult to “explain” than contemporary events in which you have participated and which are still in the midst of an ongoing process of change. The point of an *Aufschreibung*, however, is to speculate by approximations, which can be superseded later.

We have no reason to claim that our modest proposal would have been somehow exceptional or outstanding. Nonetheless, it “touched” some audiences by offering them something new. How we were actually able to find this audience of people who were interested in the history of concepts, nobody can say for sure, but the question does deserve some attention.

The first point I would like to make is that the academic lines of demarcation are becoming blurred in several respects. Intra-disciplinary organizations have little to offer in this day and age. Political science organizations such as the IPSA and the ECPR have become playgrounds inhabited by roughly the same people for decades. Such organizations should, of course, be “misused” for the subversive purpose of exploring conceptual history. This same stagnation also holds true for intra-partisan institutions: academic exchange requires learning different views, not only declaring your own position. This being the case, the initiative of the HPSCG has quite successfully managed to recruit colleagues with different intellectual and disciplinary backgrounds.

In addition, we could speculate on the role of the internationalization of the academic world in our fields. The 1990s not only bear the testimony of huge official exchange programmes of academic mobility at the undergraduate level. Simultaneously, international conferences and publications have

become a central academic merit, especially for young scholars. The internationalization of career, co-operation, and discussion patterns, parallel to the unexpected intensification of the extension of the political institutions and modes of exchange surrounding the European Union, have subverted the national playing fields. A non-disciplinary and academically non-partisan international network of regular co-operation without much administration simply appears to appeal to people who are either new to the field or tired of the official institutions.

In short, it seems to me that we have touched an audience of nomadic and cosmopolitan academics, who are dissatisfied with the established and compartmentalized modes of research and exchange, and who are eagerly awaiting something new. They, in turn, have used the HPSCG meetings as a kind of experimental field for finding arenas for their own work. Assuming that our work continues, I feel certain that this will lead to publications, conferences and other activities concerning the history of concepts in the most unexpected places and will create a kind of juxtaposition of conceptual history with unexpected types of research.

The dimensions of change that I have invoked thus far refer, in Koselleckian terms, to a distinct type of temporal layers. All of them mark the breakdown of that relative stable order of nations, disciplines, and intellectual schools that has characterized the post-World War II politico-academic cultures. One of the great advantages of conceptual history has, more or less unwittingly, been the ability to play with the specific chances that are opened up by these elements of the breakdown of order. I think we should continue to resist all claims to build up new forms of definitive order and preserve these diffuse, fragile, fuzzy, chaotic, or contingent phenomena. In doing so, the history of concepts presupposes a competence in academic politicking and will stand a chance if it succeeds in creating new *Spielräume* for research and academic networks.

It is worth speculating on the question of what the specific novel dimension in conceptual history actually appeals to this kind of audience without fixed disciplinary, national or academic identities. Is it a mere passing academic fad or trend, which, to quote H-U Wehler's less successful prophecy, parodied by Lucian Hölscher,<sup>2</sup> *would schon auf mittlere Sicht in die historische Sackgasse führen?* I want to direct attention to two different stylistic levels, both referring to distinct temporal layers that are present in the current intellectual and political cultures. The first concerns the various styles of the politics of

thought, while the second concerns the styles of the politics of action, or, if you wish, the politics of politics.

### A TRANSVALUATION OF ACADEMIC VALUES

I have an aversion to universalistic periodizations, such as modernity and post-modernity, capitalism, democracy, globalization or any such titles that aim at encompassing entire eras. Such global labels have the flair of essentialism, as if “things” would “really be” something independently of the modes of posing questions and the perspectives toward approaching them. I think one of the historical points of the history of concepts is to struggle against such essentialist assumptions, to mark the historicity, mutability, contestability and contingency of every global label attributed to the present era or to the contemporary situation in the world in general.

Using the tendency of conceptual history not to search for ancient origins but for recent conceptual breaks, I would claim that the comprehensive and nominalistic version of perspectivism has its origins in the works of Friedrich Nietzsche and Max Weber. In his essay on objectivity from 1904 Weber virtually outlines the programme of conceptual history, and in several phases, most famously in his analysis of Luther’s concept of *Beruf*, he also practices something analogous to that which we refer to today as conceptual history.<sup>3</sup> It is only in the post-Nietzschean and post-Weberian world that approaches such as conceptual history appear as a legitimate academic styles of activity at all.

The work of Nietzsche and Weber marks an academic *Umwertung der Werte*, the questioning of the progressive search for certain knowledge and for stable political order. The decades from the 1890s to the 1920s are fascinating. In certain respects that period was more decisive in terms of conceptual changes than the Koselleckian *Sattelzeit*. This break was interrupted during the era of “totalitarian” regimes, World War II, and the subsequent post-war period with its ideology of reconstruction — which still requires a proper recapitulation on a broad comparative basis.

When examining the case of conceptual history, however, we must note a certain historical paradox. It is not the militant Nietzscheans and Weberians but rather the nostalgists who were opposed to nineteenth-century progressivism — Carl Schmitt, Otto Brunner, and Werner Conze in particular — and who lie in the background of the German *Begriffsgeschichte*. Thomas

Etzemüller, studying the original plans of *Lexikon* — which was an early outline of what we now know as *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* — in the *Arbeitskreis für moderne Sozialgeschichte*, quotes Conze’s “Unbehagen über unsere historische Sprachverwirrung” to conclude that that enterprise acted as a valve (*Ventil*) for clarifying concepts.<sup>4</sup> Reinhart Koselleck has also failed to properly explicate why the *Sattelzeit* would have come to an end around 1850, tacitly excluding this problem from his considerations on *Begriffsgeschichte* after the early 1970s.

The current practitioners of the history of concepts have either never known or happily forgotten such nostalgic origins. In terms of the present-day history of concepts, Nietzschean and Weberian perspectivism play a much more prominent role through a number of mediations. It has also played a central role in what was once called the “revisionist” school in the history of political thought as well as in the revival of rhetorical historiography in various forms. Moreover, this holds true for the Koselleckian variant of *Begriffsgeschichte*, at least since the early 1980s.

The insight that even concepts have a history of their own still remains counter-intuitive to any introductory course on methodology of the human sciences. The decisive move, a real *Umwertung der Werte* in the academic culture, I think, has been to turn this very historicity from a residual that could not have been overcome into a subject matter of research, into an instrument of the improved understanding of the changing uses of concepts.

All this can be more easily realized if conceptual history is practiced not as an intra-academic history of disciplines or of scientific research, but as a history of the concepts actually used by primary human agents — as opposed to a history of the concepts used by their interpreters. Extending the proposals of Quentin Skinner and others to broaden the sources of the history of political thought to include the speeches and writings of acting politicians allows us to better understand conceptual changes as changing political tools. The liberation from the tutelage of various experts and specialists is one of the widely neglected advantages of democratic and parliamentary politics, which should also be taken more closely into account in the study of conceptual history.

#### FROM THE POLITICS OF ANSWERS TO THE POLITICS OF QUESTIONS

My most crucial claim concerns the inherent link between the study of the changing uses of concepts in political practices and the changing character

of these practices themselves. The quarrels no longer concern only the standpoints themselves, but the questions one decides to take on, the “agenda-setting,” as the jargon goes. For example the famous “non-decisions” are intelligible in terms of both the Collingwoodian “logic of question and answer” and Quentin Skinner’s famous denial of the existence “perennial questions.”<sup>5</sup> When Collingwood writes in his *Autobiography* that “each question has to ‘arise,’” he implies that the understanding of politics has increasingly become an understanding of the rise of new politically controversial questions.<sup>6</sup>

From the perspective of the history of concepts, in the context of the transition from the politics of issues and standpoints to the politics of agenda-setting, the formulation of the questions themselves become politically key “issues.” Of course, the first types of questions do not vanish. For example, the increasing use of referenda also accentuates the simplification of questions requiring an either-or-type of answer. However, the old either-or decisionism is made obsolete insofar as questions such as why, when, and how a topic becomes a political issue are increasingly invoked when dealing with such issues themselves.

In the names of government ministries we can detect clear signs of conceptual changes in the understanding of what the government is doing. The classical ministries of “foreign and domestic affairs” were first differentiated by the creation of the ministries of war (later defence), justice and finance. It was only in the twentieth century that the novel types of ministries of education, culture, social affairs, commerce, industry, transport, and, as the latest in the list, of environment and women, were introduced. This additive thematization of issues on the agenda of governmental politics without replacing the principles of the agenda-setting process alludes to a minimal politicization by means of a simple introduction of new and fashionable questions.

The politics of agenda-setting also concerns the mode and rhythm in which the questions are thematized, explicated and presented to the audience. We can detect a tacit unhistorical essentialism in the functionalist and structural styles of sociology, which today is part of the administrative jargon, such as the Swedish “Minister of Infrastructure.” This essentialism is still part of the language of today’s leading generations of politicians, most of whom have studied social sciences or economics in the 1960s and 1970s. Given that politicians have either started dismissing this language as a past fashion and that politicians from different academic backgrounds have entered the arena, insights into the history of question-formation might become more frequent.

The debate surrounding the inclusion into and exclusion from the agenda is conducted in the background of the broader context of public debate, which is chiefly concerned with questions that have moved from the debate to the agenda of parliamentary and governmental decisions. Here, the rhetorical problems of the renaming and reinterpretation of the meaning, significance and normative color of concepts play a key role in the decisions regarding inclusion and exclusion. Changes in the agenda can, accordingly, be analyzed for example in the Skinnerian terms of an innovating ideologist vs. an apologist, both of whom make use of various styles of rhetorical redescription.<sup>7</sup> The illustration of a certain use of a concept as already legitimate in certain respects increases its acceptability in the context in question. A telling historical example comes from the street naming criteria adopted in Paris. The name of the famous revolutionary Auguste Blanqui remained absent from the Parisian street grid until the late nineteenth century. The addition of his name was only legitimated by the fact that the city of Toulon had already dedicated a street to him, which also helped to convince the right-wing city-council to accept the name *boulevard Auguste Blanqui* in the 13th arrondissement: "*ce qui a été trouvé bon pour Toulon ne peut être mauvais pour Paris.*"<sup>8</sup>

The very understanding of a certain question as contingent and controversial marks a politicizing change in the agenda. We can already find a cautious dimension of politicization in the additive strategy, which does not remove old questions from the agenda, but focuses on new ones and tends to shift the old ones into the background. The old questions do not become depoliticized, but rather lose their innovative *Spielraum*. It is not the alleged "objective" weight of the question but rather its role in reshaping the political constellations that matters. In the volume *Kontroverse Begriffe*,<sup>9</sup> German linguists aptly illustrate how in the Federal Republic, politicization through the thematization of new questions also altered the entire political constellation, because the old dividing lines could not be applied to these new questions. The feministic critique of existing linguistic practices serves as an example. The double engendering or de-engendering of the names of political agents have opened, both in Germany and elsewhere, a fierce debate on a subject that was hardly understood to be a controversial subject even as recently as the 1960s.<sup>10</sup>

At the core of the rhetorical controversies lie various attempts to politicize concepts, in which no *Spielraum* of contestation and contingency had previously been acknowledged. We should become more attentive than ever to

situations in which the acting politicians also become conscious of conceptual questions, especially of their rhetorical dimensions of naming, coloring and range of reference. Since the 1980s it has become increasingly difficult for politicians to simply denounce the role of “mere” semantic or rhetorical levels by opposing them to “deeper” or more “substantial” levels of meaning within a given controversy. The intertwining between language and reality, thinking and formulation, concepts and rhetoric has been better understood, despite the still common search for basis, essence, and so on. A new sense of both literary and oratorical qualities among the politicians is already obvious, and the insight into the different layers of conceptual controversies would also serve as a resource for a competent and innovative politician.

There are no naturally political questions, but only questions that have been politicized. Issues arise only in response to moves or processes of politicization, and only when they are thematized as contingent and controversial topics. Each of them has its own different temporal layers and contextual indexes that indicate when, how, and where they have become politicized. We may always ask whether they still carry any kind of political weight in a current situation, or whether they have been devaluated in favor of more recently politicized questions. In other words, the politicization of a new topic on the agenda challenges the previous politicizations, but, as the names of the various ministries indicate, does not simply render the oldest questions less important. Here, Koselleck’s idea that every concept has different temporal layers appears highly valuable.<sup>11</sup>

One of the main differences between the nineteenth and twentieth-century modes of thematizing the concept of politics is related to the difference between the politics of a relatively stable and quasi-spatial polity compared to temporalized politics, in which different modes and layers of politicization are clearly visible. This is mostly apparent visible in the sense of disputes surrounding the everyday uses of the term “political” in the context of such expressions as “political” criminals, prisoners, refugees, associations, organizations and so on. In some cases “political” was a term of reproach and even grounds for persecution, in others, such as in the status of “political refugee,” it was a term implying exemption from persecution. It is easy to see that the radical amplification of the *topoi*, around which politics and the political have been thematized since the nineteenth century, has complicated the debates. Today it is clear that, like such concepts as equality and justice, politics increasingly require an answer to the “in which sense” question in

order to be understood. This question already leads us to the history of the concept, to the tacitly or unwittingly introduced new dimensions of the use of the concept.

The shifting emphasis from the politics of answers to the politics of questions is not independent of the history of the concept of politics. Simultaneously, it renders the conceptual dimension in general as something indispensable for political agents. For example, in no legislation or treaty applying the vocabulary of liberty can it be assumed that the audience would have either a shared meaning of the concept or would interpret the intentions of the enacting agents in a uniform manner. There is no reason to assume that the debate would somehow bring the participants in the dispute closer to one another. The Protagorean principle of making the weaker logos stronger is a good maxim against any claim hinting at the end of conceptual history.

### CONCEPTS AS BUNDLES OF QUESTIONS

The alternative route in terms of dealing with concepts lies, of course, in viewing the history of the controversy as the proper subject matter of any conceptualization. The formulae introduced as instruments in an ongoing political controversy can, then, be taken as the most recent contributions to the histories of conceptual controversies, perhaps giving the interpretation of the concept a new twist when it is transferred and translated into a new political context. Assuming that concepts function as “pivots” — to quote Koselleck again — in the contemporary controversy, there is at least some possibility for change in terms of rendering the controversy intelligible by means of the instruments of conceptual history.<sup>12</sup>

The debate on the contestability of concepts is ongoing, even among conceptual historians, such as Melvin Richter<sup>13</sup> and Terence Ball.<sup>14</sup> If we distinguish between concepts and *termini technici*, for example, between the political concept of proportional representation and the models of distributing seats in parliament, we can understand that, for example, competing models are always related to controversies surrounding the concepts of “proportion” and “representation.” Here, it is clear that a concept refers to a bundle of questions as opposed to a definite answer. When a “question arises,” it means an insight that some concept has become thematized as controversial. In more general terms, when a concept is evoked within a political debate, it

implies the opening up of at least some aspects of the bundle of questions that has been historically collected and transferred by this very concept.

For example, when politicians speak of “parliamentarism,” they may be referring to a bundle of different and partially conflicting interpretations surrounding a single concept. Its range of reference may reach from the constitutional requirement for selecting and dismissing governments via the political principle of the no-confidence motion, to the parliamentary mode of acting politically as opposed to extra- and antiparliamentary modes, up till the principle of “government by speaking.” In addition, I want to direct attention to the distinctive rhetorical dimension in parliamentarism for which the mode of speaking for and against is the main principle of parliamentary procedure. All these usages become intelligible when we note both the historical layers in the context and the rhetorical move that is involved in the speech act that is directed toward a distinct audience.

Quentin Skinner’s principle “that 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 questions to become the leading subjects of debate” also plays a role for concepts.<sup>15</sup> The principle indicates that conceptual questions become an inherent part of the study of politics, simply because the “political life itself” cannot dispense with them. It is my thesis that today there cannot be any serious study of politics — inside or outside the political science departments in academia — without the presence of at least a minimal element of conceptual history.

One difference between answer-oriented and question-oriented politics obviously concerns the range of the *Spielraum* available to competent politicians. Whereas politicians providing detailed answers to common questions may introduce conceptual shifts on a small-scale, for example in the rhetorical nuance of the concept, concept-thematizing politicians attempt to open up new horizons for discussion.

In cases in which the political agenda is contested and the introduction of new questions might increase a politician’s power share, the ability to create conceptual modifications seems to be a precondition for establishing a profile as a creative politician. This is especially the case with politicians who lack the backing of numerical majorities, either in their own parties or in the current parliamentary constellation: even if number remains the *ultima ratio* of democratic politics, as Weber put it, its decisive role can be modified by conceptual innovations.<sup>16</sup> Indeed, we could add to Skinner’s paradigm

of the innovating ideologist that of the innovating politician who cannot dispense with conceptual questions and for whom the rhetorical strategies and tactics of conceptual revisions are an indispensable part of his or her political repertoire.

One of the standard populist reproaches of present-day politics is that it has become so complicated that “ordinary people” are no longer able to understand it. This move seems to view the simple political constellations of the past as if they would have been based on the nature of things. It calls for a return to a simple type of politics, in which the distinctions between government and opposition, right and left wing politics, and so on, were almost visible to the naked eye, not conceivable only by means of a certain political reading. But taking the metaphor of political reading seriously, we have no reason to assume that “ordinary people” would be politically illiterate. The main point is, however, that the politics of questions, and the insight into the historical and rhetorical layers of these questions, also requires a different type of political literacy than that to which we, both professional and occasional politicians, have become accustomed. If conceptual history were ever to play a direct political role, it might concern teaching politicians the styles of both a conceptual reading of politics and a political reading of the uses of concepts.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> R. Koselleck (2000).
- <sup>2</sup> L. Hölscher (1991), 312-322.
- <sup>3</sup> K. Palonen (2000), 145-158.
- <sup>4</sup> T. Etzemüller (2001), 172.
- <sup>5</sup> Q. Skinner (1969).
- <sup>6</sup> R.G. Collingwood (1939), 37.
- <sup>7</sup> Q. Skinner (1974).
- <sup>8</sup> A. Fierro (1999), 87.
- <sup>9</sup> G. Stötzel and M. Wengeler (1995).
- <sup>10</sup> For the French debates see C. Baudino (2001), for the German ones see H. Gorny (1995).
- <sup>11</sup> R. Koselleck (2002), 29-47.
- <sup>12</sup> R. Koselleck (1996), 59-70.
- <sup>13</sup> M. Richter (2000).
- <sup>14</sup> T. Ball (2002).
- <sup>15</sup> Q. Skinner (1978), xi.
- <sup>16</sup> M. Weber (1917), 155-189.

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#### ABSTRACT

The author argues that conceptual history is becoming increasingly indispensable due to the historical trend in political practices to move from a politics of answers to given questions to a politics of thematizing the questions themselves, that is, of agenda-setting. The very understanding of a certain question as contingent and controversial marks a politicizing change in the agenda. From the perspective of the history of concepts, the formulation of questions themselves become politically key issues, given that rhetorical problems of the renaming and reinterpretation of the meaning, significance and normative color of concepts play a key role in the decisions regarding inclusion and exclusion. Assuming that concepts function as "pivots" in the contemporary controversy, there is at least some possibility for change in terms of rendering the controversy intelligible by means of the instruments of conceptual history. If conceptual history were ever to play a direct political role, it might concern teaching politicians the styles of both a conceptual reading of politics and a political reading of the uses of concepts.

#### KEYWORDS

Conceptual history, politics, agenda-setting, rhetorical redescription.

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## CIVILIZATION: COMPARING CONCEPTS AND IDENTITIES

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### A HIGHLY VALUATED AND TRANSNATIONAL CONCEPT

A number of important concepts in the political and socio-cultural sphere are highly valued and used in different languages. This kind of transnational key concepts might be used at first in academic treatises or emerge by chance in scholarly discussions. At a certain point, key concepts are adopted by public opinion and discussed in mass media. Some concepts end up being chanted in the streets as slogans to enforce demands, win elections or malign opponents. Shouting slogans — the most minimalistic political discourse.

The concept of civilization is, as the concept of *democracy*, an example of a highly valued and frequently used transnational concept.<sup>1</sup> *Democracy* was for many centuries used only by scholars until it became a political program and a slogan in the nineteenth century. *Aristocrat* is another example of a scholarly word that became a term of abuse during the Age of Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Likewise, *fascist* and *racist* in the twentieth century have become immediately recognizable transnational terms that can be used to discredit an opponent.

### CIVILITAS/CIVILITÉ

It is useful to return to the roots of the concept of civilization. Unlike *culture*, originally an agrarian term, *civilization* has a political root (Latin *civis*, a translation of the Greek *politês*, citizen). By 1300 *civilitas* had become a very broad concept in Medieval Latin. It signified more than just a political community; it was also a synonym for *humanity/humaneness*. Moreover, it is was a static concept and did not signify a process like the modern concept of civilization.

The reception of Aristotle in the second half of the thirteenth century revived the Latin use of the word in a political sense. For Thomas Aquinas

the *zoon politikon* is an *animal civile*.<sup>3</sup> Although *civilitas* was not yet frequently used in this sense, it could mean city, citizen, citizenship, the rights of a citizen, civic organization. It also acquired the meaning of civic life, city life. And because it was traditionally used in contrast with non-civic, with country life and the peasants, it also came to signify the opposite of non-human, of beastly, and of barbarian.<sup>4</sup> *Civilitas/civilis* gradually became a concept establishing identity. It was used to distinguish us from *them*, like much older pairs of antithetical concepts such as Greek/barbarian, Roman/barbarian, and Christian/heathen.

The concept was also translated into the vernacular. That Dante used *civilitas humana* in Latin to mean the whole of humanity is well known. But Dante was also the first to translate *civilitas* into the vernacular, into the Italian *civiltade*. In the fourteenth century the Italian word *civiltade* was displaced by *civiltà*.<sup>5</sup>

In French *civilité* has been used since the second half of the fourteenth century. In his commentary on Aristotle (1347) Nicole Oresme used *civilité*, meaning social and civic life. In his English translation of the bible at the end of the fourteenth century, Wycliffe used *civility* to translate *civilitas*, meaning Roman citizenship.<sup>6</sup>

Owing to the influence of humanism, the concept of *civilitas* became better known, but at the same time its primary meaning became less broad and its political connotations paled. In the sixteenth century it was most commonly understood as good manners, courtesy, gentility. This is its meaning in Erasmus's famous book *De civilitate morum puerilium* that was first published by Froben in Basel in 1530. The book became one of the best-sellers of the early printing press, being reprinted 30 times in the space of just 6 years.<sup>7</sup> In the course of the sixteenth century it appeared in as many as eighty editions and it was also frequently adapted and translated. Its use as a schoolbook in a bilingual edition partly explains its wide distribution. Erasmus's book has been extensively studied and over-interpreted in various ways by a number of cultural historians.<sup>8</sup>

### CIVILIZATION: THE FIRST OCCURRENCE

The word *civilization*, in English, and *civilisation*, in French, was coined around the middle of the eighteenth century by two men working independently: Adam Ferguson, one of the leading figures of the Scottish Enlightenment, and the marquis de Mirabeau, prominent author of the physiocratic movement

in France.<sup>9</sup> Both of them were well-known authors, who were usually bracketed with Hume and Montesquieu, respectively. Neither Ferguson nor de Mirabeau were regarded as very good stylists and actually both used the new word only in passing, without any special emphasis, as if it was already common in spoken language.

The marquis de Mirabeau (father of the de Mirabeau who gained prominence during the Revolution) is the author of many publications full of confused and original ideas, including *L'ami des hommes ou Traité de la population* that appeared in 1757. In the sentence in which the neologism occurs, he defends the traditional view of religion as the most useful bridle of human vice and without doubt “le premier ressort de la civilisation.” The term occurs elsewhere in the text, too. In a later publication he refers to the cycle of civilization (“le cercle de la civilisation”) (1760).<sup>10</sup> Finally, the following sentence can be found in some notes for a publication titled *L'Ami des femmes ou Traité de la civilisation* (around 1760): “la civilisation est l'adoucissement de ses moeurs, l'urbanité, la politesse et les connaissances répandues de manière que les bienséances y soient observées et y tiennent lieu de loix de détail».

Boswell's conversation with Dr. Johnson on the 23rd of March 1772 on whether or not the word civilization should be included in the dictionary is very interesting.<sup>11</sup> It proves that the word had already been used to some extent in English. One does indeed find the word in Adam Ferguson's *Essay on the history of civil society*, published in Edinburgh, in 1767, and he probably used it in earlier lectures that Boswell attended.

A Gaelic-speaking Scottish highlander by birth, Ferguson was an army chaplain with combat experience on the continent (Battle of Fontenoy, 1754). In 1757 he succeeded David Hume in the post of advocates' librarian at Edinburgh. There he became professor of natural philosophy in 1759. Ferguson may have picked up the word in French conversations. Whatever the case may be, the word occurs exactly three times in his *Essay on the history of civil society*, published in 1767. Unlike *civil society*, Ferguson did not regard it as a basic concept. He did not use it in titles of chapters or sections of his book, nor provide an explicit definition of it. On the first page it is used really only in passing to indicate the goal of the main theme of the book, “Progress: from rudeness to civilization” (translated into French as *De la barbarie à la civilisation*).<sup>12</sup> The other two times, Ferguson used civilization together with the much more frequent word politeness; “our rule of measuring degrees of politeness and civilization,” that is translated without difficulty into *degré de*

*politesse et de civilisation*. Ferguson's praise of progress is not boundless. He realized that progress depends on the standard one uses to measure it: "we are ourselves the supposed standards of progress and politeness." It is very remarkable that the French translate this into: *les modèles de la politesse et de civilisation*, thus translating progress into civilization.

Ferguson also hazards an entomology of polished/politeness. According to him the word originally referred to national laws and types of government (from the Greek polis) and later also to technical skills, literature and trade.<sup>13</sup>

Despite his style of writing, which his contemporaries agreed was obscure, Ferguson's work was rapidly translated into French, and it was regarded in France as an excellent introduction to Voltaire's *Esprit des nations* (*Avant propos du traducteur* p. x), despite his vague and abstract ideas.

Germans however, had great difficulty in translating Ferguson's book particularly because of the lack of German equivalents for politeness and civilization. In the German translation titled *Versuch über die Geschichte der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft* (Leipzig 1768), politeness was still translated into *Höflichkeit* and the word *Zivilization* was not used. *Zivilization* first appeared ten years later in Forster's work.<sup>14</sup> Ferguson's translator C.F. Jünger tried to express the concept of polite and polished with the word *gesittet*.<sup>15</sup> Whereas the French translator only had to deal with Ferguson's obscure style, the German translator was also faced with concepts that could not be translated into German yet. The irony of Ferguson's remark, "mankind generally flatter their own imbecility under the name of politeness," is captured nicely in the French translation: *déguiser sa propre foiblesse en la décorant du nom de politesse*,<sup>16</sup> but is completely lost in German when politeness is translated into the old-fashioned *Höflichkeit*.

### THE CONCEPT CIVILIZATION SPREADS

In the 1760s, *civilization* was used by various authors: Boulanger, Baudeau, Dupont de Nemours,<sup>17</sup> and Linguet.<sup>18</sup> Incidentally, the suffix of the new word *-isation* was unusual in the eighteenth century, *-ité* being the preferred one at the time.

Physiocrats and "economists" viewed the origin and the advance of civilization in terms of the growth of landed property and the development of trade (Baudeau, Raynal, Millar, Adam Smith). In his well-known *Wealth of Nations*, 1778, Adam Smith, who had also attended Ferguson's lectures, even

went to the extreme of describing the invention of firearms as a step in the advance of civilization.<sup>19</sup>

Nevertheless, and this will remain essential, the concept of civilization continued to entail a high regard for modern law and an elevated notion of morality. *Civilisation sans justice* was inconceivable. Civilization also penetrated rapidly into other European languages. In the 1760s it was translated into the Italian *civilizzazione*, the Spanish *civilización*, the German *Zivilization*, and into Danish and Swedish.

Dutch is probably the only exception. In Dutch, the French *civilisation* or the English *civilization* is always translated into *beschaaftheid* or *beschaving* (politeness). Why were the Dutch so attached to the old term, a concept from the field of carpentry without any political connotations? How can such conservatism be explained, precisely in a society that was comparatively open to economic and religious influences from abroad? The perceptive essayist Jean Paul had already noticed the paradox: the Dutch were as tolerant of other religions as they were intolerant of foreign words.<sup>20</sup>

### CIVILIZATION AS A SLOGAN

As the table below indicates, in the course of the nineteenth century civilization became a slogan, as observed by the drastic increase in its use.

1760 – 1780	5
1781 – 1800	90
1801 – 1815	178
1816 – 1830	617
1830 – 1845	614

Results of a search for usages of the word *civilization* during the period 1760-1845 generated by *Frantext*, *Trésor de la langue* (Inalff), a database of historical texts.<sup>21</sup>

The French Revolution embraced *liberté, égalité* and *fraternité* as its principles, but not *civilisation*. For Condorcet, martyr of the Revolution, victim of the Terror, the last *philosophe* to believe wholeheartedly in the Idea of Progress, *civilisation* became a basic concept. It is a term in his scholarly analysis of the progress of humanity, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès*

de l'esprit humain, 1795. For Condorcet civilization is a subject on which one can perform calculations and that can be divided into different levels (*degré de civilisation*). The concept retained its lustre as it were, while the others were tarnished by the excesses that the Revolution perpetrated in their name.

During the nineteenth century in the colonies outside Europe, in Africa, in Asia, and in America, the concept of civilization played a key role in the discourse of colonization. In colonial contexts, the concept was at first used from above, by the colonists, but later on also from below, appropriated by those colonized. The concept of civilization, charged with a cosmopolitan dimension, had a global extension and penetrated also in areas and languages that were hardly influenced by the languages of the European colonial powers (Portuguese, Spanish, English, French or Dutch). Furthermore, it was also during this period that civilization was taken up by non-European languages such as Turkish, Arabic, Persian, Chinese, and Japanese.

Given that, according to specialists, the total number of languages in the world varies from 3,000 to 6,500, it would be interesting to know in how many languages the concept of civilization has not penetrated during the twentieth century and to find the reason for this *refus conceptuel*.

### CONCEPTUAL NATIONALIZATION

The concept of civilization expressed a sense of movement and dynamism when it first emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century. At that time civilization signified a process; later it also came to signify a state of being. The concept of civilization has strong temporal overtones: it is retrospective (historicist) and prospective (forward-looking); it is associated with a particular worldview; it is used in political debate by a wide variety of people. To that extent Reinhart Koselleck's four basic working hypotheses concerning the modernization of German socio-political vocabulary (temporalization, ideologization, politicization and democratization) can also be verified in the concept of civilization.

At the end of the nineteenth century, however, the concept of civilization acquired one more layer of meaning by means of a very virulent semantic process that adds a fifth working hypothesis to the hypotheses of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*: the nationalization of concepts. Of course nationalization is also involved in two of the semantic processes already mentioned, politicization and democratization, but it remains clearly distinct

from them. The nationalization of concepts is particularly pronounced in German-speaking regions, but it operates in other European languages, too.

Attention has been drawn to the shortcomings of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*'s emphasis on the history of concepts during the *Sattelzeit* (1750-1850). Perhaps such an emphasis is justified when studying the history of concepts in German, but it does not seem justified when studying the languages of regions where socio-political and therefore semantic developments are of an earlier or later date. That is why the research project studying the history of the translation of concepts into French begins at the end of the seventeenth century, seventy years before the German *Sattelzeit*. The Dutch research project studying the history of the translation of concepts into Dutch not only emphatically includes the sixteenth century as a kind of proto-*Sattelzeit*, but even earlier medieval periods.<sup>22</sup> For other regions chronological boundaries must also be defined pragmatically according to specific research questions and historical context.

On the other hand, a post-*Sattelzeit* has been very important in the history of a concept such as civilization. Various entries in the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* do indeed extend the historical analysis of concepts to the second half of the nineteenth century and even to the twentieth century. This is especially the case of the rich and stimulating sections written by Koselleck himself. Nevertheless, the focus on more recent periods has not altered the number of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*'s general hypotheses. Here too the comparative history of concepts opens up new perspectives and offers the possibility to expand on the work of the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*.

At the end of the nineteenth century the nationalistic dimension of the meaning of many concepts was further extended. In this dimension it could be negatively or positively charged. In the case of the German language, the concept was polarized into a negative term *Zivilisation* signifying the degenerate culture of the West and a positive term *Kultur* signifying the pure culture of Germany. The First World War, which was portrayed as a battle between Western *Zivilisation* and German *Kultur*, represents the climax of this process of polarization. From the end of World War I to as late as the 1950s, the nationalistic polarization of concepts would not only remain discernible in daily speech, but also continue to influence and impede scholarly study in German.

## A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

Initially the introduction of the new concept was used only occasionally and linked to the translation of texts of famous authors like Adam Ferguson and Condorcet into different languages. One of the most influential texts is the *Histoire de la civilisation en Europe* (1828) of François Guizot, translated in nearly all European languages. In this lucid socio-historical analysis, the concept of civilization is a synonym for progress and the “modernity” of Europe.

Later the concept of civilization became accepted and frequently used with all kinds of meanings, connotations, and intentions. The political and socio-cultural function of the use of the concept could be very different according to the historical context. A comparative approach in the history of concepts opens a whole field of multidisciplinary research: of cultural, socio-economic, and political discourses. Concepts are the smallest particles of language and to study them comparatively is like comparing chemical atoms in different molecules. All kinds of different questions can be posed and a whole range of answers can be expected in a specific linguistic context.

To avoid a mono-linguistic, often national, anachronistic tunnel vision, comparative research is needed. By stressing similarities and dissimilarities, the comparative history of the concept of civilization in different languages offers a stimulating research perspective for a more profound cultural analysis and a better historical comprehension.

So let us begin with the most concrete questions: which persons used the concept of civilization, in what kind of discussion, and what were their motives? Second, on a more general level: what were the ideological and cultural connotations of this “transnationalism?” What are the implications of the use of this transnational concept in a climate of opinion dominated by the idea of progress and an evolution? Third, when was the concept of civilization nationalized? When did it become part of the political discourse on national identity and when was it appropriated by large groups with different statuses and with multiple identities?

Eventually, the concept also became so internalised that the majority of people in a country could identify their own nation as the supreme form of civilization. At that moment the concept completely lost its original cosmopolitan meaning. Civilization becomes a synonym for cultural nationalism, and barbarism its antonym. In that case its sole use is to oppose the other — and other identities — beyond civilization.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> F. J. Meissner (1990).
- <sup>2</sup> P. den Boer (1998).
- <sup>3</sup> J. Fisch (1992), 679-774.
- <sup>4</sup> J. Fisch (1992), 694.
- <sup>5</sup> A. Römheld (1940).
- <sup>6</sup> J. Fisch (1992), 696.
- <sup>7</sup> A. Wesseling (2001).
- <sup>8</sup> N. Elias (1969); R. Chartier (1986), 7-50.
- <sup>9</sup> J. Moras (1930).
- <sup>10</sup> E. Benveniste (1953), 47-53.
- <sup>11</sup> G. Birbeck Hill and L.F. Powell, eds. (1934).
- <sup>12</sup> A. Ferguson (1783).
- <sup>13</sup> A. Ferguson (1966).
- <sup>14</sup> J. Fisch (1992), 723.
- <sup>15</sup> See also F. Oz-Salzberger (1995), 151.
- <sup>16</sup> A. Ferguson (1783), vol. 2, 268.
- <sup>17</sup> See the extensive research of J. Moras (1930).
- <sup>18</sup> See the important addition to the research of Moras by E. Benveniste (1953), 47-53.
- <sup>19</sup> Adam Smith (1947).
- <sup>20</sup> Jean Paul (1813).
- <sup>21</sup> I want to thank Pierre Fiala (Saint Cloud) for his assistance consulting Frantext.
- <sup>22</sup> P. den Boer (2001).

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**ABSTRACT**

This article is a transnational comparative study of the history of the concept of civilization. It starts with a brief review of the meaning of concepts that historically preceded it, such as *civilitas* and *civilité *. Next, it focuses on the appearance of the concept in eighteenth-century England and France and the ways it was used by different political theorists and polemicists, mostly in the sense of politeness. During the nineteenth century in the colonies outside Europe, in Africa, in Asia, and in America, the concept of civilization played a key role in the discourse of colonization. First it was used from above, by the colonists, but later on it was appropriated by the colonized. At the end of the nineteenth century, civilization acquired one more layer of meaning as it was incorporated into nationalistic discourse. Eventually, the concept also became so internalized that the majority of people in a country could identify their own nation as the supreme form of civilization.

**KEYWORDS**

Civilization, European history, conceptual history, nationalism, eighteenth-century France.

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## PATRIOTISM AND GENDER IN THE TRADITION OF MODERN POLITICAL THOUGHT

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A língua é minha pátria,  
E eu não tenho pátria: tenho mátria,  
Eu quero frátria<sup>1</sup>

Caetano Veloso

“Dos filhos deste solo és mãe gentil, pátria amada Brasil.”<sup>2</sup> The final verse of the Brazilian National Anthem, composed by Joaquim Osório Duque Estrada, evinces a curious paradox embedded in Brazil’s republican tradition. This paradox was craftily exposed and then twisted by Caetano Veloso in his song “Língua.” Caetano says that the Portuguese language is his pátria (fatherland) — the standard designation in Portuguese for one’s birthland -, and that he has no fatherland, only a mátria (motherland), but would rather have a frátria (brotherland).

The contemporary association between love and the birthplace and the idea of a fatherland can be attributed to the survival in modern times of the bonds that Filmer, among others, established between *pater potestas* (the power of father over son) and the political dominium of the sovereign over national territory and subjects. Yet, non-orthodox associations of this same brand of political love to the idea of maternity suggests two alternative interpretations of the relationship of subjects and their sovereign, and, by extension, to their birthland. On one hand, a nostalgic and impassioned return to the idea of the land as a fertile womb, a gentle nurturer which provides its children with the bounty necessary for material prosperity. On the other, a delirious, utopian, and sexist projection of a sovereign authority wielded by the mother,

in opposition to the firm and harsh authority of the providing father. In both interpretations there is, however, a common trace: with the motherland replacing the fatherland, the Spartan conception of citizenry — that of citizens ready to wield weapons in defense of their birthland — is removed from the republic and is replaced with the notion of citizens as people in need of motherly protection. It also rids the republic from its ties with a conception of citizen virtue etymologically and viscerally connected to a virile trace of character, as found in Machiavelli and so many other authors of the modern republican tradition.

As shown by José Murilo de Carvalho, this personification of the republic as a feminine figure was already alive in the imagination of nineteenth century Brazil.<sup>3</sup> This association resulted in the import of the feminine image as a symbol for the republic in the aftermath of the French Revolution, particularly among Brazilian positivists inspired by Comte. In contrast with the fatherly portrayal of monarchs, the Revolution in France bred a feminine image of the republic, restored once again with the advent of the Second Republic in 1848. The inspiration for this feminizing of the republic was Greek, since in the context of the Roman republic, the female image represented liberty rather than the republic. It is the association of republic and liberty that allows the two images to converge. As Carvalho reminds us, the long Christian tradition of Marianism in Brazil supplied additional energy to the construction of the image of the republic as a woman.

This linguistic and symbolic tension between the idea of fatherland (*patria*) and the representation of the republic as a woman can be traced back to the classical era and the ways in which classic republicanism was interpreted in the Middle Ages and in the Modern Era. In this article, I will lay out a map of the several forms in which the loyalty of the citizen to the republic were represented by Western political thought and show that a conceptual history of the subject focusing on the perspective of gender can enrich our understanding of the limits of the constitutional patriotism defended by contemporary political theories stemming from democratic liberalism. I will then argue that a new brand of contemporary republicanism depends on freeing questions of citizen loyalty to the republic from the patriarchal mindset still pulsating in contemporary democratic liberalism.

In Aristotle, the association between the question of gender and the foundation of republics is conveyed in the analogies between house and city present in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and in the *Politics*. In the First Book of the *Politics* (1259b), Aristotle states that the relationship between husband and wife is like that between the *politikos* and their fellow citizens, as in an aristocracy, while the relationship between master and slave is similar to the relationship between monarch and subjects. In the *Ethics* (1161a-b), the analogy is taken further. The *philia* among brothers, due to the fact that they are equals, is of the same nature as the relationship among citizens in the *politeia*.

In the context of classical Roman republicanism, the foundation of republics is intimately connected to the construction of myths of origin and, once again, the question of gender is involved. In the first book of Titus Livy's *Ab Urbe Condita*, the narrative of the foundation of Rome begins with a public competition between Collatinus, Lucretia's husband, and other citizens over who has the most virtuous wife. In search of evidence capable of settling the dispute, the group leaves the house of Sextus Tarquinius — the son of the tyrant Tarquinius Superbus — and sets out to Rome. There, they are met by their lasciviously romping wives — with the exception of Lucretia, found dressed modestly working at her loom. Sextus Tarquinius, who accompanied the group, was enamored by her beauty and chasteness, and a few nights thereafter invaded her quarters to fulfill his lustful desires. Unfazed by death-threats, Lucretia finally gave in after the tyrant threatened to rape and kill her and then lay a slave at her side, as proof of adultery. The next day, she went to her husband, father, and Lucius Brutus — a family friend — and narrated what had befallen her. To honor her word she was willing to commit suicide. All attempts to dissuade her proved futile and she drove a dagger into her chest. While her father and husband wept at her side, Lucius Brutus pulled out the dagger from Lucretia's chest and urged all the citizens of Rome to unite and expel the family of Tarquinius Superbus, the tyrant, from the city. The men of Rome joined Lucius Brutus in search of revenge and Rome was liberated. Lucius Brutus and Collatinus were soon thereafter named counselors of the first Roman republic, circa 508/7 B.C..

This connection between the foundation of the republic of Rome and Lucretia's rape is repeated by Cicero in *De Republica* (Book 2:45) and appears in Ovid, Saint Augustine, Salutati, Boccaccio and Machiavelli, both in the

Discorsi and in his play *Mandragola*. Centuries later, in the midst of the French Enlightenment, the same story was told by Rousseau in his unfinished play *The Death of Lucretia* and by Voltaire in the tragedy *Brutus*.<sup>4</sup> All goes to say that, in the course of an important part of the tradition of Western political thought, the story of Lucretia's rape sustained an important connection to the subject of republicanism. Republics have their founding fathers, but also their women, even if it was the death of one that paved the way for the foundation of the Roman republic.

Lucretia's role in the narrative of foundation of republican Rome and the multiple retellings of this story point towards an interesting relationship between the roles of masculine and feminine metaphors in the republican myth of origin. If on the one hand the virtuous acts of men like Brutus lead to the end of the tyranny and the foundation of a republic, the original motivation for uprising lies in an event belonging to the private realm in which female honor is key. *Res publica*, therefore, is not founded in opposition to what is considered private, but rather as a reaction to a breach of this space by a tyrant. The corruption that leads to the end of the tyranny is a violation of moral values pertaining to private life. A woman and her honor are at the center of this private moral order — not the head of the family.

But how do we sort out this apparent tension between a feminine depiction of the idea of republic and a male depiction of the idea of loyalty to it, expressed in the concept of patriotism? In order to fully understand the several forms into which this tension unfolds in the tradition of political thought, we must take a step back and figure out why we call fatherland, and not motherland, the representation of the republican entity to which citizens are loyal.

If we follow Aristotle's lead, the construction of an idea of loyalty to the republic is linked to the way that the virtuous relationships engaged by its constituent citizens are interpreted. And if friendship (*philia*) is one of the highest moral virtues and is ascribed the role Aristotle gave to it in his theory of the forms of government, it remains to be examined how friendship appears in the tradition of political thought, and which role it plays in the foundation of republics and in the construction of its image.<sup>5</sup>

According to Aristotle's theory, there is a dissolution of the platonic link between the concept of love (*eros*) and the concept of friendship (*philia*). While for Plato love was the active element responsible for inducing friendship, for Aristotle love was a passion and friendship a disposition of character (*ethos*).

There are three kinds of friendship, according to the Stagirite, each one classified according to its object. The lowest form of friendship is that based on interest — people become friends due to the fact they can provide each other with benefits. The intermediary form of friendship is that based on pleasure and is most commonly found among the youth. Both friendships based on interest or pleasure are ephemeral, for once interest or pleasure ceases, so does the friendship. The highest form, *teleia philia* — perfect friendship — is based on the possession of similar virtues among kin. Being equals in virtue, they are concerned with each other's fortune as intensely as they are concerned with their own well-being. As long as both remain virtuous, the friendship will last.

For Aristotle, when there is perfect friendship there is perfect benevolence. The virtue of justice, therefore, becomes unnecessary when there is friendship. However, the inverse of this statement is not true: justice *qua* virtue depends on friendship. In order for two people to be just, they must also be friends. This *teleia philia* is the foundation of Aristotle's timocracy<sup>6</sup> in the same way the friendship among equals simulates the *philia* existent among brothers in the *oikos*. This form of government, the *res publica* as it would be called in Latin, would be based upon a form of friendship similar to that between those brothers equal in age and position in the *oikos*. *Politike philia*, the political friendship that enables agreement and peace among fellow citizens of the *politeia*, would eventually derive from *teleia philia*. Hence, what we have is not a fatherland nor motherland, but a brotherland.

During the Roman era, the most explicit discussion about the relationship between friendship (*amicitia*) and birthland (*patria*) is found in Cicero. While for Aristotle the theme of virtue (*arete*) was linked to the disposition of character to act with justice, for the Roman orator, *virtus* was linked to the citizen's disposition to carry out the duties owed to the Roman State. Aristotle thought that perfect friendship had to be converted into political friendship in order for there to be a just society; Cicero, however, thought that this friendship could collide with justice and virtue. The fatherland (*patria*) precedes friendship, according to Cicero, and it is indeed an immoral and shameful act to place *amicus contra patrium*. If the *politeia* was based on fraternal friendship inherent to the ideal of justice as equality, the Roman republic considered friendship a lower and more casual virtue displayed by citizens. As such, the citizen's disposition towards agreement was a more important constituent of justice than friendship. The contrast can be taken further, as

Aristotle believed that *teleia philia* made justice (*dike*) possible, whereas Cicero believed that agreement made *amicitia perfecta* possible.<sup>7</sup> The image of liberty as a woman might have been acceptable in Rome, however the *res publica* could not have been but a fatherland, depicted accordingly by male features. In contrast with Aristotle's conception, the constitution of *patria* preceded any fraternal bond sustained among citizens.

Medieval Christianity performed a shift away from this paternal ideal towards a maternal one. Friendship is relegated to the realm of intimacy, and is limited to the discussion on monasticism. The notion of a more public *amicitia* is transformed by the Stoics into a conception of *philantropia*, a term to be used for the idea of universal benevolence, in which the will to sacrifice one's personal possessions is key in the definition of one's virtue. Thomism further dislocates this theme to the discussion on the concept of *caritas*, which is not a virtue measured by the act of benevolence towards a needy person, but as a means whereby a Christian can contribute to his own salvation. Friendship, as defined by the motto "brothers in Christ" from the New Testament, has no place in this conception of *caritas*. At the same time, the patriarchal ideal of community is replaced by the notion of *ecclesia communæ* — the Church, which is perceived as a maternal figure, responsible for the spiritual well-being of its followers and compassionate towards those who want to be redeemed of their sins. To a great extent, the union between the mother Church and patriarchal monarchs makes way for the emerging nation-states of High Medieval times. The theme of loyalty to the republic in this christianized context assumes motherly features, since loyalty to the Church predominated over loyalty to this or that Christian monarch; when it did not, schisms, revolts, reforms proceeded. Yet, the links between gender and the myth of the foundation of republics were overshadowed by a more important issue to settle: for instance, what was the role of divine volition in the constitution of secular authority? At this point in European history, interest in this theme was limited to Renaissance Italy, where a new conception of loyalty established a renovated patriarchal image of the republic.

In the Italian peninsula, the theme of loyalty was linked to a completely emasculated idea of virtue. *Fortuna*, a fanciful notion always in tension with the virile character of the prince, was given a female role. It does not seem accidental that the tragedy of Lucretia, as described by Titus Livy, was turned into a comedy in Machiavelli's play, *Mandragola*. Machiavelli was a proponent of a republican conception defined by the very masculine idea of *virtú* and,

in his play, Lucretia is not raped by a tyrant but seduced by the charms of Callimaco. He, the seducer, is the one who considers suicide when confronted with the possibility of failure in his game of seduction. While in the Roman story Lucretia's sacrifice is the way in the plot of narrating the foundation of the republic, in Machiavelli's play it is the seduction of Lucretia which allows the plot to unravel. In the same way as *Fortuna*, she must be seduced and conquered, however incomplete this seduction may be. The rape contained in the classic version of the story becomes consent after seduction. Instead of the outcome of reparation (retributive justice) against the violation of a virtuous woman's honor, the result is the foundation of a masculine, virile republic, in which the public realm dominates over anything private. Commenting on Titus Livy's narrative in the *Discorsi*, Machiavelli acknowledges the role of Lucretia's rape in the foundation of the Roman republic, but interprets the event as an accident, and the fall of the tyrannical dynasty of the Tarquinius family as the inevitable consequence of their political corruption.<sup>8</sup> The *res publica* is founded over an already constituted public realm composed of virtuous (because virile and brave) men. In other words, Machiavelli's republic is a fatherland (*patria*), and its citizens are loyal since the "fathers" of this republic are good governors. Their moral virtues in private life matter little.

Machiavelli's masculine conception of the republic prevailed over the fraternal and maternal conceptions present in Aristotle and Christianity, respectively, and it solidified the public character of the rationale of citizen loyalty to the republic, permanently establishing the division of what Kantorowicz called "the King's two bodies." Even under the absolutist rule of the European monarchs of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, this important lesson given by Machiavellian doctrine would be preserved, as well as the masculine image of loyalty to the absolute sovereign.

Montaigne, in his essay on this subject, discusses the issue from a classical perspective, namely, the quest for *teleia philia* or *amicitia perfecta*. He firstly considers that any of these quests are to be undertaken privately, but then imbues them with a more public character. Written with his deceased friend La Boétie in mind, Montaigne's essay does not completely set aside the political discussion about friendship, however his main concern is with the nature of virtuous friendship. In opposition to Aristotle and his followers, who believed that a *teleia philia* could be rationally pursued by people who share things in common, Montaigne elects will — and not reason — as the ultimate enabler of virtuous friendship. It is, according to him, the ascension to virtue

by those who mutually and reciprocally choose to do so. In Montaigne, as pointed out by Sérgio Cardoso, “only the friend gives identity to the friend, and gives him life; the I only assumes its form by association.”<sup>9</sup> While in Aristotle human association was natural, and loyalty to the polis derived from the forms of association and friendship already present in the household, for Montaigne, association is the direct result of a person’s will to establish a bond of perfect friendship; as they are virtuous because of this act, they are apt for association in public life. The citizen, therefore, is a friend above all else, and loyalty to the republic, one can infer, is the outcome of a communion of wills that, to some extent, foreruns the concept of popular sovereignty contained in Rousseau’s idea of general will. Regardless of this possible link to future political theories, we can state that Montaigne’s republicanism reintroduces the image of a brotherhood as originally conveyed by Aristotle.

This reintroduction to a classical ideal of brotherhood suggests that the line separating ancient and modern political philosophies is not so clearly defined. After Benjamin Constant distinguished between ancient and modern liberty, a swathe of authors sought to pinpoint when certain concepts lost their ancient connotations and acquired a distinctly modern connotation. Modernity would therefore have ushered in an era in which the world of politics would be based on new theoretical and practical foundations. However, the main conceptions of the citizen’s loyalty to the republic — whether conceived as being an originally maternal, paternal, or fraternal form of association — remain unstable and it is therefore impossible to adequately identify a turning point in which conceptions of loyalty to the republic become “modern.”

Montesquieu, for example, conjures up the patriarchal image of loyalty to the republic typical of Italian humanists, and presents patriotism as a strictu sensus political virtue, whereby public interest gains precedence over private interest. Unlike men of the Renaissance, however, Montesquieu considers that this virtue is rooted in habits pertaining to the private realm, specifically in the parents’ (i.e. fathers) education of children.<sup>10</sup> According to Rousseau, however, although the masculine image of loyalty remains present, it is not rooted in the *paideia* of the child in his family environment, but in the institution of a civic public religion, built upon freedom, allowing the citizen to permanently identify with the general will voiced by the sovereign. Rousseau replaces the link between perfect friendship and loyalty to the republic, as found in Aristotle, with a more Spartan conception of patriotism that had been presented by Cicero in his discussion on the relationship between *virtus* e citizenship.<sup>11</sup>

The French Revolution and its motto *liberté, égalité, fraternité* was a witness to the reoccurrence of the discussion on fraternity at the heart of the debate involving the nature of the relationship between citizens and the republic. In opposition to the *philantropia* of the Stoics or of the *caritas* of the Tridentine Church, this conception of universalized fraternal love proclaimed by the motto was supposedly imbued by the secularized sense of love to one's kin. However, the universalistic values the motto implied were made secondary in view of the politically volatile and hostile revolutionary process still unfolding in France. The idea of *fraternité*, an integral part of so many political documents of the time, became the least important one in the motto's triad. The contradiction between the universal sense implied by *fraternité* and the fragmented character of the revolution, which pitted brothers against brothers, was also perceived at the time. In several contexts *fraternité* was excluded from the motto and replaced, for example, by motto the *liberté, égalité ou la mort*. At a closer look, even when the idea of fraternity was explicitly evoked it was not necessarily extensive to all members of the fledgling French republic; anti-clerical and anti-nobility resentment still raged. It is not a coincidence that the word "fraternity" was absent from all French constitutional documents after the Revolution. It did not reappear until 1848, when, among other things, the French masonry had become more influential. As in Rousseau, in the context of the Revolution, the concept of patriotism was related to the concept of liberty.

The resurgence of the term "fraternity" after 1848 in France is also related to positivism. After Comte's encounter with Clotilde de Vaux in 1844, to whom he attributed his "moral regeneration," he abandons rationalism, the overriding influence in his positive science, in favor of a civic and lay religion of humanity, which contained significant elements of Rousseau's conception of civil religion as elaborated in *The Social Contract*. After Comte suffers the influence of Clotilde, he goes on to value a conception of fraternity centered on altruism as a functional substitute to Catholic *caritas*. This fraternal love towards humanity, in Comte's thought, was the last hierarchical stage in the evolution of human empathy. It would begin within the family, evolve into the fatherland (*patria*), and culminate in humanity as a whole.<sup>12</sup>

In Comtean positivism, the truly patriotic moment of love for the union of citizens, was still marked by a masculine ideal, since the object of this love was the fatherland (*patria*). What changes, however, is the manner through which this love is rendered. It is not maternal love aimed towards the

Mother-Church; not paternal love for the pater-monarch; not childish love for the mother-republic. The citizen's love for the fatherland (*patria*) should emulate the highest form of altruism — love for humanity. Clotilde often represented this kind of love in the positivist art of the nineteenth century. This love, therefore, simulated the love experienced towards the female object of affection; much in the same fashion Aristotle describes the love between husband and wife, which according to him mirrored the idea of aristocracy. It seems that John Stuart Mill's contact with Comte's philosophy influenced him in his proposal of a very similar conception of universal fraternity, and that the solution to the problem of republican government, hence, also had to be guided by an aristocratic principle: representative government. In sum, the lay idea of fraternity introduced by the French Revolution and elaborated by Comte and Stuart Mill did not significantly modify the conceptual debate over the theme of loyalty to the republic due to the fact both of them believed that patriotism was based on the extension of a particular kind of friendship to humanity as a whole, which had the friendship between husband and wife as its ultimate model.

An even more important aspect of the changes undergone by the concept of patriotism in the nineteenth century was the incorporation of the concept of nationalism in the contemporary political discourse.<sup>13</sup> The advent of a romantic concept of nation represented a very peculiar way of interpreting patriotism. Instead of interpreting this concept and its relation to the loyalty of citizens to the republic in light of liberty and whatever maternal, paternal, or fraternal ties that kept the political body together, the main focus turned to the loyalty of members to the nation. As a reminder, at this point in time the concept of nation is still unlinked to the question of how modern States came into being. In Gellner's definition, what defines a nation is the sharing of a culture, in other words, "a system of ideas, signs, associations, and forms of behavior and communication."<sup>14</sup> This means that it is possible to conceive of States composed of several nations, as well as nations cut through by territorial boundaries between States.

Nationalism conceived as such refers to the loyalty of members of a people to the culture and traditions of a nation. Furthermore, in the modern context of its introduction into political discourse of the nineteenth century, it referred to the idea of self-determination of peoples to constitute their own States and also to the idea that territories occupied by a given nation would not be divided by other political divisions. Thus we can say that nationalism

is a form of patriotism that functions as a symbol, as a mechanism employed to politically legitimate the values shared by a given association that pictures itself as a community, regardless of all members knowing each other. What supports the concept of nation is the sense of an imagined community based on tradition (languages, in particular) and a common history.<sup>15</sup> Nationalism can be expressed by participation in rites, arts, in community festivals; basically, it is expressed by loyalty to a nation's culture. As a particular form of loyalty to a certain public and shared life, therefore, nationalism, given that nations and republics generally do not coincide geo-politically speaking, allows for an idea of loyalty to the republic that pays no respect to territory.

It is curious to notice how authors who tried to build a universalistic understanding of the subject of loyalty to the republic that avoided romantic nationalism were forced to abandon the concept of a nation *per se*, or at least to accept a more relative definition of nation. This is the case with Kant, for example, whose conception of perpetual peace brings forth a conception of patriotism directed to humanity as a whole, such as was the case with the ideal set aside by the French Revolution and later proposed by Comte and Stuart Mill. The latter, however, distant from Kant's political world could speak only of a universal and lay fraternity without deriving the political implications of dealing with the concept of nation.

The next question is how gender symbolism becomes relevant in this territory-less version of loyalty to the republic engendered by nationalism. The use of the expressions *Vaterland* and *Mutterland* in German are interesting examples of what nationalism could have done to patriotism. While in English the expression fatherland and motherland were always used interchangeably, the corresponding terms in German make reference to different semantic fields. The adjective *vaterländlich* has been used in German since the eighteenth century to refer to the idea of loyalty to the republic, and the neutral noun *Vaterland* is the term used to describe "my father's land," literally. In other words, the adjective can be translated to patriotism, conserving the masculine and paternal metaphor. The term *Mutterland*, on the other hand, is used in German to designate the "mother country" in the context of imperialism, that is, the *Mutterland* vis-à-vis its colonies. In this case, it is noticeable that the feminine and maternal expression acquires a sense not unfamiliar to the romantic idea of a nation, since only those who belong to the center of the empire can belong to the *Mutterland*. Nationalism, therefore, as a specific form of the idea of patriotism, is an expression ambiguous enough to become

associated with either masculine or feminine metaphors yet permanently associated and characterized by the kind of love and friendship that exist among parents and children. It is no accident that when there is the juxtaposition of republic and nation in a same political and territorial unit there is room for linguistic ambiguities such as the one found in the last verse of the Brazilian anthem which speaks of the “mother-fatherland” of all its Brazilian children. Nevertheless, nationalism completely shuns the Aristotelian ideal of a brotherhood kept alive by authors such as Montaigne.

This tense and paradoxical dialectic between patriotism and nationalism has been ingrained into the history of twentieth-century nations-states, both in representative democracies, and authoritarian or totalitarian regimes. In fact, the driving force behind many — maybe most — of the twentieth century wars involved attempts to make nations and fatherlands coincide whether in the instance of fatherlands composed of nations in conflict, nations vying to become a *Mutterland* through conquest, nations divided by two or more fatherlands, or nations trying to liberate themselves from empires. Whichever the case and metaphor adopted, nationalism becomes the paradigm for patriotism in the twentieth century. This *status quo* endures until the end of the century, when nation-states are gradually weakened by an emerging international economic order. Only then will we start to witness a new conceptual change in the formulation of citizen loyalty to the republic.

## II

In dealing with the question of the attribution of sovereignty to the people of a republic, the main theories of democracy of the twentieth century produced a two-folded conceptual distinction that revolved around the paradoxes of a “mother-fatherland.” The ideal of representative democracy strives towards the reconciliation between the idea of a citizenry loyal to the nation — which shares values and benefits deriving from inclusion in a legal order — and the idea of citizenry loyal to the republic — since the sovereign choice of representatives demands civic duties in return. That is, these theories allow for distinct maternal and paternal ideals of loyalty. The model of loyalty to the republic is presented as a paternal relationship, made up of civic duties and loyalty to the sovereign; the model of loyalty to the nation is represented as a maternal relationship, constituted of the right to reap the fruits of the nation-state’s riches and culture.

The conversion of this ideal of representative democracy into a constitutional order demands an architecture of the distribution of rights and duties, which, due to the liberal context from which it sprung, concedes priority to fundamental rights, sometimes conveyed as untouchable and even as prior to the establishment of an order. It is also a result of the historical and logical precedence of the political and territorial unit, which solidifies the idea of nation. Before becoming a republic consisting of dutiful citizens, therefore, every democratic constitutional order is expressed as a nation, composed of citizens with the right to belong to and participate in its culture and wealth — a right that is prior to the duties they shall be encumbered with by the republic.

Jürgen Habermas offers an alternative solution to the problem of the precedence of rights over duties. His political theory does so by establishing a novel conception of loyalty to the republic — “patriotic constitutionalism.” According to Habermas, the complexity and plurality of contemporary societies — at least from a cultural perspective — requires a new conception of patriotism, able to simultaneously establish its accordance with a territorially defined legal and constitutional order while also liberating it from a nationalistic agenda which would subject patriotism to strictly communal allegiances. In the context of multicultural communities, that is, communities composed of several national and ethnic identities, the communitarian solution to the problem of patriotism, in Habermas’s view, removes from the idea of loyalty to the republic its capacity to cope with the cultural identities that today exist within most contemporary nations. In this sense, for democratic citizenship to exist, the concept of patriotism would have to be revised in order to shed its excluding and parochial contents.

Much like Kant’s universalism, Habermas’s “patriotic constitutionalism” points in the direction of world citizenship. Events such as the Vietnam War, the political transformation in Eastern Europe, and the Gulf War are used and interpreted as producers of arenas relevant to an emerging international civil society. In this version of patriotism, the citizen’s loyalty to the republic does not take place within territorial boundaries, nor through national means of communication. Patriotism is demonstrated by participation in the democratic procedures designed to express popular sovereignty. The citizen’s loyalty is ultimately owed to these procedures.<sup>16</sup> We can therefore say that if, on one hand, nationalism unhitched the concept of patriotism from territory, Habermas’s Kantian theory of democracy does the same in relation to the community.

Let us now consider what happens to the gender issue in this version of patriotism. “Patriotic constitutionalism,” as formulated by Habermas, establishes that citizens must be loyal to procedures. Loyalty to these procedures is not simply or exclusively an act of whim or will. It results from the impelling force of communicative rationality. The citizen’s loyalty is rationally imposed, whether it eventually assumes either paternal or maternal forms. We are thus confronted with a conception of loyalty that much resembles the one influenced by nationalism. In contrast to nationalism, however, whose conception of loyalty within a liberal context asserted the precedence of rights — which corresponds to a maternal loyalty — over duties — paternal loyalty —, Habermas proposes that these loyalties should be constituted simultaneously in the construction of a liberal-republican order.

The problem with this concept of patriotism which is shed from its communitarian sense, however, is analogous to the one Kant faced when he tried to idealize a political organization guided by cosmopolitan values. Unless we conceive of a world with no national borderlines, we must to some extent confront politics as a struggle that pits friends against enemies, as proposed by Carl Schmitt. In other words, no matter how much optimism one nurtures towards supra-national organizations such as the European Union, we cannot escape the hard facts of conflicts among nations (whether they be actual or potential). From this perspective, we are forced to introduce some measure of parochialism in the interpretation of the citizen’s loyalty to the republic, which means that we cannot practice patriotism according to Habermas’s universalistic perspective. Patriotism, as Hannah Arendt reminds us, is and always will be the “responsibility over a common and limited community.”<sup>17</sup> Faced with this inescapability, Habermas’s “patriotic constitutionalism” only serves as a normative horizon for those national communities in which the democratic procedures he proposes are already firmly established as shared moral values. Citizens identify first with the republic and only then do they demonstrate loyalty — identity with whom they are loyal precedes the manifestation of loyalty itself. Once again, we must resort to Aristotle and his approach to friendship.

As demonstrated by Charles Taylor, the concept of patriotism still is a concept positioned at an intermediary point between friendship as a familiar sentiment of loyalty towards those close enough and altruistic dedication to the “other” expressed in universal terms in the concept of lay fraternity developed by nineteenth-century positivists. In other words, patriotism must

remain, as an imposition by the semantic field it occupies and as a result of the actual realities with which it deals, located between fraternal universalism and the exclusiveness of friendship.<sup>18</sup> This middle ground, whether in classical or contemporary republicanism, requires a conception of a common good, shared and valued by the citizens and which translates into loyalty to the republic. This common good can be understood from a broader perspective, in which it coincides with the good of each one individually and is thus converted to the good of all, or from a more restricted perspective, referring to convergent “life plans,” which are shared and valued by citizens.

The kind of patriotic constitutionalism proposed by Habermas is capable of absorbing this first and broader perspective, since the rule of law, in which procedures and regulations are universally and equally applied to all citizens, can become the object of the loyalty of all. The problem, however, is that this broader interpretation of common good is not capable of fully understanding and explaining a reversed scenario: cases in which citizens revolt against the republic when instigated by the violation of something they consider to be part of the common good. Liberal interpretations conceive that the well-being of one individual coincides with the well-being of others, therefore such revolt against the republic would necessarily have to be interpreted as a response to a violation of the citizens’ private interests. Nevertheless, as shown by Taylor, this revolt rarely results from long or short-term calculations made by citizens, and therefore has little to do with the scale of interests that goes from altruism to egotism. It is quite the opposite. Generally, what motivates this revolt is a kind of patriotic identification with a form of shared life that is being violated. Even the liberal interpretation requires a conception of common good that contains moral and ethical elements more robust than simply the rule of law and patriotic constitutionalism. In other words, liberalism requires a motivational dimension for patriotism. This basic proposition which links liberty to patriotism is what Taylor calls the contemporary “republican thesis.”<sup>19</sup>

It is precisely because patriotism is less than a set of shared values in a communitarian order but more than the minimalistic deontological universalism inspired by Kant — which combine a paternal conception of duties and a maternal notion of rights as far as loyalty is concerned — that we need to conceive patriotism as love towards a particular object of another nature located somewhere between friendship and fraternity: a form of moral parochialism that is not defined by citizen rights and duties, but actually

precedes these relationships by means of what Richard Dagger calls “bonds of reciprocity among citizens.” In defense of this moral parochialism, loyalty to the republic should be placed above any universal commandment given that bonds of reciprocity are shared among fellow citizens who define the terms of mutual respect in the democratic public sphere.<sup>20</sup>

By means of Taylor’s and Dagger’s qualified moral parochialism of contemporary republicanism, we return to a fraternal conception of patriotism — a fraternity such as Aristotle’s *politeia* and Montaigne’s skeptical republic — centered on the public friendship of equals. A strong conception of the common good, such as the one proposed by communitarians, centered on shared values and moral traditions, is not needed in order to support this republican point of view. A concept of the common good based on ethical and political values that emerge from bonds of reciprocity established among fellow citizens suffices. Nevertheless, the weak conception of common good purported by liberalism will not hold — our loyalty to the republic is independent and precedes whatever it grants us in the form of material benefits or individual rights we believe we deserve.

One question remains: what protects us from the possibility of republicanism’s moral parochialism transforming itself into communitarianism or even fundamentalism? The solution proposed by nineteenth-century positivists involved a conception of secularized fraternity; the one put forth by twentieth-century liberals was a universalized conception of human rights. Can this contemporary republicanism and its moral parochialism incorporate any of these solutions? I believe that the argument presented up to this point justifies a negative answer. We need a conceptual alternative that allows us to express a universal friendship towards humanity and which thereby liberates us from the always potentially bellicose solutions suggested by parochialism and its “friend/enemy” logic.

This article is not the appropriate place for a more detailed analysis of this issue. However, I would like to suggest at least one possible solution. The idea of fraternity is limited on the one side by localism and on the other by exaggerated forms of universalism. If on the one hand the term, today, seems to be exclusively used to describe small groups with specific objectives — as is the case with the fraternities ubiquitous in North-American university campuses. On the other hand, when expressed in the form idealized by nineteenth-century positivists, fraternity corresponds to the loyalty to a purely abstract and imaginary humanity, which is blind to differences among peoples,

nations, and republics. For many ethical or moral reasons, we might not wish to include these in our friendship towards humanity, defined as a group of human beings with whom we share a minimal set of values, such as the idea of fundamental human rights.

The interesting (and certainly intentional) replacement of the motto of the French Revolution, *liberté, égalité et fraternité*, by “liberty, equality, and solidarity” in the text of the European Union’s constitution illustrates the contradictory nature of the relation between a certain kind of republican moral parochialism and a more universal idea of friendship. The idea of solidarity, in opposition to the idea of fraternity, evokes a kind of life in society in which there are actual co-dependencies between republics. They become solidary because they need each other to guarantee their survival and continuation as political and territorial units. In this sense, the ideal we are seeking in our attempt to overcome the gender-related biases in the treatment of different conception of loyalty to the republic in modern political thought may be denominated *solidary brotherhood*.

In sum, we can parody this article’s epigraph, taken from Caetano Veloso’s song *Língua*, and say that our republic is our fatherland (*patria*). But we do not live in a Spartan fatherland; we live in a liberal motherland (*mátria*); and if we wish to live in a solidary brotherhood (*frátria*), we will need to redefine the terms we use to express and articulate our ideal of loyalty to the republic.

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> “Language is my fatherland; And I have no fatherland, I have a motherland; I want a brotherland.”
- <sup>2</sup> “Thou art the gentle mother of the children of this soil, Beloved fatherland, Brazil!”
- <sup>3</sup> See J. M. Carvalho (1990).
- <sup>4</sup> For a genealogy of the uses of Lucretia’s story see M. M. Matthes (2000).
- <sup>5</sup> For an excellent compilation of the many interpretations of friendship from ancient to contemporary philosophy, see Francisco Ortega (2002).
- <sup>6</sup> A term Aristotle equals to *politeia* in the *Nicomachean Ethics*.
- <sup>7</sup> See Ortega (2002), 53.
- <sup>8</sup> *Discorsi* (3,5)
- <sup>9</sup> Sérgio Cardoso (1999), 192.
- <sup>10</sup> Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*, book 4, chap.5.
- <sup>11</sup> J.J.Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, book 3, chap.15, and book 4, chap.8.
- <sup>12</sup> For a summary of this “Clotildean turn” in Comte’s thought, see Carvalho (1990), 129-132.
- <sup>13</sup> On the impact of the concept of nationalism on nineteenth-century positivism, see Mary G. Dietz (1989).
- <sup>14</sup> E. Gellner (1983), 7.
- <sup>15</sup> B. Anderson, (1991).
- <sup>16</sup> J. Habermas (1996), Appendix 2.
- <sup>17</sup> H. Arendt (1951), 232.
- <sup>18</sup> C. Taylor (1989), 166.
- <sup>19</sup> C. Taylor (1989), 172.
- <sup>20</sup> R. Dagger (1997), 59.

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**ABSTRACT**

The author provides a historical analysis of the use of gender metaphors in republican discourse, chiefly the representation of the republic as a father (*patria*) and as a mother (*matria*). Both metaphors are present throughout the history of Western political thought, from ancient Rome to the Modern Era. The text shows that their use has profound implications in the way citizenship is conceived and loyalty to the republic can be justified. Finally, the text also identifies a third republican metaphor, fraternity, which has been mostly neglected by republican thought, with few important exceptions. The author concludes by exploring the normative and theoretical possibilities opened up by substituting fraternity for the gendered metaphors.

**KEYWORDS**

Republic, patriotism, citizenship, fraternity, solidarity.

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## ROMANTIC PHILOSOPHY AND NATURAL SCIENCES: BLURRED BOUNDARIES AND TERMINOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

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In his introduction to the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant defined his critical philosophy according to the image, which subsequently would become famous, of the Copernican Revolution. However, as Helmut Müller-Sievers shows, this image is misleading regarding the true content of Kant's criticism: in fact, with his system, Kant (ideally) again placed man in the center of the universe from which Copernicus had (physically) dislodged him.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the physical metaphor was somehow an anachronism in his time: toward the end of the eighteenth century, biology had displaced physics from the condition of the "queen of the sciences" and had become the fundamental source of conceptual tools and motifs for both philosophical reflection (including Kant's) and literature. Undoubtedly, the other metaphors Kant used in his introduction to define his philosophical system were much more accurate regarding its meaning: an "epigenesis of pure reason." With this definition Kant introduced a fissure in Western thinking, which would also determine a fundamental turn in literature. The exposition of how this occurred forms the thread guiding the richly textured narrative Müller-Sievers offers in his book entitled *Self-Generation. Biology, Philosophy, and Literature Around 1800* (1997). As we shall see, although the meanings of terms discussed by Müller-Sievers still need some clarification, his above-mentioned reformulation of the sense of the conceptual transformations operated in Western thought towards the end of the eighteenth century is in itself a decisive contribution to intellectual history.

### PREFORMATIONISM AND EPIGENETICISM

The conceptual break produced around 1800 can be regarded as marking the transition in philosophy from preformationism to epigeneticism. This

definition clarifies the sense in which the changes then occurring in biological thinking were functional in the emergence of Romanticism. The former paradigm (preformationism) stated that all the features of adult organisms were already fully perceivable in the embryo from its conception. Thus, its maturation process should be understood as a mere growing. The natural complement of this model was the so-called “theory of inclusion,” according to which the germs of a given organism were contained in the germs of its predecessors, and so on. This theory, which became dominant in the course of the eighteenth century, was aimed at explaining the generation of new beings according to strictly physical causes, excluding the action of any extra- or supernatural agent.<sup>2</sup> The epigenetic concept, on the other hand, stated that the development of the embryo was a creative process in the course of which new parts and organs appeared. In order to explain this, epigeneticism invoked the presence of a vital impulse or *vis formativus* in organisms. As Blumenbach (who was Kant’s main source on the topic) assured, this principle should be assumed, but could not be turned into an object of knowledge; its action could be empirically demonstrated and observed in its effects, but its specific nature could never be defined according to concepts since it was placed beyond the realm of our sensory experience; it constituted a *qualitas occulta*.

As Müller-Sievers remarks, with the publication of Kant’s *Critique of Judgement*, the epigenetic concept gained a new fundamental philosophical relevance. The capacity of self-generation and self-production, which allegedly distinguished living organisms from inanimate matter, defined the model of a form of being which contained its center within itself, and, therefore, was in full possession of the laws presiding over its own generation. Epigenesis thus became the condition of possibility of every attempt to recover an absolute foundation, both for philosophy and literature. In Müller-Sievers’s words, “the only form under which the absolute can be said to exist is the organism, since only organically can the interminable chain of causes and effects be bent back onto its own origin” (1997, 4). On the contrary, in the attempt to recover the origins, the preformationist idea necessarily produced an infinite regression (in which a given cause always referred back to a previous one which explained it and so on *ad infinitum*).

The epigenetic concept did not have only theoretico-epistemological repercussions. The organic development by which parts were mutually produced was an incarnation of the physical model in which the idea of a final cause (*nexus finalis*) becomes an effective cause (*nexus effectivus*), which would also

have echoes in the realm of practical philosophy. The concept of the organism would finally break the antinomy, typical of the Enlightenment, between freedom and determination. It combines the ideas of regular development, following strict natural laws, and of spontaneous origin, which are, within the universe of Kant's critical philosophy, the grounds for moral action.

Thus, when seen in the light of the biological debates of the period, post-Kantian philosophy acquires a new sense. Müller-Sievers continues tracing the dispute for Kant's legacy from the perspective of the interpretation of the idea of epigenesis or organic self-generation. As he states, the most destructive attack upon Kant's model was provided by Fichte when he showed that Kant's notion of the subject still contained vestiges of preformationism. The idea of a self which, in order to become an object to itself, required another self anterior to it, and so *ad infinitum*, evidently followed the model of the preformationist encapsulation. To the fallacy of a preformed "I" which can never be referred back to its origins, Fichte's idea of a primitive intuition opposed a model of a structure of reciprocal determination of a total "I" (i. e., anterior to its internal differentiation in parts), which forms the basis of the concept of self-generation. Impulse (*Trieb*) is, as the organic, generative force, a mental activity preceding consciousness, from which all its possible objects derive.

However, at this point the limitations of the epigenetist model of thinking began to become manifest. The problem Fichte faced (and that later Hegel took as a basis to demolish the Fichtean concept of the subject) was that of the connection between the self, *qua* generative principle, and its attributes. In the context of his "subjective idealism" (as Hegel defined it) or "real idealism" (as Fichte himself termed it), the movement of putting it out of itself jeopardized the ideal of self-foundation (and, therefore, the possibility of moral freedom). As Fichte remarked in one of his early writings, *Practische Philosophie*, impulse should have purpose, but no causality, if it were to be distinguished from will (which would have led him back to the dependence from an exterior, pre-constituted object, the Kantian *thing-in-itself*). Thus, in his subsequent writings, Fichte would have to redefine impulse, interpreting it, not as a generative capacity, but as an expressive force. The idea of a final cause, which is not, however, an effective cause is, precisely, what distinguishes impulse (as an ungrounded ground) from thinking, which, from the point of view of impulse is doubly dependent: on understanding and its categories, on the one hand, and on sensory data, on the other.

In this fashion, Fichte succeeded to integrate heterogeneous causal series (biological epigenesis and conceptual movement). Yet, the ultimate impossibility of the philosophical ideal of self-foundation emerges at certain crucial instances in his system. The aporias to which the idea of epigenesis led became manifest in Fichte's treatment of the relationships between members of the opposite sex (hence the definition of love had a vital importance for Fichte). They best illustrate what Fichte defined as the problem of the *Anstoss* (the substratum of materiality which both permits the self's self-position and frustrates the ideal of its self-foundation).<sup>3</sup> The existence of a being whose fundamental impulse was passivity (*Leiden*) was destructive to his system. Nevertheless, it formed the premise of that system since it was precisely in the violent possession of that being that the (male) "I" made manifest his creative power. "Such bourgeois atrocities in Fichte's practical philosophy," concludes Müller-Sievers, "are the philosophical fallout of constitutive epigenetic presuppositions" (1997, 87). That subject which is a non-subject embodies the uneliminable remnant of contingency (*noise*) in the origins. Thus, Müller-Sievers states, "the (male) I is not threatened by what it must negate but by what it cannot negate" (1997, 88).

Yet, it is in the realm of language, the alleged point of intersection between matter and intellect, where romantic thought should settle the question of reason's self-foundation. In effect, as Müller-Sievers underlines, the coming of Romanticism marked a kind of "linguistic turn" in Western philosophy. In the perspective of Wilhelm von Humboldt and his contemporaries, referring reason back to its ultimate foundations would amount to tracing the origins of languages. The epigenetic concept also provided the basis for this. Following that concept, Humboldt defined language as possessing within it the laws of its own production, that is, as a formative force: *energeia* rather than *ergon*, according to his famous maxim. However, the Romantic philosophies of language would also discover the impossibility of achieving the epigenetic ideal of self-foundation.

In fact, these philosophies inherited from Herder a very problematic legacy, which made his theory of the origin of languages collapse and would subsequently frustrate all the attempts to elaborate an epigenetic linguistic theory: the problem of *articulation*. The transition from sound (*Schall*) to word seemed inexplicable in the context of Herder's theory of language; meaning should be either already encapsulated in the former (*preformation*) or produced by miracle. In order to overcome both alternatives, Humboldt had

to eliminate all empirical vestiges from the origin of languages. For him, there was no point at which language was not organic; in consequence, it should have emerged “all at once.” Hence for Humboldt every speech act already entailed an original articulation between sound and word. In fact, language was but the activity (*energeia*) establishing the double articulation — subjective (between word and idea) and objective (between word and sound) — from which representation sprang. In this way he interrupted the infinite regression in the causal chain towards an unreachable origin. Ultimately, insofar as language is the primitive phenomenon (Urform) of every representation, its genesis cannot be conceptually traced, but can only be postulated.

Thus, Humboldt solved the problem of the origins of languages making it irrelevant to the knowledge of their nature and working; but he raised an even more serious issue. Such an organicist conception of language implied a structural connection according to which every concept referred to another one, and so on (Humboldt’s major contribution to the history of linguistics is summarized in his maxim that there “resides in every language a characteristic worldview”).<sup>4</sup> However, the consequence is that communication, in its individual determination, is always impossible, resulting in a permanent sliding from sign to sign (which, to be comprehended, must be related with another, and so on *ad infinitum*). The genetic problem of the preformationists now unfolded itself and was reproduced on the level of the structural connections. Thus, as Müller-Sievers says, “in all empirical languages intellectual activity is endlessly (i.e., not only in its origins) compelled to break the resistance of sound” (1997, 115). This activity, which necessarily is a form of violence, makes manifest the existence of an indelible and always present vestige of contingency (noise) in signifying material.

The realm of literature was, by its very nature, the most receptive to these tensions. In it the fissures in the systematic projects of the different philosophical currents are laid bare. Müller-Sievers dedicates the last chapter of his book to analyzing Beaumarchais’s *The Marriage of Figaro* and Goethe’s *The Elective Affinities*. According to his hypothesis, each of these two works respectively enacts the conceptual problems raised by the preformationist and the epigenetist ideas of organic evolution. Although by very different paths, both works ultimately converge in revealing the radical contingency of love relationships.

In this way Müller-Sievers shows one of the fundamental (and systematically ignored) derivations of biological debates; namely, the

supposedly organic bases of sexuality and the institution of marriage. As he remarks, under the Ancien Régime the preformationist idea served to legitimate from a scientific point of view the practice of arranged marriages as well as the traditional seigniorial right, the *ius primae noctis*. *The Marriage of Figaro* shows the conceptual link between the violence on which feudal law was founded and the arbitrariness in the origins of marital ties, which was the feature inherent in the doctrines of germinal encapsulation. As a reaction to that concept, embryonic epigeneticism would appear as demonstrating, on an organic basis, the necessity of referring sexual relationships to an absolute ground (love). Buffon made this connection explicit in his doctrine of double sperm, according to which female orgasm was a necessary condition for conception. In any case, as Kant stated, only under that assumption (an absolute ground) could marriage appear as something more than the right to one other's genitalia (which reduced both individuals involved to the condition of a mere means for the satisfaction of the other partner's needs) and be conceived as emanating from an unconditioned, subjective activity. However, this foundation could only be expressed by means of presymbolic or preconceptual categories, such as the notions of fate, destiny or chance. Thus, the dichotomy between intrigue and violence which dominates in *The Marriage of Figaro* is replaced in *The Elective Affinities* by the undecidability of events (such events would have different meaning for the different actors, without the observer being able to discover which perspective was correct), which takes us back to the problem of the arbitrariness of the foundations of love relations, and ultimately, of their constitutive violence.

As we see, the picture resulting from Müller-Sievers's interpretation is highly suggestive and enlightening. It avoids the basic shortcomings of the traditional approaches in the history of ideas, which detach systems of thought from their specific context of enunciation and projects them as instances in a kind of eternal, trans-historical debate. This entails the reduction of all intellectual phenomena to the system of antinomies supposedly articulating such a debate ("organicism" vs. "atomism," "nationalism" vs. "cosmopolitanism," "rationalism" vs. "romanticism," etc.). This dichotomous, anti-historical inclination ultimately discloses a normative aspiration: as Brian Vickers has remarked, such a binary logic normally aims to enhance one of the two philosophical currents allegedly always in dispute (whatever it may be) and diminish its opposite, which is usually ideologically vilified and identified as containing authoritarian ideological connotations.<sup>5</sup> Müller-Sievers's work

eloquently shows, instead, that both contending doctrines under discussion had their own blind spots and were similarly prone to induce authoritarian ideological consequences.

Yet, Müller-Sievers tends to identify both aspects (undecidability of foundations and authoritarian ideology), which not only leads him to surreptitiously slip towards a normative terrain (abandoning his tone of critical distance vis-à-vis his object) but also, and fundamentally, to misrepresent his own contributions. What the problem of the undecidability of the foundations of both preformationism and epigeneticism ultimately reveals is not that these two currents of thought contained implicit authoritarian consequences. It rather raises a broader issue, systematically ignored in traditional approaches; namely, that between the theoretical assumptions of a given philosophical system and its possible ideological derivations a translation process, which is in diverse instances open to the acceptance of different interpretations, always mediates (in fact, the two biological doctrines, preformationism and epigeneticism, were susceptible to serve as the scientific support for both conservative and progressivist ideologies). This means that both theoretical and extra-theoretical factors always participate in the definition of the ways a philosophical or scientific doctrine becomes eventually articulated in ideological terms. In summary, intellectual formations are not logically and rationally integrated systems, but, always, by definition, loose arrangements, historically constituted configurations, resulting from a number of contingent interventions (which are not necessarily consistent with each other) proceeding from very different instances.

At any rate, as noted above, Müller-Sievers's remark underlining the historical links that connected the process of transition from the philosophies of the late-Enlightenment to Romanticism with the emergence of an "evolutionary" (in the modern sense of the term) concept of embryonic development is a fundamental contribution to making sense of the meaning of the conceptual transformations produced in those years. The true weak point in his approach (which explains the problems related above) lies in the fact that that author is still insufficiently sensitive to the series of changes that the categories of analysis he uses underwent as a result of these very transformations. The meanings of ideas such as "mechanism" and "epigenesis" were at that juncture profoundly altered, undergoing a number of successive, fundamental redefinitions. As we will see, a closer scrutiny of these changes will call for the reformulation of some of his proposals.

## FROM “NATURAL HISTORY” TO “BIOLOGY”: CHANGING DEFINITIONS

Müller-Sievers’s interpretative scheme can be described according to a double equation:

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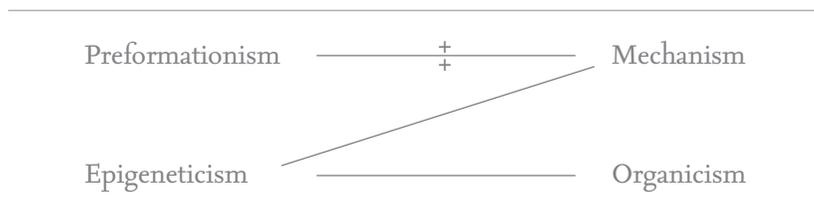
Preformationism	————	Mechanism	————	Fixism
Epigeneticism	————	Organicism	————	Evolutionism

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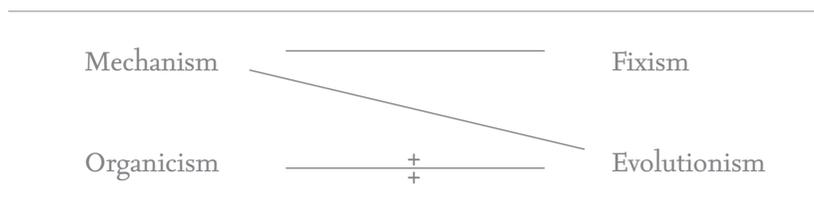
Certainly, this formula correctly describes the basic structure of biological thinking “around 1800.” However, the consensus regarding the meaning of the categories at stake here was a recent development; and, although it soon became firmly established in the field, it was far from homogeneous. In order to observe the series of conceptual changes leading to that formula we need to go back in time. To begin with the ideas of “mechanism” and “preformationism,” we can see that Müller-Sievers, following the consensus established around 1800, identifies the two terms with each other with no further qualification. However, these were not necessarily associated. By mid-eighteenth century, the first opposition in his formula (epigeneticism vs. preformationism) was placed within mechanistic currents of thought. This emerged in the course of the dispute about Buffon’s theory, which conceived of the formation of organisms, not as a process internally generated out of an embryo, as the preformationists postulated, but as the result of the composition of originally isolated organic molecules. “Epigeneticism” was thus defined, in opposition to “preformationism,” as the theory that imagined the development of the embryo according to the model of the formation of crystals, that is, as the result of the addition and composition of disperse elements. As we see, this epigenetist concept *did not have any relation with the idea of organic self-generation*, postulating a strictly mechanistic pattern of the formation of the germ.

This “epigenetist-mechanistic” theory resurfaced in the first decades of the nineteenth century through Geoffroy de Saint Hilaire.<sup>6</sup> Geoffroy’s oeuvre gave a decisive impulse to studies in animal morphology, giving birth to a school of biological thinking, later called, pejoratively, “transcendental morphology.” Geoffroy’s theory was, along with Lamarck’s, the first modern theory of “integral evolution.” As a matter of fact, the epigenetist-mechanistic concept was more permeable to the idea of “transformation” than the preformationism. And this suggests three things:

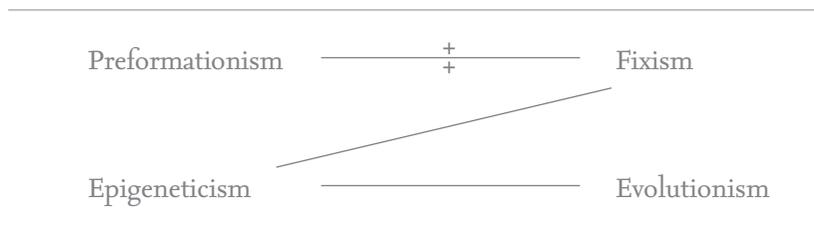
1) The existence of an “epigenetist-mechanistic” model (like Buffon’s) refutes the equation epigeneticism = organicism and its opposition with the parallel equation preformationism = mechanism: all preformationist theories were, in principle, mechanistic, but not all mechanistic theories were preformationist: they could also be epigenetist, which means that not all epigenetist theories were necessarily “organicism.” To go back to Müller-Sievers formula, we obtain this:



2) The existence of an evolutionary, mechanistic concept (like Geoffroy’s) refutes the equation mechanism = fixism and its opposition organicism = evolutionism: although all organicist theories were, in principle, evolutionary, not all mechanistic theories were fixist.



3) The existence of a fixist-epigenetist model (like Buffon’s, again) refutes the equation epigeneticism = evolutionism and its opposite equation preformationism = fixism: all preformationist theories were, in principle, fixist, but not all fixist theories were preformationist.



In short, these considerations render conceptually problematic (and historically inaccurate) Müller-Siever's interpretive model founded on the double triad preformationism = mechanism = fixism as opposed to epigeneticism = organicism = evolutionism. To make things more complicated, as we will see below, later developments in the field of embryology, which led to the introduction of a preformationist element into an evolutionary matrix of thinking, would also prove all the "in principles" (indicated here with the symbol "†") as not necessarily valid. But this would imply the final collapse of the entire categorial universe on which the late-Enlightenment biological thinking rested. The point is that Müller-Sievers's discursive objects still remained within the confines of that universe, in which all the "in principles" appeared as immediately evident truths, that is, they functioned as the series of its indisputable premises. Yet, we still have to see how, out of this situation, we obtain the formula related above (in which the oblique lines in the preceding pictures fade away); that is, the historical process by which the consensus that underlies Müller-Sievers's analysis was established.

Going back to our narration of events, we must say that the epigenetist-mechanicist doctrines were, in fact, deeply discredited by the criticism of Charles Bonnet (1720-1793). Just as Leibniz showed that Locke's empiricism already entailed human capacities, which, therefore, could only be innate (the *intellectus ipsius*), Bonnet observed how Buffon's epigeneticism always presupposed at least one element of preformation. In fact, Buffon postulated the existence of some "internal molds" articulating the generative process. As Bonnet showed, these "internal molds" were the ones that explained the systematic reproduction of specific forms of life and, finally, the visible stability of the universe of living species. The shortcomings in this epigenetist-mechanicist concept explain the twists in epigenetist thinking, which finally became identified with the vitalist schools of the Enlightenment's "natural history" (the term "biology" was only subsequently developed by Lamarck).

In effect, by 1800 the mechanistic and the epigenetist traditions had mostly parted ways, which permitted Müller-Siever to plainly identify the epigenetist ideas with the vitalist current of biological thought whose modern origin went back to the work of William Harvey (1578-1657). In *Exercitationes de generatione animalorum* (1651), Harvey asserted the progressive formation of embryos through the action of a vital fluid. This fluid, which resided in the male semen, transmitted its vital power to the germ, "like the magnet lends its magnetic force to iron", thus activating the generative process. In

the eighteenth century, vitalism was updated by Georg Ernst Stahl and stood against the materialistic theories that explained voluntary motion, sensation, and thinking on the basis of purely causal mechanisms. Best known for his phlogiston theory, Stahl, in his *Theoria medica vera* (1798), affirmed that the soul or life (*anima*) was something previous to, and independent of matter, a kind of immaterial substance that simply circulated through bodies, through their organic juices, preventing the decomposition that they would undergo if left to physical forces alone.

In this fashion, Stahl's theory attempted to account for that element differentiating living beings from inanimate mechanisms. Yet, despite its influence, it retained mystical connotations that undermined its scientific credibility. The action of such a vital fluid could be explained only as following a design, which entailed the idea of a "finality" in the developments of the matter whose presence and modes of functioning could not be accounted for in terms of causal relations (and, therefore, should be supposed to emanate from a supernatural power). However, by the end of the eighteenth century, new developments seemed to confer an empirical basis to this concept. It is significant that the explosion of new disciplines that was then produced was intimately linked to the series of transformations operating within the vitalist currents of biological thought. As a matter of fact, the vitalist concept, organized around the idea of finality, contained an implicit "research program" different from both those of the preformationists and the Buffon styled epigenetists. Geoffroy (and, by extension, Goethe) remained, like Kant, indebted to the Enlightenment's doctrines which considered the mechanical forms of explanation as the only scientifically valid, thus displacing finalistic explanations to the realm of metaphysics. Yet, by the end of the eighteenth century newly emerging paradigms of knowledge began to incorporate teleological processes within the reach of reason, proving them to be inherent to phenomena. It was precisely the attempt to encompass finalistic processes within the realm of empirical phenomena that marked the beginning of a series of new disciplines, such as physiology, chemistry, etc.

From the perspective of the late eighteenth-century vitalists, the concept that articulated form and process was that of function, in which the notion of an immanent finality was condensed. A key figure in this process was Xavier Bichat (1771-1802). Bichat understood by "vital force" that faculty of living beings that allowed them to perform their inherent functions. Following Lavoisier's chemical model, he classified the diverse "vital forces" according to the degree

of development of their respective capacities (which he called “sensibility” and “contractility”) to react to the environment’s pressure and perform their determined function. In his view, every living substance (as well as every tissue) constituted a “simple system” that, like chemical substances, kept its specific properties, disregarding the organic context in which they came to be inserted. From then on, “vital forces” could be studied as histological properties; life was nothing more than the systematic coordination of the organic reactions of matter.

This development converged, in turn, with the formal constitution of a series of new disciplines, such as chemistry, animal magnetism, galvanism, etc., which made it possible to associate the “vital principle” with physical force — the so-called “imponderable fluids.” Galvani’s experiments with frogs’ legs (1789) marked a watershed in the history of Western images of nature. According to his experiments, muscular movements could be explained as the result of the action of “animal electricity,” later called “galvanism.” It would soon be concluded that all the movements of the vegetal and animal organisms, and indeed of the whole universe, responded to the action of an agent of this kind.<sup>7</sup> This, in turn, would lead to the belief that inorganic matter was ruled by the same laws of animated organization, which completely redefined the terms of biological debates.

Let us review what we have seen so far. Preformationism and mechanism did not keep a reciprocal correspondence. Strictly speaking, Buffon’s epigeneticism was better adjusted to the Newtonian paradigm than Bonnet’s preformationist model. The source of the confusion between preformationism and mechanism lies in the fact that the latter term (“mechanicism”) had a broader meaning at that time. This was used in opposition to every kind of explanation that resorted to the action of supernatural factors, such as the “imponderable fluids” theory during the mid-eighteenth century. This, combined with the subsequent identification of “epigeneticism” with “vitalism,” led to thinking of “preformationism” as the only “mechanicist” theory. Yet, the view of this equation preformationism = mechanism as the opposite terms to the parallel equation epigeneticism = organicism implied still a further step. This opposition resulted from a double movement by which the term “mechanicism” narrowed its meaning and the notion of “epigenesis” gained a physical sense. This double movement not only paved the way to a new, hitherto unknown model of physical explanation (the “organic”), which would eventually be associated to epigeneticism, but also entailed a redefinition of the very concept of “science.”

In effect, from the moment that the notion of “vital fluids” acquired a physical sense, shedding its mystical connotations, “vitalist” explanations became forms of “mechanical” (in the broader sense of the word) explanations. However, unlike traditional explanations, these were no longer causal but finalistic-holistic: the specific forms organs took would be determined not by their genetic process but by the particular function they had to fulfill, and by the modes of their mutual correlation which ensured the reproduction of the organism as a whole. Thus, the “naturalization” of the idea of “vital forces” was also to mark the emergence of a new paradigm of “science” encompassing teleological process as a part of its dominion.<sup>8</sup> This completely redefined not only the idea of “organism,” but also those of “scientific explanation” and the boundaries between “science” and “metaphysics” (thus revealing the contingent nature of these concepts). All these changes must be considered in order to properly understand the kind of discursive objects Müller-Sievers analyzes. But we must first point out another fundamental, conceptual modification produced during those years.

What we have seen so far explains how “vitalism” became identified with “organicism.” Yet, there was still a third term (“evolutionism”) to be incorporated before the equation vitalism = organicism = evolutionism could be finally produced. And this last step would be problematic, thus making manifest the limitations of the late-enlightenment “vitalist” tradition.

Hitherto, both the “epigenetist-vitalist and the “preformationist” concepts were fixist; only the epigenetist-mechanistic ones introduced the idea of “evolution” at both the phylogenetic (the evolution of species) and the ontogenetic (the development of the embryo) levels. Yet, they were not compatible with any idea of “self-generation.” In the epigenetic-mechanicist view, the formative process of the embryo was not an internally generated development, but resulted from the composition of originally isolated organic molecules. The idea of “self-generation” on which Müller-Sievers’ entire contention hinges was the consequence of the application of vitalist explanations to the field of embryology. This resulted in the first ontogenetic-dynamic theories, which thus adopted an epigenetist-vitalist character.

In modern times, the first to postulate an idea of the embryo’s development as a creative process was Caspar Friedrich Wolff. In his *Theoria Generationis* (1759), Wolff stated, against the preformationists, that in the course of the development of the embryo new forms and organs appeared which were not originally present in it. He described the process of formation of organs

and parts through the secretion of organic matter and its consolidation or solidification by the action of a kind of formative fluid or *vis essentialis*. However, this theory was demolished by Albrecht von Haller and remained forgotten for about half a century. As von Haller demonstrated, Wolff's theory was unable to explain how specific forms of life could proceed from undifferentiated organic matter. Wolff's appeal to an "architectonic intellect" inscribed in the very living matter appeared as merely an *asylum ignorantiae*. As late as the end of the eighteenth century, when evolutionary ideas (at both the phylogenetical and ontogenetical levels) began to spread, there was still no systematic theory of the development of the embryo available. Just as it seemed inconceivable that a given species could give birth to a different one, without thus throwing all of nature into complete chaos, there was no way of explaining how the embryo could transform itself in the course of its generation, following a systematic and regular plan of evolution.

This is, broadly speaking, the situation of biological thinking Müller-Sievers is concerned with, a time characterized by the diffusion of a certain epistemological uneasiness. As Diderot stated, a single egg sufficed to demolish all the scientific theories of his time.<sup>9</sup> The point here is that Müller-Sievers misses the series of conceptual transformations that occurred in those years, and is thus unable to frame the texts he discusses within the context of the broader epistemological uneasiness that was becoming widespread at that moment. The consequence is that, although Müller-Sievers distances himself from the premises of traditional intellectual history, he does not completely succeed in breaking free from the dichotomies inherent in it. This leads him to interpret the dispute between epigeneticism and preformationism, which occurred at the end of the eighteenth century, as merely a chapter in a kind of quasi-eternal quarrel between the Enlightenment's scientificist impulse (which idealizes phenomena, creating abstract, artificial entities) and the Romantic anxiety for an absolute discourse (i. e., gaining access to "a vision of the totality"—*Darstellung*). Seen from this perspective, the contradictions he discovers in the texts he discusses appear to stem from the limitations intrinsic to a discourse which reduces all human and natural relations to causal ones, on the one hand, and the impossibility of a total causal explanation which permits establishing and accounting for the complete set of determinations constituting a particular form of being, on the other.

This tendency to de-historicize concepts also becomes manifest in Müller-Sievers's own definition of his project of tracing the "critical history

of epigenesis.” He interprets this as a kind of *contradictio in adjectio*, since, as he states, it amounts to a rational approach to what allegedly is its denial; in it one must “disorganize, or mechanize, its discourse, inspect the claims of epigenesis through the lenses of preformationism” (1997, 5). The assumption implicit in this statement is the same one that Kant endorsed, but which the new biological theories had begun to undermine, still without succeeding to completely invalidate, that is, that the only truly scientifically valid explanations are causal ones. And, as we will see, this raises problems in the interpretation of the texts he discusses.

### **EPIGENETICISM AND THE PROBLEM OF ITS “INHERENT LIMITATIONS”**

It is somehow ironical to observe that recent studies self-defined as deconstructivist or poststructuralist share with traditional approaches, to which they are severely critical, the picture of Western intellectual history torn apart by some kind of eternal or quasi-eternal antinomies. This has prompted authors to interpret the debates occurring around 1800 in terms of recently formulated categories such as “grand narratives” and “totalizing forms of discourse.”<sup>10</sup> Yet, when we further examine the respective theoretical foundations of these approaches, traditional and post-modern, we can clearly observe that, despite their apparently convergent conclusions, there is no underlying conceptual connection.

Self-Generation is precisely an attempt to situate the texts of the past in their proper epistemological niche, that is, to refer philosophical and literary discourses back to the series of images and assumptions underlying them. However, as noted above, in certain crucial instances Müller-Sievers fails to disentangle them from the dichotomous frameworks of the traditional history of ideas. In his reading of *The Elective Affinities* some of the problems that dichotomous approaches generate can be observed. For him, Goethe’s work made manifest the unfeasibility of the epigenetist project of reason’s absolute self-foundation, thus revealing the limitations inherent in conceptual thinking in general. However, as soon as we historicize Goethe’s thought and relate it to the biological doctrines on which it rested, *The Elective Affinities* gains a new sense. It raises precisely two fundamental questions that Müller-Sievers’s analysis tends to obliterate. First, it does not show why a “total explanation” is impossible but rather what Goethe himself understood by it. In the context of the biological debates of his time, the issue of how living organisms modified

themselves following a regular pattern of transformation (i.e., the “mystery of self-generation”) unfolded into the question of how to conceive of teleological processes as inherent in phenomena. Lastly, a “total theory” was considered to be that which would account for how “final causes” (function) became “effective causes” (form), which by that time was proving itself as feasible, in principle. And this leads us to the second question raised by Goethe’s work: how he formed the idea of the impossibility of such a kind of explanation as resulting from an inherent limitation to reason — an idea which, as such, is not inherent to reason; it is itself also a conceptual construction.

We must recall here that Goethe’s epigeneticism was not that of Fichte’s. Unlike the latter’s, Goethe’s was not a kind of vitalist epigeneticism, but a mechanist one. Let us briefly review it. Goethe’s epigenetist theory took form during his trip to Sicily, in 1787. In Sicily’s botanical garden he was impressed by the morphological similarities he discovered among the different parts of plants (leaves, petals, pistils, etc.) He inferred from this that all the parts of a plant were but metamorphosed structures of an original, primitive form, the archetype (Urform) from which these parts derived.<sup>11</sup> Thus, if we discover the archetype and follow the series of its transformations, that is, the sequence of the metamorphoses it underwent, we could rebuild the plan of formation of each particular plant, with no need of invoking any kind of design or hidden finality, i.e., according only to strictly mechanical laws.

In this fashion, Goethe believed to have overcome the limitations of Kant’s criticism, remaining, however, within the purely phenomenal ambit (which, as we saw, for both Goethe and Kant was that of strict causal relations). In his article on “Intuitive Judgement” (1817), Goethe made this postulate explicit. As he said, his “morphology” (as he called it) transcended Kant’s opposition between an *intellectus archetypus* (which entailed a kind of divine or quasi-divine understanding) and our *intellectus ectypus* (which, beginning from the sensitive intuition of isolated parts, proceeds to trace the process of their formation, trying to inductively rebuild the whole, without ever reaching it). The discovery of the primitive forms allowed our ectypical intellect to work as if it were an archetypal one, that is, deductively, proceeding from the sensitive intuition of the whole to the derived forms, following the laws of the archetype’s transformations, and inferring the regular sequence of its successive metamorphoses.

This explains what Müller-Sievers found in *The Elective Affinities*. Rather than exposing the fissures of Fichte’s epigenetist concept, this work reveals the

presence of a substratum of epigenetist thinking which is very different from that of Fichte and the vitalists, and which plainly rejects any idea of “finality.” Goethe himself made his differences with the vitalist epigeneticism explicit in his criticism of Wolff’s doctrine.

Wolff, in behalf of his epigenesis, was compelled to presuppose an organic element by means of which the creatures destined for organic life are nourished. He assigned to this element a *vim essentialem*, which, incorporating itself with everything about to reproduce, lifts itself to the rank of a producer. To me, expressions of that sort leave something to be desired; for no matter how dynamic one visualizes the substance, something material still adheres to it. The word “force” likewise designates primarily something merely physical, indeed even mechanical, and what is to be organized from the organic substance remains a dark, obscure point.<sup>12</sup>

In *The Metamorphosis of Plants* he explained the reasons for his rejection of the notion of “finality.”

To say the fish exists for the water, seems to me less than that the fish exists in water and by means of water; for this latter statement expresses much more clearly what is only darkly suggested in the first, namely, that the existence of creatures called fish is possible only if there exists an element called water.<sup>13</sup>

As a matter of fact, Goethe’s epigeneticism is not rigidly mechanistic. To be more precise, we must say that it incorporates a vitalist element within a mechanistic matrix of thought in order to explain the visible regularity of the order of transformations of a given organism. On the basis of the concepts recently developed in the field of chemistry (which resulted from transformations occurred in the core of the vitalist tradition), Goethe re-elaborated an idea originally posed by Maupertuis in his *Physical Venus* (1759), according to which organic matter was imbued of natural sympathies and aversions, that is, *affinities*, in chemical terms. For Goethe, the system of spontaneous affinities of the matter explained the regular and systematic character of the process of organic composition, following particular configurations or *plans of formation*, which would thus derive from innate,

natural inclinations. As he said, “if we are disinclined toward the idea of preformation, we nevertheless resort to predelineation, predermination, pre-establishment, and whatever other terms may exist to describe what is antecedent to perception.”<sup>14</sup> It is this lesser form of vitalism that explains why Goethe resorts, in his treatment of love relationships, to those pre-discursive notions such as fate, predestination, and so on. In sum, his literary project does not reveal, in the realm of fiction, the fissures of conceptual thinking in general, and the epigenetist model in particular, but forms a system thoroughly consistent with his biological concept.

Müller-Sievers’s approach is, in fact, better adjusted and much more insightful when applied to the analysis of the vitalist versions of epigenetist thinking (which are the ones which, in the series of their successive transformations, effectively produced the transition from the late-Enlightenment to early Romanticism), and to Fichte’s in particular. Müller-Sievers’s reference to Fichte’s doctrine of the subject sheds new light on what he defined as the problem of the *Anstoss* and its conflictive relation with his idea of intersubjectivity. As scholars have remarked, the issue of intersubjectivity reveals the fissures in the early-Romantic project of reason’s absolute self-foundation (including Fichte’s). Unlike Goethe, Fichte thought that a “total explanation” necessarily entailed teleological categories, even though they were not rationally conceivable. And, in fact, he still did not have available any model for showing how these two kinds of explanation (teleological and mechanical) could be integrated into one single explicative system. This leads to a second question connected with Müller-Sievers’s categories of analysis.

The “epigeneticism” he discusses was, in fact, a kind of transitional conceptual formation, one of those highly peculiar phenomena in the history of science in which a given horizon of problems is defined, which is still not solvable according to the conceptual tools available within this very horizon.<sup>15</sup> This can be observed in Fichte’s notion of the subject, which, although decisively departing from the premises of “natural history,” remains trapped in the opposition, proper to late-Enlightenment natural thinking, between preformationism and evolutionism (in the modern sense of the word).

In effect, as we saw, the Fichtean “I” was inspired by the model of the “imponderable fluids,” which denounced the vestiges of a matrix of thinking typical of the late-Enlightenment’s vitalist tradition. This led Fichte to conceive of the source of life in terms of a kind of *Substance* (electricity, magnetism, etc.) which went through the bodies and their diverse organs,

but which predated and was distinguished from its effects (an “I” that held its attributes, but had an existence of its own; a subject that is independent from and pre-existed its own predicates). Hence, Fichte fails to conceive of anything other than a merely contingent relation between the inner formative principle (function) and its outward manifestations (forms). As Müller-Sievers remarks in connection with Humboldt’s linguistic theory, he “failed to understand articulation as a *relation* rather than an *activity*” (emphasis added); and this would explain why, for Humboldt, the origin of language “becomes a progressively violent and desperate affair” 1997, 114). The conception of the “I” as a Subject, which is not a cause external and anterior to its attributes (upon which it must inflict violence in order to break its passivity), but a relationship (the very movement of putting itself outside of it, in a progressive, constitutive process (*Bildung*), remaining, however, one and the same with its own predicates) entailed a very different notion of the “organism.” The transition from the “I-Substance” to the “I-Subject” would be determined by another series of conceptual developments that occurred in the ambit of the natural sciences immediately after the period Müller-Sievers centrally analyzes, which resulted in a new scientific paradigm. Embryology now would play a central role.

The “re-discovery” of Wolff’s epigenetic theory of the formation of the embryo, which had remained mostly forgotten for almost half a century, is owed to J.F. Meckel (1781-1833). Based on Wolff’s theory, Meckel reformulated ontogenetic ideas originally postulated in 1793 (although under a mystical form) by L.F. Kiemeyer. For Meckel, mammals (including humans) underwent an embryonic development beginning with the simplest animal stage (the polyp) and rising up in the chain of being, reaching progressively upper stages of organization (worm, crustacean, etc.) until acquiring those forms and characteristics specific to its own species. This was seen as the first formulation of the doctrine, later popularized by Haeckel, that “ontogenesis recapitulates phylogenesis.” And it was. However, there is no linear continuity between the theories. As Karl E. von Baer reveals, the actual development of a dynamic ontogenetic concept contradicted the possibility (on the phylogenetic level) of an evolutionary view of nature.

In *History of the Evolution of Animals* (1828), von Baer elaborated the first systematic concept of the embryo’s progressive formation. Just as Meckel reformulated Kiemeyer’s idea by resorting to Wolff’s, von Baer, in turn, reformulated Meckel’s idea by endorsing Cuvier’s doctrine

of correlation, which had made the latter the leading paleontologist of his time. This doctrine explained animal metabolism on the basis of the mutual dependency of organs and parts. As he showed in his *Leçons d'Anatomie Comparée* (1800-1805), only certain organs could coexist. Cuvier's standard example was the carnivore, which, if it were to survive, required sharp teeth and claws to catch its prey, as well as stomach and intestines suitable for digesting flesh, etc. The key concept here was that of "conditions of existence" ("commonly called 'final causes'," as he admitted), which stated that, since no animal could exist without the conditions that rendered its existence possible, the parts of an animal were necessarily correlated to assure internal harmony as well as harmony with its environment. Following this principle, he affirmed that he could reconstruct a whole animal out of a single bone. Thus, by combining function and structure, Cuvier's theory introduced a new twist in the development of modern physiology. His was a functional-holistic view, which contradicted the "principle of continuity" on which Enlightenment's "natural history" (as well as the old physiological doctrines of the vitalists) rested. For him, not all kinds of beings were functionally viable; once a major organ was modified, all the organs must be modified. This seemed to prove the untenability of evolutionary theories: it would be impossible to pass from one combination of organs to another by insensible gradations. As a consequence, Cuvier, against Geoffroy (and, therefore, Goethe), denied the idea of one single plan of organization for the whole universe of living species, and affirmed the existence of four, radically discontinuous, major plans.

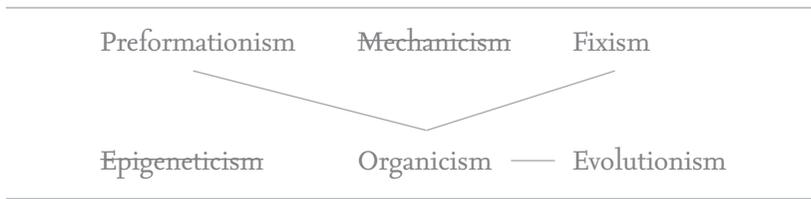
Von Baer translated this concept to the ontogenetic level. To the idea of gradation, the embryological correlate of Geoffroy's transformism, von Baer opposed the idea of formation, meaning genetic processes which follow specific "plans of formation." He re-interpreted embryonic development as the successive passage through different, yet functionally correlated, forms as the process of progressive differentiation of the species. According to this model, at an early stage of development of the germ we can only observe general features common to all the species, then, only later, those corresponding to each specific class, and successively those of its order, its particular species, and finally, its characteristics as an individual. By means of this synthesis between Cuvier's and Wolff's ideas, von Baer intended to refute both. Against the preformist doctrines (Cuvier), he affirmed the idea, on an ontogenetic level, of a formative process. Against the vitalist doctrines

(Wolff), he rejected the concept of primordial “driving forces” different from the forms in which they were manifested.

The result was a new concept of preformation: germinal evolution became a process of increasing individualization of living beings. Thus, embryology formulated the model of a system of progressive formation in which what was preformed was not a set of definite features, but the principle which constitutes them. This principle, however, against the ideas of the old vitalists, was not any kind of substance but, ultimately, a certain logical order of successive, mutually correlated, transformations — something similar to what we today call a “genetic program.” In sum, by reformulating the concepts at issue, von Baer finally succeeded in reconciling the notions of “preformation” and “evolution,” which, in the context of the Enlightenment’s universe of ideas were mutually contradictory.

From the above, we may draw, basically, two conclusions. First, the series of problems Müller-Sievers observes in the concept of “self-generation” of early-Romanticism cannot be explained simply as a particular expression of a kind of eternal struggle between “rationalism” and “idealism,” “Enlightenment” and “Romanticism,” “mechanism” and “organicism,” etc. (terms which, as we noted, underwent a number of successive redefinitions in the course of the period under discussion). These terms must be understood only within a particular historical context of this debate and be analyzed against the background of the epistemological uneasiness that sprang from the combination of uneven developments occurring in the natural sciences of the time, which pushed the late-Enlightenment natural thinking to confront its own limitations, compelling it to think what was unthinkable within its particular horizon: the idea of a world’s order that progressively constituted itself, exclusively following its own immanent tendencies of development. In the framework of the new scientific paradigm that emerged immediately after that period, the preceding antinomies would lose their theoretical grounds, becoming simply meaningless. The solution to the seeming contradiction between order and evolution entailed the redefinition of the fundamental categories of natural thinking, which resulted in new notions of “organism” and “evolution,” whose meaning were very different from those proper to the “epigenetic” concept Müller-Sievers analyzes (a concept which, although in its limit, still inscribed itself within the boundaries of the late-Enlightenment’s thought concerning “natural history”). And this leads to our second conclusion.

The concept of “self-generation” that finally crystallized in the first decades of the nineteenth-century (and lie at the origins of modern philosophies of history) does not refer, as Müller-Sievers thinks, to the vitalist-epigenetist tradition, but derives, perhaps paradoxically, from transformations in the concept of embryonic preformation. The redefinition of the notion of embryonic preformation resulted, in turn, in a new concept of the “organism,” crystallizing a view of nature that combined fixism (at a phylogenetical level) and evolutionism (at the embryological level). This should be represented as follows:



As we saw, not noticing this broader process of transformation prevents Müller-Sievers from breaking with the antinomies of traditional approaches in intellectual history, resulting in some distortions in the texts he discusses. Nevertheless, his very formulation of the issue opens the door to a whole and deeply enlightening universe of analysis. In this regard, Self-generation is a fundamental contribution to intellectual history. It contains keys to understand better the meaning of conceptual transformations that determined the collapse of the philosophies of the Enlightenment, thus providing a portrayal of this key episode in the history of Western thinking, which certainly is much richer and more complex than that offered by traditional narratives tied to dichotomous schemes of interpretation. And, above all, it provides a much more historically accurate description than that of traditional narratives which, in order to align the different currents of thought in their system of antinomies, had to obliterate the specific theoretical substratum on which those paradigms rest, eventually making these allegedly universal antinomies appear (or not) as such.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Helmut Müller-Sievers (1997).

<sup>2</sup> This theory, which was first formulated by Marcello Malpighi (1628-1694), seemed to be demonstrated by Jan Jakob Swammerdam's (1637-1680) discovery of the perfect preformation of the butterfly in the chrysalis. And this consolidated a fixist vision of nature (up to then, transmutation of animal species, as well as of metals was perfectly conceivable). This was the pre-condition for Linnaeus's taxonomical project: the universe of the living species had to lose its mobility so that its subjacent order — the "chain of Being" — could be fixed. Leibniz turned this notion into a philosophical system, re-elaborating the Scholastic distinction between *fulguratio* and *evolutio* to differentiate the genesis of a new form of life (*fulguratio*) — which can only emanate from God, since, as Spinoza remarked, no substance could be, without contradiction, the attribute of another substance — from its subsequent development (*evolutio*). As Leibniz stated, "the production of modifications has never been called creation, and it is an abuse of terms to scare the world thus. God produces substances from nothing, and the substances produce accidents by the changes of their limits" (1952), 395. Thus, in its origin, the concept of evolution had an opposite meaning to the one that only very much later it came to acquire.

<sup>3</sup> The classical study on the meaning of this term *Anstoss* (traditionally translated into English as "check") in Fichte's philosophy was written by Pierre-Philippe Druet (1972). See also D. Henrich (1967), F. Neuhauser (1996), and D. Breazeale (1995).

<sup>4</sup> Humboldt (1988), 60.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Vickers (1990), 150.

<sup>6</sup> Geoffroy de Saint Hilaire's (son of the creator of modern crystallography or mineral morphology, Etienne de Saint Hilaire) was the one to whom Goethe dedicated his later scientific writings and ardently defended in the course of the polemics with Cuvier. On the Geoffroy-Cuvier debate, see Toby A. Appel (1987).

<sup>7</sup> J. W. Ritter, whose lectures are landmarks in the development of German Romanticism, did not doubt the possibility of reducing those hidden forces to demonstrable physical essences. He affirmed also that man would soon produce mirrors to reflect electricity and magnetism. See Ritter (1987), 621. The other milestone in this history is Volta's invention of the electric pile (1800). In connection with these developments, Humphry Davy stated that "[they] promise

to afford instruments capable of destroying the veil which Nature has thrown over the operation and properties of ethereal fluids," in "Letter to D. Giddy", 20 Oct. 1800; quoted by Trevor Levere (1993), 36. This was also the context in which Mary Shelley conceived of *Frankenstein: or the New Prometheus* (1800), and in great part the background for the emergence of the romantic philosophies of nature and also of the animist tendencies that prevailed in its literature.

<sup>8</sup> This causes Müller-Sievers to confuse the romantic notion of "self-generation" with the modern theories of autopoiesis. In fact, autopoietic systems are articulated on the basis of a very different concept, which describe teleonomical, not teleological, processes.

<sup>9</sup> Denis Diderot (1875), 11.

<sup>10</sup> Pierre Lacoue-Labarthe and Jean-Luc Nancy (1988).

<sup>11</sup> As he noted in his introduction to *The Metamorphosis of Plants*, "once we observe that it is possible to take a step backward and reverse the order of growth, we become all the more alert to Nature's regular procedure and become familiar with the laws of transformation by which she brings forth one part through another, achieving the most diversified forms through modification of a single organ". Goethe (1989a), 31.

<sup>12</sup> Goethe (1989b), 233.

<sup>13</sup> Goethe (1989a), 83.

<sup>14</sup> Goethe (1989b), 234.

<sup>15</sup> A more elaborate discussion of this topic can be found in Elias Palti (1999).

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### ABSTRACT

Departing from a recent work by Helmut Müller-Sievers the author charts the intricacies of the debate between preformationism and epigeneticism and its theoretico-epistemological repercussions during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although the most common interpretation equals preformationism to mechanism and fixism, on one side, and evolutionism to epigeneticism and organicism, on the other, the actual picture, once key authors are analyzed, is far more complex. All preformationist theories were, in principle, mechanistic, but not all mechanistic theories were preformationist: they could also be epigenetist, which means that not all epigenetist theories were necessarily organicist. Although all organicist theories were, in principle, evolutionary, not all mechanistic theories were fixist. And finally, all preformationist theories were, in principle, fixist, but not all fixist theories were preformationist. The redefinition of the notion of embryonic preformation in the first decades of the nineteenth-century resulted, in turn, in a new concept of the "organism," crystallizing a view of nature that combined fixism (at a phylogenetical level) and evolutionism (at the embryological level).

### KEYWORDS

Epigeneticism, preformationism, Romanticism, Enlightenment, mechanism, organicism.

Book Review

**A SPANISH HISTORY OF CONCEPTS**Erik Tängerstad  
Gotland University, Sweden

Javier Fernández Sebastián and Juan Francisco Fuentes, eds.  
2002. *Diccionario Político y Social del Siglo XIX Español*. Madrid:  
Alianza Editorial. pp. 772.

“We are living in times of crises.”<sup>1</sup> With this proposition, the editors Javier Fernández Sebastián and Juan Francisco Fuentes open the *Diccionario Político y Social del Siglo XIX Español* (2002). The crises they refer to is defined by the modern condition of being in an ambiguous world that tends, paradoxically, to be at one and the same time both more globalized and more fragmented. To conceptualize and make intelligible these times of crises we have to critically revise the overall notion of modernity, as well as the modern concepts that were once conceived in order to make this modern world intelligible. When trying to understand today’s world, say the two editors, we ought to take a closer look at the concepts of the nineteenth century.

Viewed against this background, the Spanish case appears to be a good point of reference when discussing modern history at large. Nevertheless, when speaking of modern history, generally, few references are made to Spain. This is both unfortunate and understandable, given the fact that Spain during the twentieth century trailed a path that differed significantly from the one taken by the rest of today’s “developed world.” For example, while for most Western European countries the post-war era started with the end of Second World War, in Spain it coincides with the end of the Spanish Civil War in 1939. Furthermore, the long-lasting Franco dictatorship and the following transition to democracy during a time period when parliamentary democracy was already a well established principle in most Western European countries create a particular space of experience and horizon of expectations. On the other hand, Spaniards shared with other twentieth-century Western Europeans

experiences such as the construction of the modern welfare state. In sum, the uniqueness of the Spanish case provides an interesting complement to other Western spaces of experiences and horizons of expectations.

The relevance of the Spanish case when discussing modern history could be claimed with perhaps even more emphasis when regarding the nineteenth century. The development of the modern Spanish nation-state could very well be taken as an alternative point of reference when studying the making of modern Europe in general. For instance, the fact that the modern usage of the term “liberalism” can be traced back to the Spanish resistance against the Napoleonic Empire demonstrates that the Spanish case plays an important, although not always fully recognized, role in the history of modern Europe.

Moreover, in the context of European integration, the task to fill this gap between Spanish and European modern history acquires a renewed importance. It is therefore with high hopes and expectations that one opens the above mentioned, newly published dictionary of nineteenth-century Spanish political and social concepts. And this well researched volume is not to let its readers down. It should be said immediately that this book contains all the qualities needed to become a long-lasting reference for those dealing not only with Spanish history in general but also with modern history in general and conceptual history in particular.

Precisely because of the competent scholarship put in the making of this volume, it ought to be given a closer look. Hopefully it will be able to inspire other projects and volumes of this same nature. A second volume covering twentieth-century Spanish social and political concepts is about to be published. After having stated that the Spanish case should be placed closer to the center of interest when reflecting modern history, one ought to ask what the Spanish case is. What is here meant by “Spanish” when nineteenth-century political and social concepts are examined?

Spain was a highly contested notion throughout the nineteenth century, and remained so during the twentieth century. Exactly what is meant by “Spain” in this conceptual history of nineteenth-century Spanish concepts? Under the entry *España* the editors of the volume, Fernández and Fuentes, have co-written a crucial eleven-page article. They place the nineteenth-century notion *España* in a semantic field of tension structured according to three main dichotomies: “citizenship vs. essentialism”; “unity vs. diversity or centralization vs. decentralization”; and “emphasis on the

weight of the past vs. conceptions of Spain tilting towards the future.” The modern notions of Spain, they claim, were shaped in these fields of tension; “modern notions,” it must be said, since no consensus about the meaning of the term *España* was established.

Fernández and Fuentes mention that the expression *las Españas*, i.e. “the Spains” was used in the early nineteenth century both in the pro-Napoleonic *Estatuto de Bayona*, of 1808, as well as in the anti-Napoleonic *Constitución de Cádiz*, of 1812. In both cases, this meant that Spain was thought of as a multinational and global empire, not a locally restricted nation-state. Nevertheless, the first paragraph of the Cádiz constitution defined the concept *la nación española*, or “the Spanish nation,” which was understood as “the union of all Spaniards of both hemispheres” (*España*, 285). Through this constitution, the modern project of replacing the old imperial regime with a new national one became an issue. However, this modern constitution at Cádiz was soon overruled in 1814, when the returning king Fernando VII reinstalled the old regime and tried, among other things, to re-establish imperial hegemony over the rebellious colonies overseas. As a result, a profound conflict arose in Spain, not least around the meaning of the concept “Spain” itself.

What was Spain in the nineteenth century? The implicit answer given in this dictionary is that Spain was the battleground for a modern conflict between notions of old empire and new nation-state. Under the entry *Castilla*, Benoît Pellistrandi writes, for example, that the bulk of nineteenth-century historians in conflict-ridden Spain saw medieval Castile as the ideal-type forerunner of the Spain to-be, although there “was no doubt that for them, *España* was a union of different kingdoms.” He then states that early nineteenth-century liberals actively brought about “a preliminary discourse that was to synthesize the history of *España*” in order to bring all the medieval roots together, forming a united Spain (*Castilla*).

According to Pellistrandi, during the second half of the nineteenth century, the notion of a *Castilla* became a symbol for decadence to some, while others took it up as the very essence of *España*. Previously during that century, and especially to commentators outside of the Pyrenean peninsula, *Andalucía* had incorporated the essence of *España* (*Castilla*, 127). At this point it could be mentioned that the dictionary does not contain the entry *Andalucía*, nor does that term appear in the volume’s otherwise highly useful index. Anyhow, under the entry *Cataluña*, Albert Ghaniame discusses nineteenth-century notions of Catalan identity connected to ideas about a unified history of a Catalan

*patria*. Crucial to these notions, he writes, was the idea of a distinction between Catalonia and Spain. To nineteenth-century Catalan nationalists the term *provincialismo* (provincialism) was seen as a dual affirmation of this perceived conflict between Catalonia and Spain. On the one hand, this term was taken to signify the relationship between Catalonia and the Bourbon monarchy, the old regime, while on the other hand it was understood to actively integrate Catalonia into the new Spanish nation-state, the new regime (*Cataluña*, 129). So both the opposing sides in crisis-ridden nineteenth-century Spain, reactionary monarchists and modern liberals, were amalgamated in Catalonia into the one single force called *España*, which, in turn, was viewed as a menace to Catalan identity. Ghaniame also mentions that when O'Donnell formed a government in 1858, the newspaper *Diario de Barcelona* wrote "Catalonia is no longer a Spanish colony" (*Cataluña*, 132).

Through the multitude of nineteenth-century meanings ascribed to the term *España*, Spain appears to have been more a country to-be than a well-cemented and existing nation-state. Hence, as already mentioned, the Spanish case proves to be a good example of a modern nation-building process, a case to be studied closely by those interested in how modern nationalists have conceived the notion of original nations. In the face of turmoil and civil war, the liberal politician Alcalá Galiano in 1835 said that one had "to make a nation out of the Spanish nation" (*España*, 287).

How is "Spanish" delimited in this dictionary of nineteenth-century Spanish political and social concepts? Non-Spanish readers should be reminded that, during that period, Spain was more than the European peninsular Spain and that the Spanish language was more than Castilian. Overseas colonies such as Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and the Canary Islands were part of Spain. In addition, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century, large extensions of South and Central America were at least formally still Spanish possessions. Though Castilian was (and is), beyond dispute, the dominant Spanish language, it was not the only language used in nineteenth-century Spain.

The dictionary's introductory chapter does not provide a clear-cut answer to the question above. Moreover, the implicit answer seems to differ slightly from contributor to contributor. When looking at the sources used, one can state that debates in European Spain were almost exclusively researched from sources in the Castilian language. This source material can be subdivided according to three categories. First, there are individual contemporary

contributors, mainly active politicians or political theorists, who produced books or articles, and who left transcribed interventions in debates such as parliamentary sessions. Second, there is the public sphere of the printing press outside elected parliaments. And the third, there are contemporary nineteenth-century dictionaries, first and foremost the *Diccionario de la Real Academia de la Lengua* (DRAE), which was frequently updated and went through numerous editions throughout the century.

In this dictionary “Spanish” means principally the Castilian discourses on political and social matters that took place in peninsular Spain during the nineteenth century. However, discourses in the colonies are sometimes referred to, as in the entry *Ultramar*, in which one can find discourses articulated both in European Spain and in the provinces. Or, to take another example, in the entry *Vascongadas*, Castilian discourses on Basque identity are discussed together with Basque discourses on the same topic. A more explicit discussion in the introductory chapter about how to delimit the Spanish case in this dictionary on Spanish political and social concepts would have been clarifying.

Given the extreme tension in nineteenth-century Spain concerning the very notion of *España*, the issue of how to delimit the scope of the study must have been, admittedly, a hard nut to crack. In fact, several entries of the volume demonstrate how tensions between different nineteenth-century meanings ascribed to the term *España* caused numerous conflicts, wars, and civil wars throughout that century, up until the Spanish-American war in 1898. Since that war resulted, among other things, in the loss of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam the question of to what extent nineteenth-century Spain was a global empire and to what extent it was a European nation-state was raised once again.

According to Fernández and Fuentes, Spanish contemporaries saw the lost war of 1898 as the culmination of a crisis-ridden century. The two editors co-wrote the entry *Crisis*, which they conclude with the following remark:

To sum up, if the anti-Napoleonic reaction of 1808 had served to elevate the depressed national self-esteem, the disaster of 1898 fed a strange narcissism in the defeat. In any case, between the those two crisis we notice a fundamental difference: the former started a project aiming at nationalizing Spain while the latter almost brought this project to a halt (*Crisis*, 205).

From this point of view, crisis seems to be the term that encapsulates Spanish nineteenth-century experiences and it appears logical that a six-page entry in this volume was dedicated to it.

When first approaching this dictionary one would be prone to expect nineteenth-century Spain to be a fairly well delimited object. But after having worked with it for a while one learns that nineteenth-century Spain was what has already been described as a “battleground for modernity;” a set of colliding nation-building processes that resisted unification, for no consensus about the meaning of “Spain” was ever reached during that period.

The dictionary achieves at least two important goals. While it manages to bring relevant knowledge of the Spanish case to non-Spanish researchers dealing with conceptual history, it also helps to consolidate conceptual history in the Spanish academic milieu. The editors behind this substantial work are both prominent historians. Javier Fernández Sebastian is a professor of the history of ideas and of social and political movements at the University of the Basque Country and Juan Francisco Fuentes is a professor of contemporary history at Universidad Complutense de Madrid. Twenty-seven researchers from different parts of the Spanish academic world were involved in the project. Twelve of them have direct links to the University of the Basque Country, thus making the institution a strong bridgehead for conceptual history within Spanish academia.

It must be recognized that the editors here had to face a dilemma between a handy volume with few explicit references and accessible to readers outside the field of conceptual history, and a vast work with detailed footnotes that would please field experts. In regard to this dilemma, the editors take the following stance:

This *Diccionario Político y Social del Siglo XIX Español* aspires to be a useful guide when searching the origins of our contemporary social and political vocabulary, and a whole group of concepts, institutions, and values that, to a large extent, continue to be valid. It does so without renouncing a historical perspective that restores the specificity of nineteenth-century Spain, that is, intending as far as possible not to adjust this past according to our own present references (Crisis, 14).

A non-Spanish reader should bear in mind that although this is a study in the field of conceptual history, it is primarily intended as a reading for a broad contemporary Spanish audience, that is, a lexicon that provides useful information for interpreting Spain's contemporary society through a perspective handed down by the approach of conceptual history.

The present volume contains 104 entries in 772 pages, including introduction, bibliography, and index. Entries, which are between two and fourteen pages long, are easy to read and well researched. Not all the words listed in the table of contents are actual entries. Some of them are only leads to other entries. For example, when looking up the entry *prensa* (press), which is listed in the table of contents, one will find the following line: *prensa*: ver *periodismo* (press: see journalism). Furthermore, a list of thematically related entries is attached to every entry. This dual structuring system, alphabetic and thematic, facilitates cross-referencing, which the editors emphasize explicitly through the use of the English term *cluster-concepts* (*Introducción*, 58). The volume contains a very valuable subject index too, which makes it both handy and easy to work with. Unfortunately, however, it does not contain a name index.

In contrast to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, which the editors acknowledge as a major reference for their work, the dictionary's system of references does not include long and detailed footnotes but only references in brackets placed directly in the text. The problem is, however, that this system of references is not consistently carried out throughout the volume. Some of the contributions include full references, and also page numbers, while others merely cite sources without providing detailed bibliographical references, not to mention entries that lack references altogether.

For example, in the entry *Soberanía* (Sovereignty), by José María Portillo Valdés, one will find a brilliant five-page article about the complex semantic changes undergone by that concept in nineteenth-century Spain. Portillo Valdés writes that the republican federalists, who during the mid-nineteenth century wanted to see a modernized Spain, got stuck in between "their extended conception of sovereignty and the difficult articulation of nations and State, and states and Nation" within Spain. Portillo Valdés concludes that whatever nationalist perspective used at the end of the nineteenth century — whether for example Spanish, Catalan or Basque — the general view was that the state, and not the nation, was sovereign (*Soberanía*). However, this otherwise thoughtful article has no explicit references backing up the information

provided. For instance, one can read a quotation like: “‘Sovereignty’, we read in a constitutional dictionary from 1820, ‘is the same as supreme power, or power over all powers’” (*Soberanía*, 650). But no bibliographical information is provided about the particular constitutional dictionary from which the quote is extracted.

On the other hand, the entries written by the editors Fernández and Fuentes are impeccable concerning both system of references and the methodological use of conceptual history. It should also be mentioned that they have contributed with more than half of the volume’s entire collection of entries.

As it has been already stated, the main goal of the dictionary is to make sense of the transformations undergone by the political language used when the groundwork of present-day Spain was laid out. Presented in the volume’s thirty-nine-page introduction, its methodological framework purportedly fulfils three basic tasks. First, the entry should draw up the history of the term in question, thus demonstrating its actual usage over time. Second, it should also outline the history of the concept, connecting the term with its contextual social reality. And third it should, against the background of ideological and discursive systems, sketch the different networks and polemical confrontations in which the concept was used and given meaning (*Introducción*, 56).

However, some entries do not strictly follow this methodological framework, something that is understandable in a multi-authored work such as this. Nonetheless, their overall quality undermines the occasional lack of methodological strictness. This is case with Jordi Canal’s entry *Carlismo*, which opens with the following phrase: “*Carlismo* is a socio-political movement with an anti-liberal and anti-revolutionary character, which appeared in Spain at the end of the Old Regime and, although marginalized, has survived to this day” (*Carlismo*, 119). He then uses almost a page to establish this definition before he turns to the history of the concept in question — a procedure that is somewhat unusual to the method of conceptual history, which assumes from the outset the polysemy of key concepts.

After having defined *Carlismo*, however, Canal manages to make the remaining three pages of the entry a highly interesting history of the concept. As is well known, the younger brother of King Fernando VII, Carlos, was devoted to the reactionary cause. When Fernando VII died in 1833 a conflict concerning his succession emerged in Spain. The liberals wanted to see Fernando’s infant daughter Isabella enthroned, while the reactionary claimed

that Carlos should become crowned King Charles V. This conflict led to a series of civil wars, the Carlist Wars, which lasted the rest of the century. Already before the death of Fernando, the supporters of Carlos were called, and called themselves, *carlistas*. Although Canal gives an uncertain date for the emerging concept (between 1823 and 1833), Fernández and Fuentes claim that the concept *carlista* was first documented in 1825 (Introducción, 42). This can have some significance, since, like Fernando VII, the reactionary French king Louis XVIII had a younger brother that was even more devoted to the reactionary cause than his brother. Furthermore, his name was Charles and in Spain he was known as Carlos. In 1824 he became King Charles X of France. Canal mentions that the French concept *carliste* precedes the Spanish *carlista* and that the reactionary side in Spain took both inspiration and concept from the reactionary party in France (*Carlismo*, 120). This sheds light on the relationship and exchange between reactionary groups in France and Spain, an interesting topic for further research in comparative conceptual history.

Even if the *Diccionario Político y Social del Siglo XIX Español* does not have the primary ambition of being a transnational or trans-lingual work, it does raise important questions concerning nation-building processes and theoretical as well as methodological aspects of conceptual history. After having worked with this highly inspiring volume, one waits eagerly for the announced dictionary of Spanish twentieth-century political and social concepts.

**NOTES**

<sup>1</sup> All quotations translated by the author.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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- *Translation, the History of Political Thought, and the History of Concepts.* September 29 - October 1, 2005 at the Graduate Center, City University of New York, USA.
- *Rethinking Secularization.* The International Society for Intellectual History Conference. March 31 - April 3, 2005 at The University of California, Davis. For more information please visit: [www.isih.org](http://www.isih.org).
- Helsinki Summer School arranges a multidisciplinary 6-10 ECTS "Introduction to Conceptual History" course on 16.-31.8.2005. The course is tailored for Finnish and international M.A. students with various academic backgrounds. The course fee for international participants is 450 EUR. The organisers provide a few scholarships covering the course fee for outstanding applicants. The participants are chosen on the basis of their applications. For course description and registration, please visit the Helsinki Summer School website: <http://www.helsinki.fi/summerschool>.

The internationally prominent staff, Martin J. Burke (Associate Professor, The City University of New York) and Jan Ifversen (Associate Professor, Aarhus University) will, together with conceptual history scholars from Finland, provide the participants with the means to re-examine the key concepts of humanities and social sciences from a fresh perspective. The emphasis of this introductory course is two-dimensional. On the one hand this intensive course intends to go in depth in the basics of conceptual history, thereby giving the participants tools to use the methods of conceptual history later in their own research. On the other hand there will be a strong Nordic dimension in tuition, e.g. in the case studies. In practice the pedagogic elements of the course are the following:

- » Introductory lectures by key note lecturers on scholarly traditions and methodological practices of conceptual history.

- » Workshops on specific work-in-progress texts to be discussed and analysed together with the researcher
- » Workshops for discussing the student presentations
- » Case studies presenting analysis of concepts like liberalism, politics, revolution, state and woman

A pre-course reading package will be provided. In order to complete the course successfully the participants are required to participate in the lectures and workshops. They are also expected to write assignments during the course. Target groups of this course include both Finnish and international young academics aiming at theoretical research as well as young academics in need for practical training for position in administration. In other words:

- » Advanced students working with special studies on conceptual change or otherwise needing to analyse the use of concepts
- » Young professionals aiming to work in organisations such as the European Union or the United Nations and their special organisations, in which the political problems of translation, multilingualism and conceptual history lie at the agenda of their daily work

This 6-10 ECTS credit multidisciplinary Helsinki Summer School (<http://www.helsinki.fi/summerschool>) course is organised and hosted by the University of Helsinki and its Centre for Nordic Studies (CENS) at the Renvall Institute. The summer course is a pilot project within the research training program CONCEPTA, an initiative within the History of Political and Social Concepts Group <http://www.jyu.fi/yhtfil/hpscsg/>. In the future CONCEPTA will organise courses both at the M.A. and Ph.D. level in conceptual history and the contextual analysis of political thought.

Please direct any questions concerning especially the course to the coordinator Ms. Sanna Joutsijoki at [sanna.joutsijoki@helsinki.fi](mailto:sanna.joutsijoki@helsinki.fi). Any questions concerning the general arrangements (accommodation, scholarships etc.) should be addressed to the Summer School's office at [summer-school@helsinki.fi](mailto:summer-school@helsinki.fi).

## RECENT AND UPCOMING PUBLICATIONS

- Sebastián, Javier Fernandez, and Joëlle Chassin, eds. 2004. *L'avènement De L'opinion Publique. Europe Et Amérique, XVIIIe-XIXe Siècles*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Contributors: Lucien Jaume, Jacques Guilhaumou, Laurence Kaufmann, Joëlle Chassin, Pilar González Bernaldo, Annick Lempérière, Javier Fernández Sebastián, Iñaki Iriarte, Joaquín Álvarez Barrientos, Elías Palti, M<sup>a</sup> Cruz Mina, Nere Basabe, Juan Olabarría Agra, Richard Hocquellet, and Gonzalo Capellán de Miguel.

- Sandro Chignola. 2004. *Fragile Cristallo: per la Storia del Concetto di Società*. Napoli: Editoriale scientifica.
- Pietro Finelli, Gian Luca Fruci and Valeria Galimi. 2004. *Quaderni Storici: Discorsi agli elettori*. Bologna: il Mulino. n° 117, December.
- Prismas: Revista de Historia Intelectual. 2004. *Journal of the Program of Intellectual History*, National University of Quilmes, Argentina, no. 8.

Articles: Tulio Halperín Donghi, "Alberdi por Alberdi: La Dimensión Autobiográfica en los Escritos Póstumos"; Eugenia Molina, "De Recurso de Pedagogía Cívica a Instrumento de Disciplinamiento Social: el Espectáculo Teatral en el Programa Reformista de la Élite Dirigente. Buenos Aires, 1810-1825"; Alejandra Mailhe, "Fuegos Cruzados. Estética Vanguardista e Ideología Conservadora en Retrato do Brasil de Paulo Prado"; José Fernández Vega, "Estética como Antropología Política. Adorno en la Dialéctica de la Modernidad"; Leticia Prislei, "La Voluntad de Creer y Organizar: Ideas, Creencias y Redes Fascistas en la Argentina de los '30"; Fritz Ringer, "El Campo Intelectual, la Historia Intelectual y la Sociología del Conocimiento"; El Comparatismo como Problema: una Introducción, Adrián Gorelik; La Historia Comparada entre el Método y la Práctica. Un Itinerario Historiográfico; etc.

- Raymonde Monnier, ed. 2004. *Révoltes Et Révolutions En Europe (Russie Comprise) et Aux Amériques de 1773 à 1802*. Paris: Ellipses.

Contributions: R. Monnier, "Introduction" and "Le Republicanisme à l'Épreuve de la Révolution Française. 1770-1802"; Elise Marienstras, "La Révolution Américaine"; Wladimir Berelowitch "l'Insurrection de Pougatchev"; Fabien Marius-Hatchi "Les Insurrections aux Antilles"; Yannick Bosc "Thomas Paine"; Marc Bélissa "Fraternité Universelle", Joost Rosendaal "La Révolution Néerlandaise"; Jacques Guilhaumou "Agir en Révolution"; Sophie Wahnich "Mouvements Populaires Urbains"; Florence Gauthier "Une Révolution Paysanne"; and Jean-Pierre Gross "Jacobinisme et Libéralisme Égalitaire".

- Sandro Chignola and Giuseppe Duso, eds. 2005. *Sui Concetti Giuridici E Politici Dell'europa*. Milano: Angeli.

Contributors: M. Richter, S. Chignola, G. Duso, L. Jaume, L. Hölscher, Th. Hugelin, J. Coleman, R. Bellamy, J. L. Villacañas, H. Hofmann, P. Schiera, P. Costa, and G. Borrelli

- *Redescriptions: Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History*. 2005. Jyväskylä: SoPhi. vol. 9.
- Lucien Jaume and Alain Laquièze, eds. 2005. *Cahiers du CEVIPOF (Centre de recherches Politiques de Sciences Po): Interpréter les Textes Politiques: un Groupe de Recherches au CEVIPOF*. Edited by, n° 39, April.

## RESEARCH PROJECTS AND NETWORKS

- Iberoamerican Network of Político-Conceptual and Intellectual History (RIAHPCI). Coordinators: Elías Palti (UNQui-Argentina), João Feres Júnior (IUPERJ-Brasil), Alexandra Pita (COLMES-México), and Javier Fernández Sebastián (UPV-España).

The recent proliferation of historical studies on languages, concepts, discourses, and political cultures has markedly increased the interest for the field of politico-conceptual history. The number and variety of studies on the key notions of modernity, such as nation, individual, citizenship, republic, liberalism, rights, representation, public opinion, and so on, in Iberian and Iberoamerican societies, concretely demonstrates the vitality of these new approaches and the growing collaboration among specialists in different realms of knowledge.

The Iberoamerican Network of Politico-Conceptual and Intellectual History intends to diffuse these new scholarly orientations and help the exchange among researchers from both sides of the Atlantic.

The virtual forum *IberoIdeas*, one of the first elements of this network, seeks to serve as a vehicle for the debate among different perspectives and approaches to the field of meanings, and to explore different ways to understand better how the modes of comprehension of reality changed historically. Besides organizing seminars and congresses on specific topics, our proposal is aimed at performing more ambitious studies on compared politico-conceptual and intellectual history in the Iberian and Iberoamerican worlds, particularly, in the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We invite all those interested in taking part of this initiative, to visit our Web site [[http:// www.foroiberoideas.com.ar](http://www.foroiberoideas.com.ar)], and become a member of the Network by filling out the requested form you will find when accessing the forum section.

# Redescriptions

## Yearbook of Political Thought and Conceptual History

(formerly The Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought) is an illustrative example of an act of redescription. In terms of both classical rhetoric and modern linguistics of signs, 'redescription' is the common name for a group of moves changing the concept in alternative respects. We can discern four different variants of redescription, namely the reconceptualisation (revision of meaning), renaming (change of the name), re-weighting (shifting significance) and re-evaluation (alteration of the normative colour). One of the classical sources of such rhetorical redescription is the scheme of paradiastole in the ancient and renaissance rhetoric, which refers to de- or revaluing the normative tone or to the increasing or decreasing significance of the concept in question. In a broader sense, the point of both renaming and reconceptualising can be just in the corresponding changes that increase or decrease the acceptability of the concept.

**Redescriptions** encourages submissions of previously unpublished articles, original scholarly contributions on any aspect of political thought regardless of the author's academic discipline. We particularly welcome articles drawing specific attention to the changing and contested character of concepts. In addition, we welcome reviews of recent books focusing on political thought, conceptual history, feminist theory and philosophy.

Redescription's **volume 9** will be published in **April 2005**. It will include, among other contributions, articles by the following authors: Chantal Mouffe, Jodi Dean, Pasi Ihalainen and Elias Palti.

**For more information** on *Redescriptions*, please visit <http://www.jyu.fi/yhtfil/redescriptions>



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Notes and citations should be numbered consecutively using Arabic numerals and should be placed at the end of the text (endnotes). Complete bibliographical references should be included following the endnotes. In reviews and summations, references to the pages of the book under review should be placed in parenthesis. References to other works should follow the same guidelines as articles.

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For words and phrases in languages other than English please use italics. Words in Greek can either be left in the Greek alphabet or transliterated. Long quotations in other languages should be translated.

Gender-specific language should be avoided, unless only one gender is intended.

Centuries should be fully spelled out – “the nineteenth century” - and hyphenated if used adjectivally – “nineteenth-century France.”

Double quotation marks should be used to indicate quotations; single quotation marks for quotations within quotations. Periods and commas should precede quotation marks, except when a page number follows the quotation. Placement of other punctuation marks will depend. If they belong to the sentence or phrase being quoted, they should precede quotation marks; otherwise they should be placed outside quotation marks.

For bibliographical references, please conform to the following illustrative examples:

## BOOKS

**Schaffer, Frederic C. 1998.** *Democracy in Translation: Understanding Politics in an Unfamiliar Culture.* Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

## JOURNAL ARTICLES

**Howland, Douglas R. 2003.** The Predicament of Ideas in Culture: Translation and Historiography. *History and Theory* 42:45-60.

## EDITED BOOK

**Ball, Terence, James Farr, and Russell L. Hanson, eds. 1989.** *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

## BOOK SECTIONS (CHAPTERS)

**Koselleck, Reinhart. 1996.** A Response to Comments on the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*. In *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts: New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, edited by H. Lehmann and M. Richter. Washington D.C.: German Historical Institute.

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All other electronic correspondence, announcements concerning upcoming events and publications, and any other information that might interest our readership should be sent to Katarina Wolter ([contributions@iuperj.br](mailto:contributions@iuperj.br)).

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ISSN :: 1807-9326