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EDITORIAL

CONTINGENCY IN POLITICAL THEORY

Today it is almost fashionable to speak of contingency in political theory, philosophy and historiography[1]. This fashion is, however, a novel phenomenon. In the sixties and seventies the sociological jargon of structures, functions, processes etc., with its implication of "necessities", was dominant. This jargon still shapes much of the journalistic or administrative discourse and is visible for example in the common lamentations of the dangers of globalization. When John Pocock in *The Machiavellian Moment* (1975) summarized the experience of certain Anglophone historians by expressing the idea of politics to consist in the "dealing with the contingent event", he probably was more innovative than he himself understood. The recent contributions to contingency of politics could be related to this formula.

Why is contingency so fashionable today? It would not make any sense of "explaining away" it by some external "factors". The point is, rather, that the idea of contingency is so multi-faceted that almost everyone can recourse to some of its faces to one's own purposes.

Let us simply enumerate some of its facets, in an attempt to translate it. One is the simple facticity, something that "is" but has no grounds or reasons for being, like the Sartrean *être-en-soi*. Another

point is marked when contingency is identified as lack of foundations or sufficient grounds. A third nuance is the pure hazard or coincidence. This is to be distinguished from the good or bad luck, as an expression of the powers of the *fortuna*. Contingency sometimes also refers to a point of connection or "touch" as Oakeshott put it. Per definitionem contingent is "something that could be otherwise". For political theory the most interesting variant of it is: "something that can be done otherwise". In this sense contingency refers to occasion, opportunity or *Chance* in the Weberian sense. It simultaneously contains elements of revisability, mutability, alterability etc. The converse side of these aspects are the nuances of being timely, fragile, destructible, bound to failure or decay etc. In relation to time contingency is always something unexpected and unpredictable, something impossible to control.

What makes the concept so fashionable and fascinating is just its multiplicity of nuances, which tend to make tacit shifts, when we talk on contingency in a specific context. Indeed, contingency is a paradigmatic expression of the Koselleckian idea that concepts as such are ambiguous and contestable. In the controversy surrounding contingency, we can distinguish important disagreements concerning the concept itself from those on the value or acceptability of contingency, as well as from those concerning its significance in the situation or in historical changes.

How then to "deal with", or better yet, to "play with" contingency? Contingency used to be a *bête noire* of the philosophers, and they only knew how to play *against contingency*, by denying its reality or significance, or by trying to eliminate or eradicate it. In the contemporary debate an acknowledgement of the reality and importance contingency is obvious, and its sheer elimination would appear to be something beyond human powers. This mere acknowledgement has, however, made possible new forms of reducing or "taming" contingency. It can be marginalized in its significance, reduced in its extent, restricted to specific fields of topics, normalized into something harmless, functionalized into service of proper aims, regulated into something controllable and so on.

Elections are "the contingent event" *par excellence* in the daily politics: a source of chances, choices and alternances. Around the elections, however, most of the aforementioned strategies of taming con-

tingency are actively used in various combinations, thus leaving the individual voter with litle to choose from. It is no wonder that the topic of *Politikversdrossenheit* is a commonplace in the daily political discourse in the Western world.

The rehabilitatation of politics seems, thus, to revalorize contingency. But how can we celebrate contingency? Rorty's reversal of the classical slogan into "freedom is the recognition of contingency" does not quite seem sufficient. Simply recognizing contingency does not prevent its taming. Contingency requires a reappraisal of the activity of politicking, as something more important than the substantive policy goals or procedural regulations of the polity. The results of political games should be left open, to be understood as the result of clever playing and of *fortuna* in relations to other players.

Still, it seems that it is difficult to speak of contingency without at least implictly engaging in its reduction. How, then, can we conceptualize contingency without, through this very act, already taming it? The possibility of doing so consists, to borrow Quentin Skinner's terminology, in a rhetorical redescription of the concept, which alters its "range of refererence". Only then could contingency appear as a politicizing move.

In Pocock's *Machiavellian Moment* the contingency of *fortuna*, in whichever form it was evoked, remained an already existing contingency, a background of all human actions, to which individuals only had to adapt themselves. The fashionable slogan of contingency in the contemporary discussion still seems to assume that the only contingency is that of the *fortuna*.

In the twentieth century political theory, however, we, at least implicitly, know, however, another figure of contingency, which is perhaps best manifested in the Weberian concept of *Chance*. For Weber *Chance* is an operative concept, which makes human actions and their relations to each other intelligible. In the Weberian sense, *Chance* marks an occasion or an opportunity, not in the rare and extraordinary sense of the Greek *kairos* or the Machiavellian *occasione*, but rather, as something omnipresent. For Weber even the extremely tight and bureaucratized structures and processes are to be made intelligible in the nominalistic terms of the complexes of *Chancen*.

A precondition of the rethinking of contingency in terms of *Chancen* was, in the 'Weberian moment' a situational analysis according to

which *fortuna* had vanished. Weber saw the tendency towards bureaucratization as omnipresent and irresistible, a force which probably would "one day" extinguish the moments of freedom. His reconceptualization of the contingency of politics in terms of *Chancen* was a move to restrict the tendency of bureaucratization. Weber overestimated the role of bureaucratization, while there are signs of a return of the *fortuna* in the contemporary world. Weber's concept of *Chance* remains a key innovation for the contemporary political theory, but the return of the *fortuna*, as it is manifested by actualization several figures, such as Beck's concept of risk, in obliges us again to rethink the contingency of politics.

* * *

In this volume of *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* the rethinking of contingency is practised both as main theme and as a thematic background of the history of concepts. Explicitly the topic is dealt by *Maureen Whitebrook*, who combines a political reading of two contemporary novels with the discussion of contingency in the contemporary anglophone political theory – with the interesting result that, in the perspective of contingency, novels seem to do better political theory than professional political theorists. A strong support for this thesis can be found in *John Nelson's* article, in which the spy novels of John Le Carré are read both as an extension of the classical political thought since Hobbes and as a critique of the contemporary theories of international politics, implicitly just from the viewpoint of contingency, which spies both try to reduce and turn to their own advantage.

An increasing acknowledgement has, however, reached also the political, cultural and social theories of today, and and its relevance for the *Zeitdiagnose* is discussed in *Risto Eräsaari's* article. The relevance of the contingency for the understanding the changing practices of contemporary politics is also thematized by *Eeva Aarnio's* and *Kyösti Pekonen's* article on the Finnish party programmes.

As opposed to the classical analytical ideal of "defining" of concept, contingency plays a key role in the formation and use of con-

cepts in the interdisciplinary approach called "history of concepts" or "conceptual history", or with a German term *Begriffsgeschichte*. In this volume we publish four of the contributions of the first international conference, arranged at the Finnish Institute in London in June 1998. An international forum for scholars was founded at that occasion and a *"History of Concepts Newsletter"* has been recently been published by Karin Tilmans and Wyger Velema at the University of Amsterdam.

Each of the contribution on the history of concepts published here also emphasizes its links to contingency, although not always using the word. *Melvin Richter's* "overview" indicates to some new problematics and challenges to *Begriffsgeschichte* and the problem of contingency is emphasized by the contestability of political and social concepts. *Janet Coleman* discusses the chances and limitations of the history of concepts for the history of ancient and medieval political thought, claiming interestingly that Reinhart Koselleck's approach sometimes unduly simplifies the contingencies of history. *Iisa Räsänen*, in her review of the Dutch volume *History of Concepts* wants to apply conceptual history to the analysis of contemporary politics and she also criticizes the search for "foundations", in the sense of looking for a definite view on the relations between words and concepts or meaning and concepts. I have sketched a somewhat unconventional perspective for comparing the work of two paradigmatic representatives of conceptual history, Reinhart Koselleck and Quentin Skinner, by seeing as a common point that their work "can be read as contributions to … extending contingency to concepts" (for Koselleck cf. also *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* vol. 1, 1997)

In his response to my contribution *Quentin Skinner* assesses his own intellectual development and especially the role of his specific "rhetorical turn". He explicitly refutes the *communis opinio* that his approach is opposed to the history of concepts and stresses that especially some of his own contributions to the concept of the state well can be included to conceptual history. In addition, it is worth noticing that Skinner also alludes to the role of contingency for his approach in relation to the older views on the history of thought. Characterizing his critique of Lovejoy's programme for the history of ideas in the late sixties Skinner writes: "I tried … to speak up for a more radical contingency in the history of thought". He also evokes

contingency when assessing his own turn towards the work of the theorists of classical eloquence: "I … have come to share their more contingent understanding of normative concepts and the fluid vocabularies in which they are generally expressed". In terms of contingency Skinner's programme, thus, can be interpreted as consisting in two historically separate moves, each of which radicalizes the heuristic use of contingency in his understanding of conceptual changes.

KARI PALONEN

Notes

[1]The concept has now reached also the level of the weeklies. A German author writes in the *Zeit* : "Woran berauschen sich die Zuschauer im Fußballstadion! Nein, nicht Bier. Die *Zeit* "… sie berauschen sich an den Mysterien der Kontingenz". Genau denen bin ich auf der Spur: den Mysterien der *Kontingenz*. Sie fehlt heute in keinem kulturphilosophischen Text." (Dieter Zimmer, *Die Zeit*, 8.4. 1999, p.2). Even thought Herr Zimmer finally claims that "Kontingenz oft gar nichts bedeutet", is both his characterization of its use as a slogan and his reference to an earlier *Zeit* article on the contingency of the football – to me always an important source of illustrating political action – characteristic of the situation.

MAIN TOPIC

CONCEPTUAL CHANGE AND CONTINGENCY

Melvin Richter

BEGRIFFSGESCHICHTE TODAY – AN OVERVIEW*

To discuss the history of political and social concepts at the meet ing at the Finnish Institute in London offers an unique international occasion in its subject, its location, and in the disciplinary and national diversity of those gathered. This gathering brings together participants from fourteen countries, including those involved in eight projects, some under way; others proposed, or being planned. All of them represent initiatives prompted by positive, if selective and qualified responses outside Germany to three great collective works, the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (GG), the *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich, 1680-1820* (Handbuch), and the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. Newer German lexicons using one or another version of *Begriffsgeschichte* include one on the history of rhetoric, and another on the history of aesthetic concepts in German-speaking Europe.

All five of these German works vary greatly in both method and focus, as no doubt will the projects about which we shall be hearing. Also on our agenda will be considerations of the relationship between *Begriffsgeschichte* and the disciplines and sub-disciplines to which it is related, as well as its potential contributions to such fields as political culture. All of us anticipate the discussions in other panels of several other themes crucial to our subject.

As for my own paper, I shall not recapitulate the schematic view of *Begriffsgeschichte* provided in my book *The History of Political and Social Concepts*. Instead I shall first address those great intellectual challenges and unusual opportunities offered by this meeting. The second section deals with the need to consolidate and extend the findings of the collective works in *Begriffsgeschichte* now completed or approaching their end. Next comes a consideration of what might facilitate the comparison of histories of political and social concepts in different natural languages, about which we shall be hearing. Finally, I survey and assess recent critiques and alternative formulations of our subject, including some redefining it, and one proposing that the very term "concept" (*Begriff*) be abandoned.

I

In more than one sense, it is significant that we should meet in London under the sponsorship of the Finnish Institute, rather than under the auspices of any analogous British or Anglophone organization. Two questions are in point: Why the interest in the history of political and social concepts represented by our hosts from Finland, as well as those of us from Denmark, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Russia, and Sweden? Why has there been relatively little response to *Begriffsgeschichte* in English-speaking countries? One obvious answer is the fact that because most of these countries have long had close ties to German thought, scholars from them are more apt both to work in the German language and to attend to intellectual developments there. Nor should we underestimate those differences separating the methods used by German, French, and English-speaking historians of political and social thought. Indeed, we shall see that the most recent discussions of these subjects tend to organize discussions in terms of contrasts among the approaches to the historical study of political and social language in these three cultures. Of course, scholars in other countries, notably the Netherlands and Italy, are both well acquainted with all these developments, and have themselves contributed significantly to the discussions of them. What is positive and encouraging is that not only has an international dia-

logue begun, but that attention now focuses on how differences may be reconciled and synthesized. We hope that in this regard, this meeting marks a significant step that will be continued by subsequent conferences.

Here we should consider that there is a new situation potentially favoring further developments of *Begriffsgeschichte*: the end of the Cold War, the dramatic changes brought by it, including intellectual freedom in the former Soviet Union and the countries once under its control; the globalisation of trade, industry, and communications; the movement towards creating more inclusive political and economic units such as the European Union and the North American Free Trade Association; attempts to enlarge membership in existing units, North Atlantic Treaty and the World Trade Organizations; and finally the incredible speed of developments in new technologies of information processing and communication, to mention only computers, data banks, analytical programs, and the internet.

Indeed the hypotheses investigated by the GG may be even more applicable to our present time than to the early modern and modern periods of what Reinhart Koselleck has called the *Sattelzeit*. We may anticipate an even greater acceleration of linguistic change, coinages of new political and social concepts indicating the increased acceptance of modes of thought premised upon the assumption that time, experience, and advances in knowledge are all speeding up. Such rapid change (*Beschleunigung*) may produce modes of political and social thought registering the loss in importance of past time, tradition, and other continuities in relation to the present, and even more, to the future. Thus, if the GG's hypotheses hold, the anticipation of future time (*Verzeitlichung*) will be increasingly built into political and social concepts. What of the other three hypotheses about the characteristics of modern political and social concepts: *Demokratisierung* (democratization) of political and social vocabularies, *Ideologiesierbarkeit* (the extent to which concepts may be incorporated into ideologies), and *Politisierung* (politicization) of concepts?

Michael Freeden, author of a recent important book on political ideologies is better situated than me to comment on the prospects for ideologies in the present conjuncture. In the perspective of his book we could, for example, consider whether ideologies in their 20th century forms will be less important in the next century, or

whether the situation will resemble that in the United States, where as overtly political ideologies recede, cultural and economic ideologies replace them, along with fundamentalist religious movements. As for the prospects for further democratization and politicization of political and social concepts, I here raise rather seek to resolve such questions.

II

Up to now the principal achievements of *Begriffsgeschichte* have been primarily German lexicons of political, social, and philosophical concepts, and secondarily, studies in books and articles of particular concepts in these domains. For these lexicons to achieve their greatest usefulness for future works, supplementary studies and research are needed. Such follow-up and evaluative work might well be done by graduate students, in theses and dissertations while they can still interview those who have directed and participated in major projects. Past sponsors of research in *Begriffsgeschichte* – research institutes and academies, foundations and publishers – might be approached to support such evaluative research and reflections.

What are the questions which might be most profitably addressed? Among others are the following: When projects have stated the specific problems they were meant to address, to what extent has the finished work done so? If hypotheses have been formulated as was done in Reinhart Koselleck's Introduction to the GG, to what extent have they been verified, verified in part, falsified, or can be said to have produced no useful conclusions? In short, what are the theoretical findings of the project? To what extent did contributors use the distinctive techniques specified, and make use of the full range of sources provided by the editors? Evaluations should include both internal self-critiques, as well as the judgments of outside analysts.

On balance, what do the editors, contributors, publishers, and readers of these works in *Begriffsgeschichte* perceive to be both their greatest achievements and lacunae? Which concepts should have been included; which omitted? Again evaluations should include autocritiques, as well as those by outside analysts. Thus detailed ques-

tionnaires should be devised to record systematically queries to the editors. For example, if they were starting now, what would they do which was not done? What would they omit?

In addition to internal critiques, external analysts might usefully ask those who took part in these earlier projects what contributions could now be made by techniques and sources now available, such as computer analyses, and construction of data banks. Had any of the been available, how could their use have improved what was done in past collective works. To this end researchers should investigate the construction, analysis, and applications of such potentially useful works as the joint French-American data base, *Trésor de la langue française*, (ARTFL); the files compiled at St. Cloud; as well as existing programs for analyzing the *Oxford English Dictionary* and plans for expanding it. From this discussion by editors, participants, and evaluators, might come recommendations for designing computerized analytical programs specially designed for use in research on *Begriffsgeschichte*.

Now that so many projects in languages other than German are under way or being considered, the foci of each of them ought to be examined, and to the greatest possible extent, include the same concepts. Using one or more international language, a center should be established to house archives recording the processes used to select the method and subject matter of the different projects by their editors, as well as their reasons for their choices.

It would be no less important to create a file of applications made for support of projects, including those dating back to the 1960's. This archive would contribute to the history of knowledge by recording the changing goals set for scholarship in our subject, it would provide an array of arguments needed for making persuasive cases for new projects, and would also help identify foundations, as well as governmental, non-governmental and international organizations willing to participate in such efforts, particularly if they fit into a comparative agenda designed to facilitate international understanding. For example, Profs. Kopossov and Khapaeva have formulated a rationale for their project, which, *mutatis mutandis*, may be applicable to other countries recently within the former Soviet bloc. What they emphasize as the prequisite for communication among scholars and statesmen, is the need to establish a clear understanding of

the disparate meanings carried by key social science and historiographical concepts in Russian, French, German, and English.

Above all, we need to make a case for both minimum and maximum programs comprehensible and persuasive to our colleagues, governmental and non-governmental, and not least to publishers and the educated public which constitutes their market. What might this case look like? As a minimum, we should argue that just as the goal of lexicography is defined as the preparation of dictionaries; so that of *Begriffsgeschichte* is to prepare lexicons of political and social concepts. This is a minimum but still honorable and justifiable objective. Indeed one of the strongest arguments for *Begriffsgeschichte* is that if pursued on the level attained by its German models, it produces lexicons of a kind previously nonexistent but certainly highly desirable. Where such lexicons of *Begriffsgeschichte* exist, they are widely used by both scholars and by the general public, and help raise the level of political and social discourse. That they do not tell us all that we want to know about intellectual, political, and social history scarcely counts as a criticism. The distinction between necessary and sufficent conditions for knowledge is in point here, as it is for all forms of inquiry. Instruments must be evaluated in terms of what they are meant to do. We must clarify the questions and problems to which *Begriffsgeschichte* is relevant, and point out the advantages of knowing the history of past usages of concepts still very much at the heart of contemporary discussion. Comparison of such usages reveals much both about ourselves and others.

III

Now that we have the prospect of a number of projects in different natural languages and diverse political cultures, the time has come to raise the hitherto little examined question of what might come from comparing the findings of these studies. This would be greatly facilitated by the analyses recommended earlier of the findings of those lexicons already completed or nearing their end. As for new projects, it is self-evident that subsequent comparison of them will be facilitated by discussion in advance of their respective agendas.

This means that we ought to consider establishing an organization which could serve as a forum for discussing critically alternative sets of both metatheories and working methods. While there must be some degree of variation among projects in disparate settings, such differences should be minimized as much as possible.

How could this be done? One way would be through establishing a forum for discussing both the methods that would be used and the concepts to be covered. The second is more easily dealt with. For example, while the GG and Handbuch differ in their theoretical frameworks, there is a considerable overlap, if not identity, of the concepts covered. When resources are limited, as is usually the case, there will be the need to choose those concepts most important for the individual project. But if there is some room for going beyond a bare minimum, then the negative question can be raised of why some concepts so crucial for one unit of comparison are not so for others. This apparently abstract issue is open to resolution in more than one way.

One promising approach to comparison is the systematic study of conceptual transfers from one culture to another. Because of its empirical dimensions, the study of transfers should be given a high priority. Analyses of which concepts were taken, modified, or ignored tells much about the mechanisms at work in the important process of selection performed by the intellectuals, institutions, and media, which together create public opinion. The Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft is supporting a study of the concepts taken from France by German authors from 1700 to 1815. The directors of this work have worked out a research agenda applicable in principle to other conceptual transfers. By using and modifying these methods to borrowings in other national or cultural settings, it might be possible to draw upon both the resources internal to states, such as national academies, libraries, and archives, and in addition, national and international research organizations such as the European University and Central European University, and research programs sponsored by the European Union and NATO.

For purposes of comparison, it is preferable to consider conceptualization as a process, usually contested, rather than to emphasize the content or final forms of the concepts produced. For example, it may be generally agreed that something new and im-

portant is taking place, such as the industrial revolution in the nineteenth century; population movements or globalisation in the twentieth. However, different persons and groups make discrepant analyses of what they regard as the component strands constituting the phenomenon; they disagree about its present effects and future consequences. The diagnoses, prognoses, and evaluations of the phenomenon by these different persons and groups diverge greatly, as do their prescriptions for what should be done on the basis of how they view this new development. Because they have conceptualized the phenomenon in contested forms, they may, depending upon the political system, debate the merits of their respective formulations. Or else only one form of the concept may be imposed and made authoritative under penalty of sanctions, as exemplified by the Bureau of Formulations which in the People's Republic of China since 1949 has regulated every public use of political concepts in the media.

Very general comparisons should be avoided. Instead attention should be centered on conceptual coinages, changes, and transfers. Comparisons should be among nations or cultures at given moments, and conducted with common foci, that is taken from the same domain. Much will depend upon the period or moment chosen. In the 18th and 19th centuries, comparative analysis of political and social concepts should not ignore "nation," "state," "bureaucracy," "liberty," "equality," "suffrage," "representative government," "the rule of law," "freedom of expression and religious worship," "revolution," "civil society," "human rights" and regime types, including "republic," "democracy," and "Bonapartism." Finally, may I add the recommendation that we should not assume that the concept of "comparison" means and has meant the same thing everywhere and at all times? While preparing a chapter on the "The Comparative Study of Regimes and Societies in the Eighteenth-Century" for *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Political Thought*, I discovered that the methods of *Begriffsgeschichte* enabled me to identify important 18th century senses of "comparison" differing considerably from 20th century understandings. It is also to identify the terms such as *moeurs* and *manières* used in comparative analyses in one time and place but not in another.

IV

What direction should be taken in writing the history of political and social concepts? I shall not attempt to recapitulate all of the most recent literature in German, French, and English, as has Rolf Reichardt in his extraordinarily thorough, well-informed, and thoughtful introduction to *Beiheft 21* of the *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung, Aufklärung und Historische Semantik*. Instead I shall offer some reflections and comments on his account and recommendations, along with two others who have offered their own reviews of studies in more than one language and national style: Günther Lottes's "'The State of the Art.' Stand und Perspektiven der `intellectual history;'" and Peter Schöttler's "Mentalitäten, Ideologien, Diskurse," as well as his earlier "Sozialgeschichtliches Paradigma und historische Diskursanalyse."

Recent comparative discussions of alternative methods have been phrased in three sets of terms: German, including both the varieties of *Begriffsgeschichte*, and historical semantics from the standpoint of linguists such as D. Busse critical of *Begriffsgeschichte*; French, *Annales* studies of *mentalités*, discourse analyses such as Robin's, and the lexicometry of the St. Cloud school; and in English, the study of political languages or in his own special sense, "discourses" by Pocock; or of "ideologies" again in a stipulated sense by Skinner, and most recently, the "new cultural history," and post-modern "cultural studies," largely, although not exclusively, by North Americans.

I shall comment briefly on proposals that "historical semantics," "history of mentalities," or "history of discourses" replace that type of *Begriffsgeschichte* concerned with the history of political concepts or terms. Such critiques are of two kinds. One, originating in social historians, and sometimes combined with French discourse analysis and/or quasi-Marxist assumptions, uses a strategy resembling that of other theories which deny any degree of autonomy to the political process. All such critiques subordinate government, politics, and political thought to some deeper structure or whole, variously located in the economy, society, culture, or language. A second type of critique represents hegemonic aspirations on the part of one or another discipline to impose its *Fragestellungen* and methods, as with

the program of positivism or behavioralism in the social sciences. The dominant impulse here is an obsession with exact measurement, quantification, statistics, in short, incontrovertible proof. Existing procedures for studying the history of political and social concepts are deprecated as merely verbal, arbitrarily interpretative, inconclusive because contestable, and hence always relative to the values of investigators, and never establishing unquestionable criteria for intersubjective validity.

By contrast, the methods of other sciences, in this case modern structural linguistics and semantics, are presented as the model for the new discipline meant to replace *Begriffsgeschichte*. This critique, originating with a group of German linguists, and subsequently embraced by some social historians, has convinced Rolf Reichardt, among the most impressive practitioners of what he now wishes to call "historical semantics." He has accepted their conclusion that the very term "concept" (*Begriff*) should be replaced by *Schlagwort*, meaning by that, if I understand him correctly, a sign or group of signs constituting a semantic unity. He also accepts their denial that there are any defensible criteria for choosing *Grundbegriffe* or *Leitbegriffe* to serve as the subjects of a conceptual history. This is not the place, nor do I have the competence, to state and evaluate the precise case made by this group of German linguists against the procedures of *Begriffsgeschichte* as hitherto practiced. I shall confine myself to making several observations, which presumably will be discussed by either the commentators or in the question period.

First of all, there is the question of what degree of exactitude is appropriate to our subject of inquiry. Aristotle's commonsensical answer is that it is the kind of study in question which determines the extent of possible precision: "it is obviously just as foolish to accept arguments of possibility from a mathematician as to demand strict demonstrations from an orator." In the GG, Professor Koselleck has made selected and pragmatic use of linguistic techniques, while disclaiming strict conformity with present-day linguistics and semantics. Certainly it is possible to achieve exactitude in detail by omitting any consideration of the larger significance of the data. This was Reichardt's dismissive verdict in the *Handbuch* on *lexicométrie*, a judgment which our French guests may wish to contest. But before accepting as a standard that version of historical semantics derived

from linguistics endorsed by critics of *Begriffsgeschichte*, it would be prudent to await detailed historical studies along the lines they advocate. Thus far there has been little to show for treating political concepts, *Schlagwörter*, or *Schlüsselwörter* as nothing more than a subset of linguistics, as a form of language or discourse differing in no significant respect from any other. The same could be said of efforts to treat political concepts as subordinate parts of mentalities, the "third level" of the *Annales* school; or as nothing but symbolic expressions of a single unified culture; or as determined exclusively by the social or economic membership of those possessing and using such concepts.

My second point is that it is always a mistake to treat political terms exclusively as units of language. Without specific reference to the type of political regime under which these terms are used, many, if not all conclusions about their use are at best misleading, and at worst, clearly wrong. Purely linguistic treatments of political language in China since 1949 are meaningless without referring to the fact that under this political regime, a "bureau of formulations" has regulated every public use of political concepts in the media. Books such as Viktor Klemperer's *LTI* demonstrate the extent to which the Nazi regime controlled and manipulated the use of political concepts, reversing for its own ideological purposes the meaning of terms such as *Fanatismus* (fanaticism, *fanatisme*). Nor was the case any different in the former DDR, or in its Soviet master and model. Thus a history of political terms cannot be adequately formulated without specifying a theory of politics and a classification of regimes. Purely semantic theories make no room for theories of politics and regime types. I shall make this point again when referring to the "contestability" of political terms, surely one of their defining characteristics.

What is meant by the "contestability" of political concepts? First, the term indicates that disputes about such concepts as "democracy" involve their central, rather than their marginal meanings. In short, is a direct, participatory system such as ancient Athens the paradigm of democracy, or should the model be modern constitutional, representative governments such as the Bundesrepublik, the United States, and the United Kingdom? Second, in "contestable" concepts, disagreements form an indispensable part of the meaning. Anyone failing to realize that fact does not understand the way the term is used.

This would be true of anyone holding that the meaning of "freedom" is so clear that it is difficult to understand why so many people and governments use it wrongly. "Freedom" is not the type of concept which carries one incontrovertible meaning. Third, this is to suggest that the value of some concepts derive from the controversy they engender rather than from any consensus about their meaning. Certain concepts are valuable, not despite disputes about their meaning, but just because of such disagreements. Thus debates about the meaning of "democracy" or "free speech," or the right to political asylum may enrich public understanding of the issues involved without ever providing a single correct or agreed concept of any of them. While conceptual contestation may or may not occur in different types of regimes, there is much to be said for those who argue that conceptual contestation is crucial to the practices of constitutional and representative democracies. On this view, conflict, not consensus, is crucial to regimes that are both free and democratic. For in such governments, despite legislative, judicial, and intellectual disagreements about concepts, principles and their application, it is usually the case that policies are adopted and put into place. The assumption that only consensus on a single set of views can produce social order and effective political decision is highly questionable.

I further contend that the history of political terms should be linked to agents, both individuals or groups, as well as to reception of these terms by their targets or audiences. The notion of agency, that is the systematic consideration of who takes or has taken political action, and for which reasons, is crucial to understanding how political terms are constituted and function. Such theories of agency, whether individual or group, tend to be ruled out *a priori* by purely linguistic, social historical, or cultural analyses. This is especially true for the distinction made in structural linguistics between *langue* and *parole*, which by its emphasis on language as a synchronic system precludes attributing any role to agency in language change. Much the same point holds for post-structuralists like Foucault.

Another point, which I shall state here but not develop further, challenges the blanket dismissal as mere *Gipfelwanderungen*, going from peak to peak, the consideration of the part played in political language by major political theorists. Here Saussurean linguistics converge with the *Annales* school of social history focused on

mentalités in denying that the political vocabulary may be affected by individual contributions. I agree with the non-controversial assertion (made among others by Lovejoy, Pocock, Skinner, Koselleck, and Reichardt) that histories of political concepts and language should not be based exclusively, or even mainly on canonical thinkers. Yet I conclude that it is unjustifiable to engage in sweeping categorical rejections of the part played in political language by major theorists such as Montesquieu and Rousseau in the eighteenth century, or by lesser known individuals such as Nicole Oresme who contributed more than five hundred political terms to French during the fourteenth century, or by an analogous figure, Sir Thomas Elyot in England during the sixteenth. And at the end of the twentieth century, how plausible is it to assert that the writings of Marx and Engels, Lenin, Stalin, and Mao have been irrelevant to the political languages of peoples subject to regimes that regarded one or more of them as canonical?

My final conclusion is that we should beware of assuming that there is one and only one correct method and theoretical objective for those concerned with the history of political and social concepts. Everything depends on what is the question being addressed, and upon the purpose of a given work. While the minimal purpose of Begriffsgeschichte is, as has been suggested, to produce reference works on the history of political and social concepts, there remains ample room for other types of projects. These, depending on the problems addressed by the investigator, may and should vary greatly.

Perhaps the greatest and most exciting challenge confronting historians of political and social concepts is to demonstrate by example how the application of their approach can illuminate their subject. It was above all by *The Great Chain of Being* that A. O. Lovejoy scored his success in founding the *Journal of the History of Ideas*, and establishing the movement, which for two decades was to dominate American studies in that field. Similarly what ultimately convinced Anglophone historians to abandon Lovejoy's history of ideas were Pocock's *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* and his *The Machiavellian Momen*t, as well as Quentin Skinner's *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*. It remains to be seen whether anyone now writing Begriffsgeschichte can rival these precedents.

Notes

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Janet Coleman

THE PRACTICAL USE OF BEGRIFFSGESCHICHTE

*By an Historian of European Pre-modern Political Thought: Some Problems**

I have just put the final touches to the text of a rather large book that is the result of a very long-term project on *A History of Political Thought from the Ancient Greeks to the Renaissance* (Blackwell, forthcoming). Because courses in European and Anglo-American universities often treat the history of political thought as a study of canonical great theorists and their texts, I have taken into account students' needs and primarily focused on Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Augustine, Aquinas, a selection of medieval theorists, and I end with Machiavelli and his contemporaries. But this is no *Sophie's World* with footnotes. I have treated these thinkers' political theories or political philosophies as embedded within as much socio-political history as I could include to elucidate why the texts say what they do (and don't say something else) without, I hope, drowning the reader in the minutiae of different and other times. I have taken these individual theorists to be representatives of groups, parties, all of them positioned in structures not of their own making. I do not treat them merely as individual linguistic agents in speech situations, but rather, as representatives of local kinds of arguments set in contexts that

were not purely linguistic. But these contexts survive for us through texts which *re*-present the nonlinguistic circumstances in which concepts were developed and experiences had. Crucially, these selected philosophers or theorists are not taken to be, because they were not in their own times, representative voices *of* their times. Rather, they were judged by later Europeans to have been exemplary of the best of the past. Hence, they are the winners, judged or misjudged as such, retrospectively, by later Europeans who actively reconstructed their own pasts, in part by establishing a canon of great and inspiring thinkers who, if properly understood, they thought could be essentially imitated later down the historical road.[1]

On the one hand I have looked at selected political theories and discussed their genesis in their own socio-political contexts, but my principle for inclusion of one as opposed to another thinker has been founded on a retrospective examination of which texts Europeans, in the course of their construction of their own identities, themselves deemed worthy of actively adopting and necessarily misinterpreting to serve their own present. Past concepts for such Europeans in the pre-modern period were not antiquarian curiosities; they judged these texts which expressed past concepts to be usable or else, they ignored them and did not have them recopied for future generations. Unlike post-19th-century historians, earlier Europeans looked for answers to what they took to be unchanging questions, and they thought they could engage unproblematically in dialogues with philosophers across time and re-use their solutions to what they took to be eternal problems about human governance. Of course, from our point of view, what they did was construct continuities with their selected pasts, believing themselves to be able to learn from and indeed, repeat the virtues of the past because they held that the past was filled with men who were just like them. In fact, they were only able to sustain this essential continuity by completely transforming past concepts to suit their own circumstances and experiences. They thought they were living within a tradition but actually were in the extended process of constructing one.

Instead of focusing on lesser contemporary texts, although I have sometimes included them to show parallels or differences with what came to be considered the more famous texts, I have focused on what has become for Europeans a canon because I think there actu-

ally has been one established by Europeans which is remarkably stable and it has undoubtedly wiped out a variety of past contemporary voices and perspectives from our view. I think this in itself has tremendous consequences for the success or otherwise of a synchronic mapping of key concepts that comprised a complex past society's political and social vocabulary. The canon is a collection of evolving European prejudices about themselves and others, and has been forged precisely as women and minority groups have today claimed, through a process of exclusion and selection which has determined which voices from the past were, in fact, taken seriously. I have not looked for the genesis of modern concepts, like 'the state', in these earlier periods because I think teleologies can only be constructed retrospectively, and in the construction they tell us perhaps more about ourselves than about past peoples' self-understandings. But I have tried to identify certain conceptual configurations through languages used at the time in order to alert readers to, say, a notion of *ius* or right, whose meaning is perhaps related to some of our uses of the notion of right but which, when situated in another context, implies a range of other ideas, some of which seem distinctly strange to us.

Throughout this project I have attempted to use some of the methods of Reinhart Koselleck's *Begriffsgeschichte*. As a classicist and medievalist, and not simply as a historian of classical and medieval *political* theory, my training ensured that I was much influenced by Otto Brunner's work, without however, coming to similar conclusions about the benefits of national socialism! But I admit to having found it often much easier to sustain the theoretical discussion especially of Brunner's heirs and successors than to engage the theory in practice as I've moved from the ancient Greek world through that of the Romans, early Christians, medievals – early and later – and that of the renaissance theorists.

First of all, there is, of course, a huge problem of just who we can call a political theorist in a period when there were many literary genres which *we* might not recognise as expressing political or social concepts. And there were many men with very different professional trainings who wrote about the social and political ordering of human life but perhaps couched their views in biblical and theological terms. Is every surviving text capable of revealing social and political

concepts? In some sense the answer must be yes. Is every author then, a political and social theorist? This is not simply a problem for 'medieval' so-called (by us) political thought. It raises the question about the criteria we use which enable us to privilege political and social concepts which both *GG* and I wish to do, not least because this privileging of the political as an exclusive realm of (usually male) public values is a notable European practice. Furthermore, it raises the problem of our capacity to recognise what distinguishes political and social from other kinds of concepts in pre-modern societies.

Then secondly, for my kind of book, aimed at advanced undergraduates and postgraduates, who are interested in coming to some understanding of coherent *whole* political theories of the past, I found it insufficient to track say, the antithetical dualisms, e.g. hellenes/ barbarians, Christian/heathen as Koselleck does in his 'The historical-political semantics of asymmetric counterconcepts'.[2]

Hence, first I want to suggest that there is a problem with the use of *Gegenbegriffe* which seems to be rooted in an unspoken epistemological theory of the bi-polar or the binary mind. It is not that there is some fixed ontology of concepts with which Koselleck and his colleagues are working, but there does appear to be a submerged theory about the genesis of contingent frames of meaning that is based on presumed psychological polarities which get filled up, as it were, by contested words which signify concepts. Hence, diachronic transformation is for Koselleck, *necessarily* polar. In discussing the concept *Bund*, for instance, Koselleck offers us a religious and a political sense, and while the religious sense was never completely abandoned, he seems to have a notion of mind as dependent on binary contradictions.[3] Koselleck has written that 'without the invocation of parallel or opposed concepts, without ordering generalised and particular concepts, and without registering the overlapping of two expressions, it is not possible to deduce the structural value of a word as 'concept' either for the social framework or for the disposition of political fronts'.[4] Koselleck affirms that expressions are multiple but it seems that concepts get transformed diachronically only through polar opposition. This looks to me to be a statement about how our recognition in sources of parallel or opposed concepts allows us to infer a theory of mind's workings: that humans only have limited perspectives on things and they achieve self-definition as it

emerges through distinguishing who is in and who is out. There is not a problem of the relation between words and things but between a limited perspective on things framed by the polarities of either/or, good/bad, hellene/barbarian. Now I do not wish to deny that there is a transformation of meaning of words and a transformation of things, but I am unclear about what appears to be the motor of these transformations. For Koselleck it appears to be the presupposition that a certain kind of exegesis of sources will reveal to us no more than two conceptual opposites as possibilities.

Furthermore, I think that Koselleck and his colleagues go further than their open claim that epistemologically nothing can occur historically that is not apprehended conceptually. Koselleck believes that the history of the translation and reception of concepts shows that concepts are more than linguistic evidence of social continuity and change. Concepts, by defining extralinguistic structures, condition political events.[5] I happen to agree with this. But I also think it implies something that a current Anglo-American orthodoxy which takes a view on the relation of thinking to speaking, must reject, I presume following Wittgenstein: the rejected assumption is that thought is not simply constituted by language but in some sense thought is the prerequisite for language which is itself only a partial reflection of thinking. To hold this view as I do and as I think Koselleck and his colleagues do as well, is to hold a view that is not widely favoured in the Anglo-American world and it may, in part, be a reason for *Begriffsgeschichte* not having been taken up widely there. J.G.A. Pocock, for instance, believes that humans communicate by a language system which helps them constitute their conceptual worlds and authority-structures. He appears to have no room for what was, in effect, a pre-modern theory of language, which argues that language reflects rather than constitutes a mental world. On the contrary, for Pocock and others, past (and present) theorists must and always do tailor their projects to fit the available normative languages which in turn constitute their mental worlds. As I tried to show in my discussion of various ancient and medieval thinkers[6], pre-moderns had a theory of language which not only is not 'ours', that is, the Anglo-American version that it is the *uses of language* which constitute our thinking, but rather, they argued that there is a universal language of thought which is selectively and partially externalised

by conventional languages which reveal shifting conceptualisations in contingent circumstances. For them, our world is thought before it is (inadequately) revealed in speech and therefore, the meaning of an idea is not simply reducible to its referential use.

At any rate, to tell one or more of the stories of the western European reconstruction and use of earlier ethical and political theories, especially during that pre-*Sattelzeit* period when it was held that *historia magistra vitae*, and for my book not to become the size of the encyclopedic *GG* project, I simply could not trace the semantic field of selected words. This was not simply a problem of time and space however. The selection of words also seems to harbour unspoken problems of exegesis of texts where these terms are used. Therefore, secondly I want to indicate a problem in selecting words and providing a critical exegesis: my worry is that this depends on uncontested but highly contestable readings of the whole theories in which such words might be found. Instead, I have opted to look at whole theories in their own socio-political contexts and have tried to determine what they could have been taken to mean by contemporaries, and perhaps even more importantly, what they were taken to mean by those who reinterpreted, indeed misinterpreted these 'exemplary' theories of the past when they were in socio-historical conditions, and conceptualising and living according to localised norms, that were not similar to the ones in which the theories were themselves first generated.

Koselleck has, of course, very interesting things to say about how one treats words as insufficient indicators of stable contents and that contents themselves undergo long-term change, expressible in numerous and different ways. I too have tried to shift between synchronic and diachronic analysis. I have set a premium on the synchronic and largely affirm the diachronic by including examples of say, the use of the classical Latin concept *respublica* and I have charted its changed meanings in the middle ages and the renaissance in order to show that despite later thinkers' references to reviving the Roman *respublica*, medieval and renaissance city-states and their theorists did something else.

I have fewer problems with changed concepts than I have with those taken to be stable. Therefore, I am less optimistic than Koselleck that I can disclose a persistence of past *experience* – experience is precisely what does not persist over large tracts of time even in pre-

modern societies; while I do, on the other hand, think one can come to some understanding of the possible viability of past theories. My third problem, therefore, is with Koselleck's belief that many concepts from an earlier period continue to be applied in almost unaltered forms. It is not clear to me how we could ever know this. Past traditions do, of course, persist in the present but I do not think we could ever assert that what we take them to mean in the present is what they meant in the past. My reason for saying this is that as readers of past texts, interested in the evolution of political theorising as an activity, philosophical questions and answers are transitory and historical rather than permanent. But some questions and answers still appear to be alive for us because they have entered our thought in an evolved state, a reconstructed state, having already been taken up, rethought and reinterpreted by earlier thinkers who thought it important to keep *their* interpretation of the thought of 'their fathers' alive. The old questions and answers are part of our tradition of rethinking, of making intelligible, in different intellectual and social contexts, these wide-ranging matters. In this way, the past necessarily penetrates our present lives. But concepts from the past are not universal or transhistorical; they have a history but not on their own. Their history is due to their having been re-thought, reconsidered and rendered intelligible and therefore *changed* by historically-situated thinkers, and we are simply the latest in the queue. It is not therefore, clear to me how one could confirm that past concepts continue to be applied in almost unaltered forms today or at any other time. In other words, I am not convinced that the religious sense of *Bund* in the 19th century was the same religious sense it had during the early Reformation.

Given what I take to be the above problems, my interest at this conference is to discuss with you how one might incorporate the theoretical principles of *Begriffsgeschichte* into a narrative about the use and abuse of whole past political theories. This is an acknowledged problem, noted by Mel Richter, about how we characterise patterned relationships amongst concepts. There is an unresolved problem of how to proceed from a lexical arrangement of individual concepts in *GG* to the reconstruction of integrated political and social vocabularies at crucial points in the development of European political and social languages.

Problems 1 and 2: *Gegenbegriffe* and Selection of Concepts

When we provide or extract the meaning of political and social concepts, the words designating them and the semantic fields within which they have functioned, we set before ourselves a range of contemporary sources. Even if we start by extracting a concept from one type of source, e.g. a political theory text, to understand *how* a concept is used we have to understand or have an interpretation of the whole political theory. Take the concept 'obligation' in Hobbes. For someone to try to grasp Hobbes's meaning requires that he already has some working interpretation of *Leviathan* and we all know that the historical profession is based on new or different interpretations of Hobbes as the first liberal, of Hobbes as an absolutist, of Hobbes as Protestant theorist of man's construction of the state as the divine will. There are plausible reasons for adopting any of these perspectives when we read Hobbes's text and try to get at what he means by 'obligation'. But which one we choose is crucial. In studying past political thought *Begriffsgeschichte* may enable students of past political theories to avoid anachronisms in attempting to interpret texts written at a time when the use of key terms differed from our own. But this is only to assert that we can minimally establish what say, a 17th century theorist could *not* have meant. How we get closer to a 17th century meaning and use of words – say Hobbes on obligation – depends on how we understand the *whole text* in which such a word or its inferred concept is embedded.

Because concepts are ways of thinking we can only infer them from language. Concepts are ambiguous, contingent universal meanings with capacities for potential experiences. But in his 'Historical-political semantics of asymmetric counterconcepts' Koselleck actually provides us with his very literal interpretation of Aristotle's *Politics* book 1 in order for him to show that the Greeks operated with the counterconcepts Hellene-barbarian. He tells us that Aristotle designated the barbarians as natural slaves and that he supported his view by reference to a verse by Euripides.[7] Now this is an exceedingly contentious reading of what Aristotle is doing in his ethics and politics. It is a reading of an ethical discourse as descriptive history.

Aristotle explicitly tells us that he starts with how Greeks in *ordinary language* tend to speak of barbarians and natural slaves and then goes on to preserve the truth, *if there is any*, in common views. Furthermore, the distinction is not between Hellenes and barbarians but the more abstract one between freemen and the unfree. Aristotle's method is to analyse, dialectically, common speech and test it against the 'facts' of lived life. There is indeed a concept of the *naturally* slavish but whether it actually and legitimately can apply to any living or past human example is very problematic for him and for others in his society. He tells us that some refuse to accept slavery to be natural and that others think that it is acceptable simply because it is expedient. Aristotle does not, of course, argue that *de facto* slavery does not exist in his society nor does he pretend that Greeks have no prejudices either about barbarians or non-Greeks or indeed, about other Greeks. The prejudices are much more varied than the dualism Hellene-barbarian and Aristotle tells us what they are. But his aim in both the *Nicomachean Ethics* and *Politics* is to test the prejudices revealed in the use of common ascriptions to see whether they are justified or not.

The *Politics* in particular is a testing of the common view about what the good life consists in by examining what it is said to consist in by a variety of men with a wide variety of views, against the true or at least the best definition so far of *eudaimonia*. And it is clear from his own account that Greek ethical discourse is much messier than a presumed structure of dual counter-concepts because ascription is dependent on a near-overwhelming number of contingencies. Indeed, he makes it clear that even the ascription of natural slavishness is contingent for ordinary Greeks, and they never know to whom they ought to apply it if at all, not least because it is meant to be a statement about a certain kind of person's inner disposition and Aristotle affirms that we have no direct access to any human's intentions. We can only infer them from practices and we can get it wrong. Hence, his observation that although one would think that one could simply see a natural slave by his physique and contrast it with the obvious characteristics of the master, there is great confusion here because men who are presumed to be masters should have bodies that are serviceable to the life of political agency, both in war and peace. *But in fact*, Aristotle tells us the very opposite often comes

about, that is, that slaves have the bodies of free men and freemen have the right soul but not the body[8].

Without going further into the details here, one emerges from Koselleck's reading with a concept and its counterconcept whose meaning is dependent on what many classicists would argue is a *literal* and therefore, contentious understanding of these concepts both in Aristotle's text and more globally in ancient Greek society. Furthermore, in tending to read language literally in order to display concepts, there appears to be no capacity to respond to irony. My concern, therefore, is that in selecting concepts, an uncontested but highly contestable reading of the sources from which they have been extracted, can be offered us.

Furthermore, it is not enough for the *GG* to include extensive passages from texts, both primary and secondary sources from periods where the sources for past conceptual usages are not only difficult to obtain but are either self-selecting or they survive because they were allowed to survive by later rememberers of past usages deemed useful to them in a later present. Indeed texts that survive for *us* say, from the 14th and 15th centuries, have histories that do *not* necessarily relate to their contemporary importance. Cultures preserve and destroy texts so that the history of texts is a history of their reception by later generations with other things on their minds. Medievalists are overwhelmed by the loss of texts which the Protestant reformation sold or burned. The *GG* assumes it is possible to map synchronically the key concepts that comprise a complex society's political and social vocabulary especially for a time of rapid changes in its structure. For the pre-modern period I find this overly optimistic. We are dependent on later generations' decisions about what they thought important to preserve for their own reconstructive uses. Important and representative texts, I would even suggest for the early-modern and modern periods, are retrospective nominations. Subsequent orthodoxies actively kill off what they perceive to be past heterodoxies which might not have been heterodox in their own times.

Let me provide an example from Mel Richter's *The History of Political and Social Concepts. A Critical Introduction* (Oxford, 1995)[9]. In presenting the distinction applied in the *GG* to the analysis of concepts between semasiology and onomasiology, that is, the study of all the

meanings of a given word, term or concept, and the linguistic study of all names or terms in a language for the same thing or concept, he describes the work of the influential Jost Trier. Trier distinguished between lexical semantics and the semantic field within which concepts function at a given time. He looked at three concepts designating 'knowledge' that were current around the year 1200: *wisheit*, *kunst* and *list* and then he looked at them around 1300. He supposedly found by 1300 the linguistic field had been transformed especially with regard to what *wisheit* meant. By 1300 it had a religious sense and was no longer used as a simple alternative to *kunst* and *list*. *Kunst* by 1300 is said to have lost its courtly and social senses and *list* acquired pejorative connections with magic and low cunning.

What texts did he look at and compare? Undoubtedly *wisheit* took on a religious sense amongst those who were university-trained authors and we have these texts now in abundance. It is impossible for us to tell whether the older usages were replaced or survived. What did occur is that later generations actively destroyed texts from the past which did not suit their way of reading their present. Patrick Geary has done some extraordinary work on how modern historians of the so-called 12th-century renaissance are entirely at the mercy of an 11th-century generation which self-consciously destroyed whole libraries and engaged in picking and choosing what they thought ought to survive from and about their pasts.[10] In short, Trier simply told us about other texts rather than proving a real shift in the meaning of concepts and a transformation of the linguistic field. At best one can argue for a range of new voices appearing around 1300 and unfortunately for medievalists, they happen to have been the ones that survive for us in dominant numbers.

I have found the *Begriffsgeschichte* projects enormously stimulating and useful, indeed more so than several other methodological candidates that have been proposed, not least amongst Anglo-American analytical political theorists. Perhaps the chief attraction for me is that it takes the past seriously because it takes conceptualising seriously. And yet it is troubling for the reasons I have already mentioned above. Let me summarise them:

1) What criteria do we use to privilege social and political concepts and how do we recognise such concepts, distinguishing them from other concepts in the pre-modern world?

2) The location of *Gegenbegriffe* seems to be based on a submerged theory of mind based on bipolarity. I need a more explicit demonstration that it is proper to deduce from oppositional language a universal, cognitive approach to human understanding.

3) The selection of words and the providing of a critical exegesis can be based on an uncontested but highly contestable interpretation of the whole theory text from which the words are selected.

4) The survival of sources from any period is not necessarily a reflection of their importance for the time in which they were written: past texts of all sorts are retrospective nominations by later generations of what is allowed, even inadvertently, to survive from the past. This presents serious problems for establishing synchronicity of key concepts.

5) The transformation of linguistic fields is harder to determine than one might at first think from simply looking at dominant surviving sources.

6) Even if we were not troubled by what appear to me, at least, to be problems, how do we get from lexically arranged concepts to the patterned relationship amongst concepts? How do we provide a narrative which adequately reconstructs an integrated political and social vocabulary for a moment in the past development of political and social languages? This last step, if we could achieve it, would replace my attempts to provide a history of European political theories.

Notes

* This is a slightly expanded version of a twenty-minute intervention at the conference: 'Conceptual Changes in European Political Cultures', 18-20 June, 1998, The Finnish Institute in London.

1 I have dealt with this further in J. Coleman: *Ancient and Medieval Memories: Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 1992).

2 *Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time*, trans. K. Tribe (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985). pp. 159-197.

3 In '*Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History', *Futures Past*, *on the semantics of historical time,* trans.K. Tribe (MIT Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1985, pp. 73-91.

4 '*Begriffsgeschichte* and Social History', p. 87.

5 R. Koselleck: 'A Response' in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts, new studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, eds. H. Lehmann and M. Richter (German Historical Institute, Washington D.C., Occasional paper 15, 1996), p.67.

6 J. Coleman: *Ancient and Medieval Memories. Studies in the Reconstruction of the Past* (Cambridge, 1992).

7 *Koselleck: Futures Past. On the Semantics of Historical Time,* p.167.

8 Aristotle: *Politics* I, 1254b 33f.

9 pp. 48-9.

10 P. Geary: *Phantoms of Remembrance. Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium* (Princeton, 1994).

Kari Palonen

RHETORICAL AND TEMPORAL PERSPECTIVES ON CONCEPTUAL CHANGE[1]

Theses on Quentin Skinner and Reinhart Koselleck

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

Conceptual Change as a Problem

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Rhetorical Perspective: Quentin Skinner

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

centuates the political contestability of concepts.

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

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

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

The Temporal Perspective: Reinhart Koselleck

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Objections to Skinner

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

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

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

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

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

Objections to Koselleck

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

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

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

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

Chances of Complementarity

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

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

Notes

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

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Quentin Skinner

RHETORIC AND CONCEPTUAL CHANGE

> *And therefore in reasoning, a man must take heed of words; which besides the signification of what we imagine of their nature, have a signification also of the nature, disposition, and interest of the speaker; such as are the names of Vertues, and Vices; For one man calleth Wisdome, what another calleth feare; and one cruelty, what another justice; one prodigality, what another magnanimity; and one gravity, what another stupidity, &c. And therefore such names can never be true grounds of any ratiocination.*
>
> THOMAS HOBBES[1]

Kari Palonen begins his comments (in this volume) by declaring that, when we address ourselves to the problem of conceptual change, we are (or ought to be) 'only concerned with the political aspects of concepts'. He adds by way of explanation that 'for me the words "political" and "interesting" are more or less synonymous'. I admire his epigram, but I faintly dissent from his narrowness of focus. For me the interest of studying the history of concepts arises from the moral and social as well as the political changes that we find reflected in – and to some extent engendered by – the groundswell of conceptual change itself.

This is a mere quibble, however, for I warmly endorse Palonen's contention that, if we are to treat the study of changing concepts as a distinct form of historical enquiry, we shall do well to concentrate

on the concepts we employ to describe and appraise our moral and political world. This in turn means that we shall need to focus on the various terms – the entire normative vocabulary – in which such concepts are habitually expressed. These terms, the paradigms of which are perhaps the names of the virtues and vices, are those which perform evaluative as well as descriptive functions in natural languages. They are basically used to describe actions and the motives for which they are performed. But if the criteria for applying one or other of these terms can plausibly be claimed to be reflected in some given action or state of affairs, then the application of the term will not only serve to describe but at the same time to evaluate it. The special characteristic of the terms I am singling out is thus that (to invoke J. L. Austin's jargon) they have a standard application to perform one of two contrasting ranges of speech-acts.[2] They are available, that is, to perform such acts as commending (and expressing and soliciting approval) or else of condemning (and expressing and soliciting disapproval) of any action or state of affairs they are used to describe.

As Palonen correctly notes, I began to make such terms a subject of my historical research in the early 1970s. One reason for doing so was my wish to dispute the view – then prevalent in Anglophone philosophy – that it is appropriate to conceive of a distinctive grid of concepts marking off moral, political and other such domains. It was widely assumed that we can speak (as T.D Weldon had done in the title of a classic text) of the vocabulary of politics[3] and that we can likewise speak (as R.M. Hare had done in an even more influential book) of *the* language of morals.[4] This assumption seemed to me well worth disputing in the name of a more historically-minded acknowedgment that different societies may conceptualise these domains in different and possibly even incommensurable ways.

I had a second and yet more basic motivation for wishing to study the changing use of concepts. I wanted to question the assumption influentially propagated by Arthur Lovejoy and his school about the proper task of the historian of ideas. Lovejoy had argued that, beneath the surface of ideological debate, there will always be a range of perennial and unchanging 'unit ideas' which it becomes the task of the intellectual historian to uncover and trace.[5] Against this contention I tried once more to speak up for a more radical contingency

in the history of thought. Drawing on a suggestion of Wittgenstein's, I argued that there cannot be a history of unit ideas as such, but only a history of the various uses to which they have been put by different agents at different times. There is nothing, I ventured to suggest, lying beneath or behind such uses; their history is the only history of ideas to be written.

One way of expressing my underlying commitment would thus be to say that I wanted to treat the understanding of concepts as always, in part, a matter of understanding what can be done with them in argument. As Palonen points out, in announcing this belief I declared my allegiance to one particular tradition of twentieth-century social thought. The tradition may perhaps be said to stem from Nietzsche, although I originally encountered it in the social philosophy of Max Weber. It is characterised by the belief that our concepts not only alter over time, but are incapable of providing us with anything more than a series of changing perspectives on the world in which we live and have our being. Our concepts form part of what we bring to the world in our efforts to understand it. The shifting conceptualisations to which this process gives rise constitute the very stuff of ideological debate, so that it makes no more sense to regret than to deny that such conceptual changes continually take place. This commitment in turn gave rise in my own case – as in the case of Koselleck – to a particular view about what kind of history needs to be written if this general truth is to be illuminated. Koselleck and I both assume that we need to treat our normative concepts less as statements about the world than as tools and weapons of debate.

One reason why it is perhaps worth identifying my original targets in this way is that several commentators have supposed that what I was aiming to discredit was the very project of Koselleck's that Palonen seeks, very illuminatingly, to relate to my own research. It is no doubt deplorable, but it is nevertheless a fact, that when I wrote my polemical essays in the late 1960s and early 1970s I had no knowledge of Koselleck's research-programme. I did not come to appreciate the distinctiveness and magnitude of his achievement until Melvin Richter made his work available to Anglophone readers in his articles of the 1980s[6] and later in his important study, *The History of Social and Political Concepts*, published as recently as 1995.[7]

It is perhaps worth adding that I have not only been innocent of

any desire to question Koselleck's methodological assumptions, but that I have even attempted to write some conceptual histories myself. I have written about the acquisition of the concept of the State as the name of a moral person distinct from both rulers and ruled.[8] And I have tried to sketch the rise and fall within Anglophone political theory of a particular view about social freedom, a view according to which our freedom needs to be seen not merely as a predicate of our actions but as an existential condition in contrast to that of the slave.[9] I do not consider these studies to be in tension with anything I have said about the need to understand what can be done with concepts as an element in the process of recovering their meaning and significance. On the contrary, part of my aim was to indicate why the concepts in question first came into prominence at particular historical periods by way of indicating what could be done with them that could not have been done in their absence.

As these remarks already make clear, I strongly endorse Palonen's insistence that we must be ready as historians of philosophy not merely to admit the fact of conceptual change but to make it central to our research. Not only is our moral and social world held in place by the manner in which we choose to apply our inherited normative vocabularies, but one of the ways in which we are capable of reappraising and changing our world is by changing the ways in which these vocabularies are applied. There is in consequence a genealogy of all our evaluative concepts to be traced, and in tracing their changing applications we shall find ourselves looking not merely at the reflections but at one of the engines of social change.

The only point at which I demur at Palonen's way of laying out these issues is that I am less happy than he is to talk about conceptual change *tout court*. It is true that he begins by asking 'what, then, does actually change when concepts change?' But his answer is simply that the transformations in question can be related both to language and to time. I have no quarrel with this formulation, but it seems worth trying to say something rather more detailed about it.

I have already gestured at what I take to be the most fundamental point we need to grasp if we are to study the phenomenon of conceptual change. My almost paradoxical contention is that the transformations we can hope to chart will not strictly speaking be changes in concepts at all. They will be changes in the use of the terms by

which our concepts are expressed. These transformations will in turn be of various kinds. Palonen rightly notes that in my own work I have chiefly focused on what he describes as a rhetorical perspective. I have been interested, that is, in the kinds of debate that take place when we ask whether a given action or state of affairs does or does not license us to apply some particular evaluative term as an apt description of it. While this has been my principal interest, however, I should not want it to be thought that I take this to be the sole or even the most significant way in which the process of conceptual change may be initiated. Before turning to consider the rhetorical case in more detail, I should like to mention two other ways in which the phenomenon of conceptual change can be historically mapped.

We can hope in the first place to trace the changing extent or degree to which a particular normative vocabulary is employed over time. There are obviously two contrasting possibilities here. The rise within a given society of new forms of social behaviour will generally be reflected in the development of a corresponding vocabulary in which the behaviour in question will be described and appraised. As an example, consider the emergence in the English language for the first time in the early seventeenth century of a range of terms that came to be widely used to describe and at the same time to commend the behaviour of those who were *frugal, punctual* and *conscientious.* The alternative possibility is that a given society may gradually lose its sense that some particular style of behaviour needs to be singled out and evaluated. This will generally be registered in the atrophying of the corresponding normative vocabulary. An instructive example is offered by the disappearance in contemporary English of a complex vocabulary widely used in earlier generations to describe and commend an ideal of gentlemanly conduct, and at the same time to stigmatise any behaviour liable to undermine it. Such terms as cad and *bounder* – together with the contrasting concept of *gentlemanliness* – can still be found in historical dictionaries of the English language, but they are virtually obsolete as terms of appraisal now that the patterns of conduct they were used to evaluate have lost their social significance.

Such examples arguably provide the best evidence in favour of the claim that concepts have a history – or rather, that the terms we use to express our concepts have a history. I confess, however, that

this kind of long-term shift in the fortunes of concepts is not one of my primary interests, as Palonen correctly points out. Here my approach differs from that of Koselleck, who as Palonen notes is chiefly preoccupied with the slower march of time and much less concerned with the pointillist study of sudden conceptual shifts. Palonen ends by asking why I am so much less interested in such broader chronologies. One reason is that, in the examples I have given, the shifting vocabularies are little more than indexes or reflections of deeper transformations in social life. This in turn means that, if a history of these conceptual changes were to have any explanatory value, the explanations would have to be given at the level of social life itself. But I have no general theory about the mechanisms of social transformation, and I am somewhat suspicious of those who have. Certainly I am deeply suspicious of all theories in which Time itself appears as an agent of change. As Palonen justly remarks, such metaphors have a nasty habit of reappearing as objectifications, thereby encouraging a discredited form of intellectual history in which Tradition is always doing battle with Progress, Superstition with Enlightenment, and so forth.[10]

I turn to consider a second form of conceptual change, or rather a second way in which the vocabularies we use to describe and appraise our social world continually wrinkle and slide. This process also occurs when the capacity of a normative vocabulary to perform and encourage particular acts of appraisal either alters in direction or else in intensity. Alterations of this kind will usually reflect an underlying attempt to modify existing social perceptions and beliefs, and these efforts will in turn be mirrored in the language of evaluation in one of two principal ways. A term generally used to commend an action or state of affairs may be used instead to express and solicit disapproval, or a condemnatory term may be used to suggest that, contrary to received assumptions, what is being described is also deserving of praise.

What is being suggested in these cases is that a society should reconsider and perhaps transvalue some of its moral values. Sometime we can even pinpoint such suggestions within individual texts. For example, we can arguably see this process at work in Machiavelli's *Il Principe*, in Chapter XVI of which he appears to suggest that parsimony is not necessarily the name of a vice. Perhaps, he implies, a

number of actions generally condemned by the courtly societies of Renaissance Europe as miserly and parsimonious actually deserve to be praised.[11] An even clearer example is provided by Sir Thomas Hoby's translation of Baldassare Castiglione's *Book of the Courtier*, first published in 1561. Faced with the term *sprezzatura*, which Castiglione had invented to commend an aristocratic style of nonchalance, Hoby chose to render it as *recklessness,* thereby confronting his puritan contemporaries with the astonishing thought that this might be the name of a virtue.[12]

When such suggestions are widely taken up, a whole society may eventually come to alter its attitude towards some fundamental value or practice and alter its normative vocabulary accordingly. Consider, for example, the fact that such terms as *shrewd* and *shrewdness* were widely employed in the Renaissance to condemn whatever actions they were used to describe, but were later employed in such a way that similar actions came to be commended. Or consider, by contrast, the fact that such terms as *obsequious* were commonly used in the Renaissance to commend the behaviour they described, but were later applied in such a way as to make it clear that the obsequious are deserving of nothing but contempt.

These are examples of conceptual change in perhaps its purest sense. As Palonen correctly notes, however, I have again paid little attention to the long-term social transformations that cause such appraisive terms to lose or alter the direction of their evaluative force. Palonen is also right to note that this lack of interest again contrasts with Koselleck's approach. The reason for my neglect is the same as before. I lack any talent for writing the kind of social history that would be required. I also plead guilty to the further charge that, as Palonen expresses it, I neglect (by comparison with Koselleck) 'the possibility of including time into the very meaning of a concept'. I do indeed neglect this possibility, but only because I cannot make sense of it.

I turn finally to re-examine the form of conceptual change in which I have chiefly been interested, the form described by Palonen as rhetorical in character. Such changes originate when an action or state of affairs is described by means of an evaluative term that would not normally be used in the given circumstances. The aim is to persuade an audience that, in spite of appearances, the term can properly be

applied – in virtue of its ordinary meaning – to the case in hand. The effect of successfully persuading someone to accept such a judgment will be to prompt them to view the behaviour in question in a new moral light. An action they had previously regarded as commendable may come to seem worthy of condemnation, while an action they had previously condemned may seem worthy of praise.

As Palonen notes, when in the early 1970s I first discussed this technique of rhetorical redescription, I operated with the assumption that for every evaluative term there will at any one time be a standard meaning and use. As a result, I portrayed the innovating ideologist as someone essentially engaged in the act of manipulating a normative vocabulary by a series of sleights of hand. Since then, however, I have immersed myself in the writings of the ancient theorists of eloquence who originally spoke of rhetorical redescription, and have come to share their more contingent understanding of normative concepts and the fluid vocabularies in which they are generally expressed. As a result, I have found myself adopting their assumption that it makes little sense to speak of evaluative terms as having accepted denotations that can either be followed or, with varying degrees of disingenuousness, effectively manipulated. Rather, as the ancient rhetoricians put it, there will always be a sufficient degree of 'neighbourliness' between the forms of behaviour described by contrasting evaluative terms for those terms themselves to be susceptible of being applied in a variety of conflicting ways. It now seems to me, in short, that all attempts to legislate about the 'correct' use of normative vocabularies must be regarded as equally ideological in character. Whenever such terms are used, their application will always reflect a wish to impose a particular moral vision upon the workings of the social world.

To illustrate the technique of rhetorical redescription, it will be best to turn to the analysis originally offered by the ancient rhetoricians themselves. The fullest account is supplied by Quintilian, although he owes an obvious debt to Cicero and even more to Aristotle's *Art of Rhetoric*. Quintilian's main discussion of the technique – to which he gave the name *paradiastole* – occurs in Book IV of his *Institutio Oratorio,* where he discusses it in the course of considering how best to present a narrative of facts. Suppose you find yourself in a court of law facing an advocate who has managed to describe an

act 'in such a way as to rouse up the judges and leave them full of anger against your side.'[13] Suppose too that you cannot hope to deny what happened. How are you to proceed? Quintilian's answer is that 'you should restate the facts, but not at all in the same way; you must assign different causes, a different state of mind and a different motive for what was done.'[14] Above all, 'you must try to elevate the action as much as possible by the words you use: for example, prodigality must be more leniently redescribed as liberality, avarice as carefulness, negligence as simplicity of mind.'[15]

Quintilian had already put forward this last and crucial suggestion in Book II, in which he had quoted (although without acknowledgment) three examples of the same technique offered by Aristotle in *The Art of Rhetoric*: 'slander can pass for frankness, recklessness for courage, extravagance for copiousness'.[16] Aristotle had added that the same technique can equally well be used not merely to extenuate the vices but also to depreciate the virtues, as when we denigrate the behaviour of a habitually cautious man by claiming that he is really a person of cold and designing temperament.[17]

As Quintilian emphasises, the essence of the technique may thus be said to consist of replacing a given evaluative description with a rival term that pictures the action no less plausibly, but serves at the same time to place it in a contrasting moral light. You seek to persuade your audience to accept your new description, and thereby to adopt a new attitude towards the action involved – either one of increased sympathy or of acquired moral outrage. As Quintilian explicitly adds, this means that strictly speaking we ought not to describe the technique as a case of substituting one word for another. 'For no one supposes that the words prodigality and liberality mean the same thing; the difference is rather that one person calls something prodigal which another thinks of as liberality.'[18] What we are really claiming is that the *res* – the actual behaviour – possesses a different moral character from that which our dialectical opponents may have assigned to it.

Quintilian also explains what makes the use of paradiastolic redescription a perennial possibility. Drawing once more on Aristotle, he reiterates that this is due to the fact that many of the vices are 'neighbours' of the virtues. Cicero had already put forward the same explanation in his *De Partitione Oratoria*. 'Cunning imitates prudence,

insensibility imitates temperance, pride in attaining honours and superciliousness in looking down on them both imitate magnanimity, extravagance imitates liberality and audacity imitates courage'.[19] So many of the vices, in short, stand in 'neighbourly relations' with the virtues that a clever orator will always be able to challenge the proferred evaluation of any action whatsoever with some show of plausibility.

One of the distinctive achievements of Renaissance culture was to revive and reassess the rhetorical philosophy of the ancient world. This in turn means that, if we wish to see the techniques perfected by the ancient rhetoricians put to work again, we need to turn to the moral philosophy of the Renaissance. Among Renaissance moralists, it was Machiavelli who arguably took the lessons of the ancient rhetoricians most profoundly to heart. Certainly he employs the technique of paradiastolic redescription with unparalleled audacity in challenging the political morality of his age. He first uses the device in Chapter XVI of *Il Principe* to question the so-called 'princely' virtue of liberality. Two contrasting rhetorical strategies are at work in this passage. As we have seen, one is the startling suggestion that liberality may not be the name of a virtue, nor parsimony of a vice. But Machiavelli's other strategy depends on assuming that liberality is unquestionably the name of a virtue. While conceding the point, however, he adds that much of the behaviour usually described and commended as liberal ought rather to be redescribed and condemned as *suntuosità*, mere ostentatiousness.[20] His next Chapter questions the princely virtue of clemency in exactly the same way. He begins by acknowledging that cruelty is of course a vice.[21] But he insists that many of the actions usually celebrated as instances of clemency ought rather to be redescribed in much less favourable terms. The avoidance of cruelty for which the Florentines congratulated themselves when they refused to punish the leaders of the uprising at Pistoia ought really to be recognised as an instance of *troppa pietà,* mere over-indulgence.[22] Likewise, the clemency for which Scipio Africanus came to be so widely admired was really an example of *sua natura facile*, his laxity of character.[23]

I have frequently referred to Machiavelli as a pioneer in recognising the power of paradiastolic redescription in moral debate. But perhaps the most emphatic tribute to the technique is owed to

Nietzsche, a deep student of Machiavelli and of the ancient theorists of rhetoric on whom he had relied. Nietzsche's main account of how, within European history, one set of moral evaluations was successfully displaced by another and incommensurable one can be found in hus opening essay in *The Genealogy of Morality.* The passage is a famous one, but Nietzsche's commentators appear not to have noticed that the technique he illustrates is precisely that of paradiastolic redescription. He begins by asking whether anyone would like 'to have a little look down into the secret of how *ideals are fabricated* on this earth':

> What's happening down there? Tell me what you see, you with your most dangerous curiosity – now *I* am the one who's listening. –
> –'I cannot see anything but I can hear all the better. There is a guarded, malicious little rumour-mongering and whispering from every nook and cranny. I think people are telling lies; a sugary mildness clings to every sound. Lies are turning weakness into an *accomplishment*, no doubt about it – it's just as you said.' –
> – Go on!
> – 'and impotence which doesn't retaliate is being turned into "goodness"; timid baseness is being turned into "humility"; submission to people one hates is being turned into "obedience" (actually towards someone who, they say, orders this submission – they call him God.) The inoffensivenes of the weakling, the very cowardice with which he is richly endowed, his standing-by-the-door, his inevitable position of having to wait, are all given good names such as "patience", which is also called *the* virtue; not-being-able-to-take-revenge is called not-wanting-to-take-revenge, it might even be forgiveness ("for *they* know not what they do – but we know what *they* are doing!"). They are also talking about "loving your enemy" – and sweating while they do it.'
> – Go on! ...
> 'But enough! enough! I can't bear it any longer. Bad air! Bad air! This workshop where *ideals are fabricated* – it seems to me just to stink of lies.'[24]

It is Nietzsche's contention, in short, that the slave morality of the Christians succeeded in overturning the moral world of antiquity by rhetorically redescribing a number of vices as their neighbouring virtues.

For a contrasting example of how a virtue can come to seem a

vice, consider a case recently discussed by Ian Hacking: the fact that what may appear as wholesome discipline in the rearing of children in one generation may appear as child abuse in the next. Nothing in the conduct of adults towards children need in the intervening period have changed. What will have changed, if the new evaluation is accepted, is the sensibility of a community. A number of practices previously taken for granted will come to seem morally intolerable. This is not of course to say that the process is one of coming to see things as they really are. As before, it is merely a matter of substituting one social philosophy for another, both of which may have been rationally defensible at different times.

It might appear, however, that in talking in this way about rhetorical redescription we are precisely *not* talking about conceptual change. I certainly agree that a number of philosophers have been somewhat too ready to say that such disputes arise because each party 'has a different concept' of (say) what constitutes child abuse. But if the disputants are genuinely arguing, they must have the same concept of what constitutes child abuse.[25] The difference between them will not be about the meaning of the relevant evaluative term, but merely about the range of circumstances in which they think it can appropriately be applied.

This caution strikes me as correct and important, but the fact remains that the outcome of such debates will nevertheless be a form of conceptual change. The more we succeed in persuading people that a given evaluative term applies in circumstances in which they may never have thought of applying it, the more broadly and inclusively we shall persuade them to employ the term in the appraisal of social and political life. The change that will eventually result is that the underlying concept will come to acquire a new prominence and a new salience in the moral arguments of the society concerned.

It is true that, as Palonen remarks, I have again been less interested in these long-term changes than in the kind of epiphanic moments dramatised by Nietzsche. But I acknowledge, of course, that if we are interested in mapping the rise and fall of particular normative vocabularies, we shall have to devote ourselves to examining the *longue durée*. So I am not unhappy with Palonen's concluding proposal that my own research-programme might even be regarded as an aspect of the vastly more ambitious one pursued by Koselleck.

Koselleck is interested in nothing less than the entire process of conceptual change; I am chiefly interested in one of the means by which it takes place. But the two programmes do not strike me as necessarily incompatible, and I hope that both of them will continue to flourish as they deserve.

Notes

[1] Hobbes 1996, p. 31.
[2] Austin 1962.
[3] Weldon 1953.
[4] Hare 1952.
[5] Lovejoy 1960, esp. pp. 3-4, 15-17.
[6] See esp. Richter 1987.
[7] Richter 1995.
[8] See Skinner 1989 and Skinner 1999.
[9] Skinner 1998.
[10] On this point see Dunn 1980, esp. p. 13.
[11] Machiavelli 1960, pp. 66-8.
[12] Castiglione 1561, Sig. E., ii[r.]
[13] Quintilian 1920-22, IV.II.75, vol. II, p. 90. Here and below, translations from classical texts are my own.
[14] Quintilian 1920-22, IV.II.76-7, vol. II, p. 90.
[15] Quintilian 1920-22, IV.II.77, vol. II, pp. 90-2.
[16] Aristotle 1926, I.IX.28-9, pp. 96-98; cf. Quintilian 1920-22, II.XII.4, vol. I, p. 284.
[17] Aristotle 1926, I.IX.28, p. 96.
[18] Quintilian 1920-22, VIII.VI.36, vol. III, p. 322.
[19] Cicero 1942, II.XXIII.81, p. 370.
[20] Machiavelli 1960, p. 66.
[21] Machiavelli 1960, p. 68.
[22] Machiavelli 1960, p. 69.
[23] Machiavelli 1960, p. 71.
[24] Nietzsche 1994, pp. 30-31.
[25] On this point see Skinner 1988, esp. pp. 125-8.

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Maureen Whitebrook

NOVEL AND NOVELTY

*Dealing with Contingency**

One strand of debate in Anglo-American political theory is that concerning the unencumbered as against the encumbered self as the subject of political interest. The 'liberal', Rawlsian figure of the autonomous rational chooser as political agent is set against the 'situated' self, the person embedded in their community – or, to avoid slipping (merely) into the over-polarized 'liberals versus communitarians' argument, against the person 'encumbered' by 'givens', features derived from tradition, cultural context, accidents of birth and the like (thus, for example, the 'relational', or 'dialogic' self as set out in post-liberal or feminist theory).

Across that dichotomy cuts a rather different division, based on the notion of *contingency*.[1] On the one hand is a tendency to underestimate 'the contingent', treating it not as a normal element in politics, but at best to be coped with, to be, as it were, worked round.[2] Even some radical, 'postmodern' approaches while noting its ubiquity still find it distracting, an irritation if not (rather literally) a disaster – thus frequent reference to such 'acts of god' as floods and famine, or man-made disasters such as environmental pollution or the possibility of nuclear holocaust.[3] Alternatively, the contingent may be considered so obviously an element of the quotidien that a satisfactory account of the political – such as aspired to by political theory – can hardly afford to neglect or disparage it.[4]

Within the context of political literary criticism – the practice of moving between works of literature and thinking about the political – attention to novels, and to their treatment of the lives of characters, and the investigation thereby of narrative identity as a matter of current interest in political theory, leads inexorably to consideration of the role of contingency – especially in the sense of chance or coincidence – on the construction of identity. And contingency can thence be seen to have a direct bearing on political agency.

Various strands of contemporary political theory recognise the contingent elements of identity; but, frequently, they also continue to treat contingency as a *problem* to be contained.[5] However, this apparent disjunction in political thought may be related to the question as to whether theory *can* deal with contingency inasmuch as it deals with types rather than characters. In addition, theories of causality, or of intentionality, may seem to be threatened by the *acceptance* of contingency as part of the political story. The narrative contribution, alternatively, suggests that purpose can stem from (the *response* to) contingency. Furthermore, although 'contingency' directs particular attention to the *unpredictability* of politics/political action, contingency is not necessary negative – to be avoided.

In fictional narratives, plots (often) hinge on chance or coincidence. Novels typically revolve around the contingent, especially in the form of chance and coincidence: stories seem to be reliant on those elements, and the development of character includes responses to them. However, that may be discounted as, precisely, 'fictional', as though in 'real life' – in empirical situations of interest to political theorists – contingency cannot, or should not, be allowed such a pivotal role. I suggest that this deprives political theory of an understanding and of a methodological tool to be gained from narrative; and I query the dismissal of the contingent in those theoretical accounts which are inclined to adopt a relatively deterministic attitude to agents' actions, or in those which, less rigidly but equally exclusively, rely on the notion of the rational chooser or strong versions of rational choice theory.[6] Literary narratives show the place of the contingent in 'real lives' and the way in which contingencies may act as the impetus for political action, depicting characters whose achievement of political identity is obtained precisely by way of their response to the contingent. And narrative form indicates how contin-

gency can be assimilated into a coherent account of human behaviour, into *political* explanation (political theorizing).

* * *

A writer has borrowed a summer cottage in Vermont. One early evening he takes a walk in the woods, intending to walk for half an hour and then turn back. However, he is distracted by thinking about what he is writing and just goes on walking. Eventually he realizes that the light is fading, tries to get his bearings but cannot, and decides that he must sleep there. Next morning, lost, he walks on, deciding that the woods must end somewhere – he can find a road, and then a house where someone will tell him where he is. Three or four hours later he comes out on a narrow dirt road with no houses in sight. After ten minutes or so on this road, a pickup truck appears, and the driver gives him a lift. The young man driving the truck tells him that he had wandered about ten miles on foot, but the road journey back to the cottage is well over thirty. The driver then says that he knows a shortcut, reverses, and takes a very narrow dirt trail through the woods. A mile or so down this trail, they come upon a man standing by a car. Thinking he must be in trouble, the driver gets out to offer help. The stranger appears angry; the driver continues to go towards him; the man reaches for a gun in his car and shoots the driver; the writer picks up a metal softball bat, jumps out of the car, hits the stranger's head and kills him; when he moves over to the driver, he too is dead.

Leviathan

This is the central incident in Paul Auster's novel *Leviathan*. It is a turning point for the writer, the protagonist of the novel, Ben Sachs, who has expressed dissatisfaction with his life – "I want to end the life I've been living up to now. I want everything to change" – but has not hitherto altered his life as a writer. His killing of a complete stranger is tied into the narrative by ensuing developments and by past connections. The 'stranger' is in fact Reed Dimaggio, the husband of a friend (Lillian) of a friend (Maria Turner) of Sachs' friend

and fellow-writer, Peter Aaron. Sachs discovers this when, by chance, Maria is the only person to whom he can turn when trying to decide what to do about this bizarre occurrence.

Sachs decides to find Lillian in order to recompense her for the death of her husband. As events turn out, he could have settled down with her in Berkeley, to begin a new life; instead he takes on the identity of the dead man. He becomes the Phantom Bomber, traveling America blowing up reproductions of the Statue of Liberty (as a form of political action, protesting against the state of America); and he himself dies, apparently as a result of an accident with explosives. The novel is framed by the discovery of his body and the FBI's attempt to discover whose it is. His friend, Aaron, has guessed from a newspaper report that it is Sachs, and determines to tell the 'true' story of Sachs – the substantive content of the narrative – before the FBI catch up on his own connection with the dead man, as they do at the end of the novel.

Aaron, as narrator of Sachs' story, comments that

> My whole adulthood has been spent writing stories, putting imaginary people into unexpected and often unlikely situations ... but the real is always ahead of what we can imagine. No matter how wild we think our inventions might be, they can never match the unpredictability of what the real world continually spews forth. This lesson seems inescapable to me now. *Anything can happen.* And one way or another, it always does.

Most critical studies of this novel comment on the extent to which the action of the plot (and, indeed, the 'development' of character) is a matter of contingency, with instances enough of the "fortuitous chance and odd, barely credible coincidence" which typifies Auster's work. The narrative begins on the 4th of July, which is also the date of a party at which Sachs by chance falls from a fire escape but escapes death because his fall breaks a washing line and he lands on the clothes. The party is held on the hundredth anniversary of the Statue of Liberty – the site of a significant occasion in Sachs's childhood and also the focus of his eventual political activity. And the accident happens because of "the particular combination of strangers on a Brooklyn fire escape".[7]

That accident, which has strange effects on Sachs, begins the period of his life which culminates in the random killing and a new life with his victim's wife (an outcome of the sheer chance that she is Maria's friend). But "Then, with no apparent cause, everything suddenly changed". Firstly Lillian begins behaving strangely, erratically. Then Sachs discovers that Dimaggio had become involved with terrorism for political change. He decides to try and continue Dimaggio's work by writing about him. But again "something strange happened". Diving into a secondhand bookshop to avoid someone who had known him in New York, he immediately notices a copy of his own book, 'The New Colossus', and buys it. Later,

> I sat there on the sofa, staring at the cover of my novel, feeling like someone who's just run into a brick wall. I hadn't done anything with the book about Dimaggio ... I'd botched every hope for myself. Out of pure wretchedness I kept my eyes fixed on the cover of the book. For a long time I don't think I even saw it, but then, little by little, something began to happen. It must have taken close to an hour, but once the idea took hold of me, I couldn't stop thinking about it.

The book is "filled with references to the Statue of Liberty": so Sachs becomes the Phantom Bomber, until his death when, presumably, a bomb he is preparing detonates 'accidentally'.

Aaron's narrative has to integrate the predominance of chance in Sachs's life (and death):

> like Sachs himself, who takes life's contingencies as cues, Aaron has to accommodate the leakiness, contradiction, and dubious leads that beset his enterprise within that enterprise ... the music of chance is paradoxically at once freer and denser than the routine scales of evident cause.[8]

And so he

> comes to understand that every life is a leviathan, that connections stop nowhere, and that a person's public self is merely the tip of a colossal iceberg shaped by chance, destiny and secrecy.[9]

Mao II

Don DeLillo's *Mao II* is another fictional case for the examination of contingency in a political context. This novel depicts and 'discusses' distinctive features of modern politics: mass politics, the crowd, and the submersion of the individual in the crowd; totalitarian leadership; terrorism, and the problem of political agency and responsibility in such a world. Against this is set a version of the classic issue of 'the writer and commitment' embodied in the figure of a famous author (who could also be regarded as the figure of the autonomous individual of liberal theory) caught up in a particularly difficult political situation. The ostensible problem is the position of the author in the face of actual manifestations of political power. But this writer is also an instance of what is said of DeLillo's treatment of his protagonists – that he has them

> tunneling deeper and deeper toward some unreachable solution or explanation, then shows them to be players in a game manipulated by unknowable forces ... Likely to fall into the chaos they hoped to show and correlate

and he is concerned with "connections, links, secret relationships", catastrophe, and conspiracy.[10]

Mao II opens with a Moonie wedding: one of the participants, Karen, later appears in the household of Bill Gray, a reclusive author. When he goes missing, she goes to New York to look for him, lodging with Brita, a photographer who had been allowed to visit and photograph Bill as part of her project to record all living authors. Brita's visit had disturbed Bill, partly because she got beneath his defenses, talking to him about his work, partly because he found himself attracted to her, and specifically – the actual cause of his going missing – because she had brought him a message from his friend and publisher, Charles Everson. Everson wants Bill to take part in a plan to free a hostage being held by a terrorist group in Beirut. Bill is increasingly drawn into the plans to free the hostage, going first to London and then to Cyprus where an intermediary, George Haddad, a sympathizer with the terrorist group, attempts to get Bill to Beirut to meet the terrorist leader, Rashid.

It is a problematic feature of this novel that Bill's activity and eventual thinking-through of the positions entailed, the working-out of personal and political commitment, is framed in the narrative by a coincidence and an ambiguity. Bill's initial impetus to action is his interest in Brita who had met Everson by chance in New York at the point where she had been chosen to be brought to take photographs of the famous author. Bill's apparent willingness to take responsibility for the life of the hostage then initially relies on coincidence – as Charles tells him, "If I hadn't run into Brita ..."; and it is largely unexplained thereafter. His turn from reclusiveness and authorship towards political activity is moved along by accident: he is to give a public (and televised) reading of the hostage's poems in London and simultaneously the hostage will be released in Beirut; it is when this plan goes wrong – due to violent action, the planting of a bomb – that Bill decides to go further and to become more actively involved. And at the last, in Cyprus, he is hit by a car, with no certainty in the narrative as to whether this is an accident or an attempt on his life by some element involved in the hostage situation. As the attempt failed, the ambiguity would not matter but that it caused internal injuries from which Bill dies on the ferry taking him to Beirut to meet the terrorist leader, Rashid.

What then of contingency – and of political agency? *Leviathan* is, as a reviewer put it, an unlikely but possible story, where a high degree of chance moves the plot[11], and in this novel, as in *Mao II*, and others – for example, Thomas Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, Nadine Gordimer's *A Sport of Nature*, or William Golding's *Rites of Passage* – the characters can be said to be driven by contingency. These novels would appear to bear little similarity to theoretical accounts of action and agency: yet, if they are 'possible stories', some degree of consonance between literary and theoretical (non-narrative) accounts might be expected?[12]

Contingency and Identity

One sense of 'contingency' is acknowledged in that theory which, arguing against the notion of the autonomous rational chooser cen-

tral to liberal theory, recognises the contingent nature of identity. Thus Michael Sandel, arguing against Rawls, points out that

> I am indebted in a complex variety of ways for the constitution of my identity – to parents, family, city, tribe, class, nation, culture, historical epoch, possibly God, Nature, and maybe chance – and I can therefore claim little or no credit (or for that matter, blame) for having turned out the way I have.[13]

William Connolly agrees – identity is 'deep in its contingency',

> contingent in the sense that happenstances of genetics, family life, historically specific traditions, personal anxieties, demands, and aspirations, surprising events (the death of a parent, the intrusion of a war) all enter into its composition and give shape to the porous universals that mark me as human.[14]

Reviewing Connolly's *Identity\Difference*, Iris Marion Young says that

> The most important contribution of Connolly's book is to plunge political theory into the contingency of the human condition – our ultimate human fragility in the face of mortality, disease and disaster. I find very convincing his diagnoses of how identities and political institutions are overloaded with disciplines and resentments because people refuse to accept ambiguity, the incommensurability of differences, the contingencies of natural fate and human mortality.[15]

But even in such relatively sympathetic treatments, contingency is problematical: for instance, Connolly speaks of

> a fourth dimension of contingency in the constitution of identity, then: identity is a site of interdependence and strife between incipient formations/presentations of self and intersubjectively constituted modes of identification.[16]

And commenting on Connolly's notion of democratic citizenship, Dana Chabot notes that

> By 'contingency' Connolly means that identity is not, as is commonly believed, something one chooses on the basis of careful reflective thought;

> it is, rather, the reflection (or interiorization) of society's mechanisms for discipline and control. By becoming aware of the contingency of identity, Connolly believes, we put ourselves in a position to fight back, by contesting "established definitions of normality and rationality" on the grounds that these definitions are manipulative and too confining.[17]

'Contingency' is then something to be dealt with (because it is reflective of social control, for example), less to be accepted, or taken as the impetus to political activity, than it is to be 'contested'. Connolly's position as summarized by Chabot does not seem to allow either that the 'reflective thought' which establishes identity is most often post hoc, a matter of incorporating the contingent into the life story after the event, or for the willing acceptance of contingent identity (as, for instance, by those whom contingency has favoured).

Contingency and Agency

In both *Leviathan* and *Mao II* there is some linkage between the realization of (political) identity and contingent effect resulting in the expression of political agency. Coincidence and chance lead Bill Gray and Ben Sachs towards and into action. The novels present political agency occurring as a result of contingency; political action is 'caused by' the exigencies of plot: it could have been otherwise.

Political theory, however, more often presents action and agency as non-contingent, the result of reasoned decisions followed through by conscious, purposive, behaviour. Thus, for example, while Benjamin Barber acknowledges that

> [T]he embeddedness of politics in action suggests a temporality and contingency, as well as an engagement in the world of ongoing events that rebuff a facile philosophical reconstruction.

He goes on to say that "politics as a domain of action needs to be characterised by the constraints of necessity and the accompanying logic of necessity" – including the judgment of actions by reference to their location in chains of cause and effect.[18] But for Sachs it is

action as such which is the 'necessity'. Once he had decided to carry on Dimaggio's work,

> All of a sudden, my life seemed to make sense to me. Not just the past few months, but my whole life, all the way back to the beginning. It was a miraculous confluence, a startling conjunction of motives and ambitions. I had found the unifying principle, and this one idea would bring all the broken pieces of myself together. For the first time in my life I would be whole.

A particular contribution to political understanding to be gained from these novels is then (the possibility of) a positive connection between contingency and agency. A full consideration of political agency requires inclusion of the contingent and its effects.

Contingency and Agency: Problems and Issues

1. Contingency is an everyday occurrence: and where theory treats it, if at all, as a problem to be coped with, or controlled, it fails, accordingly, to allow for the effects of contingency in the lives of persons – including their behaviour as political agents. Where the social sciences, in their attempt to be 'scientific', have sought rules and principles, that has tended to push the contingent to the margins, theoretically speaking. And even for political theorists and philosophers, explanations of the political – including, of course, *narrative* explanations - constitute an attempt to impose patterns, to order. And this is not just a 'theoretical' practice: because life is quite largely contingent, subject to chance and coincidence, persons have the impulse to 'order' it – to narrate, give pattern to the contingent and chance events; or, rather differently, there is a wish to live a life that makes the contingency meaningful – as Ben Sachs clearly demonstrates.

In the context of forms of enquiry which seek rules and principles analogous to 'scientific fact' ('the laws of nature'), contingency refers to that which is not subject to laws, principles or rules (and hence to that which is not predictable). Referring to the 'multifaceted charac-

ter' of the term, Connolly points out that:

> By contrast to the necessary and universal, it means that which is changeable and particular; by contrast to the certain and constant, it means that which is uncertain and variable; by contrast to the self-subsistent and causal, it means that which is dependent and effect; by contrast to the expected and regular, it means that which is unexpected and irregular; and by contrast to the safe and reassuring, it means that which is dangerous, unruly, and obdurate in its danger.[19]

Insofar as theory assumes certain regularities or predictabilities, there is an association with 'order' or 'control' (and thus the tendency to assert, or to rely on, relationships of cause and effect). The contingent may then be understood in terms of that which cannot be ordered, which escapes control, and where 'effect' cannot necessarily be derived (predicted) from cause – or outcome from intention.

The 'theoretical' inclination is to attempt to bring contingency under control. Thus, for example, Rawls' intention for a theory of justice is one "that nullifies the accidents of natural endowment and the contingencies of social circumstance". (Though consistently with the main thrust of his theory, the 'contingencies of social circumstance' might be allowed to work for the good of the less fortunate.)[20]

In general, liberal theorists like Rawls are apt to write off 'contingencies' as though they are, as part of a natural (and/or un-ordered or irrational) world, to be coped with, or, preferably, overcome by reasonable principles for orderly arrangements. And political theory of all persuasions works with such figures as the autonomous rational chooser, the member of the group acting within or under the collective impetus, the citizen operating politically within the State, or the activist engaging in extra- or anti-State activities. These are all, in diverse ways, political agents, with

> capacities for decision-making, for initiating projects, for determining futures, for entering into reciprocal obligations, and for taking responsibility for actions.[21]

All assume some measure of intention or choice, clear motivation is attributable, and there is an expectation of and, indeed, primary focus on, outcomes.

2. The theoretical understanding that persons are agents and authors (capable of self-reflection, judgment, and choice) together with implications of authority and order would appear to be in contradiction to the idea that contingency, chance and coincidence have to be accommodated in the story, and to preclude agency based on (the response to) chance occurrences. As I have said, some theory is apt to treat contingency as a problem to be coped with, or controlled, and it does not (therefore) allow for the effects of everyday contingency in the lives of persons. But how would it, given that theory frequently fails to make the political agent concrete?[22] Theory deals with types – including such figures as 'the citizen' or 'the rational chooser'; but literature deals with characters ('thick' rather than 'thin' selves),

> individual, unique modes of human life – whose particular qualities and trajectory in time are, in quite crucial ways, not like others, nor by any means entirely a matter of voluntary actions, and yet no less morally important for that[23]

where choice and action *follow from* contingency. Narrative adds character to the person who is the necessary agent of the political process (the political actor, as it were). And in the novel the person is shown as one in whom private behaviour and public, political, activity are interrelated. This is, among other things, the usefulness of fiction: that it shows the coexistence of these strands.

Whereas theory (or, different bodies of theory, different disciplines) separate out aspects of the person for investigation and analysis, persons as *characters* (re)unite the strands. Thus for example, it is said of Sachs that

> his exchanging his role of angel of Lillian's household for the Phantom of Liberty owes itself to the conception of Dimaggio as his active alter ego, whereby the coincidences that brought Sachs and Dimaggio violently together symbolize a conspiracy of reintegration, or at least a transference of directed political energies.[24]

3. To accept that responses to contingency may form part of political agency and action raises problems concerning intention and motivation. The narrative presentation of contingency relates to a political

understanding of the concept in respect of the effect on agency of, or the gap between intention and outcome occasioned by, chance, unforeseen events – the discrepancy between purposeful action (as understood in political theories of identity and agency) and contingent 'cause'.

Both narrative and political theory agree on the need for purposeful action: thus the distinction between "all the thousands of things a living person does, what we might call his or her *activity*, and those done voluntarily and intentionally, his or her *actions*".[25] Political agency similarly, as Barber points out, requires purpose – at least intention, if not pre-planning (otherwise failure if thrown off course and required to improvise?). And concepts of narrative and action have been inter-related by way of that requirement:

> It is the intentional nature of human action which evokes a narrative account. We act for an end, yet our actions affect a field of forces in ways that may be characteristic yet remain unpredictable ... by structuring a plausible response to the question, And what happened next?, narrative offers just the intelligibility we need for acting properly.[26]

However, both narrative examples studied here would seem to have little place for purposeful intention: it is, rather, contingency which moves Ben Sachs and Bill Gray on. If agency is defined in terms of purposeful action, what then of that sense of purpose in the face of contingency?

If it is intention which as it were 'causes' the narrative account, what possibility of story is there when intention is thwarted by contingency? Quentin Skinner warns that the causal basis of action can be over-emphasized:

> It may well be strenuously doubted, however, whether the knowledge of the causes of an action is really equivalent to an understanding of the action itself. For as well as – and quite apart from – the fact that such an understanding does presuppose a grasp of antecedent causal *conditions* of the action taking place, it might equally be said to presuppose a grasp of the *point* of the action for the agent who performed it.

(Skinner goes on to point out that the examples used for this kind of distinction are usually very simple (trivial), so demeaning (the ques-

tion of) the point of the action.)[27]

Similarly, while Jerome Bruner claims that

> What marks human agents is that their acts are not produced by such physical 'forces' as gravity, but by intentional states: desires, beliefs, knowledge, intentions, commitments

he adds to his stipulation of intention the rider that

> It is intrinsically difficult to 'explain' exactly why it is that human agents, impelled by intentional states, do as they do or react to each other as they do – particularly in the unexpected or non-canonical situations that constitute stories.[28]

Narrative tends to exclude strictly causal explanations because of 'narrative gaps': Peter Johnson cites Gallie's acknowledgment that

> there are contingencies in life – unforeseeable disaster, accidents, windfalls, losses and so on – which create discontinuities in sequences of events and in the development of character.

Johnson points out that "For Gallie, the preparedness to 'wait and see' is essential if we are to grasp what such contingencies amount to when seen in the context of life as a whole": and Gallie himself says that

> what is contingent eg. coincidental or unpredictable is, of course, per se unintelligible. But in relation to a man's life, or to a particular theme in a man's life, it can be understood as having contributed to a particular, acceptable and accepted, conclusion.[29]

As a comment on Conrad's *Chance* has it:

> On the one hand ...chance seems an alogical category that cannot fit our causal lines of explanation. But when chance is the explanation, institutionalized as the operational principle, it is a first cause, a prime mover, and inverts the classic oppositions of reliable/unreliable, truth/fiction, rational discourse/imaginative narrative, order/chaos.[30]

The novels read here are particularly good instances of the understanding that purpose can arise *from* contingency, chance or coincidence.

4. The political is characterised by (among other things) the unpredictability of outcomes – the political chooser (the decision-maker, the policy-maker, for example) cannot perfectly know, cannot fully envisage, what the outcomes will be.[31] Thus Weber's remark that "The final result of political action often, no, even regularly, stands in completely inadequate and often paradoxical relation to its original meaning".[32]

The "constant contingency of politics" is, in Hannah Arendt's view, a consequence of the uniqueness of individuals. It is not clear, however, that conventional political theory (or even all radical or post-modern theory) allows for this understanding or is capable of offering a full account of the ubiquity of contingency, chance and coincidence (as factors in human – and thence political – life). Commenting on Arendt, Margaret Canovan notes that both the tradition of political theory and contemporary political science tends to generalize in terms such as system, structure, class and role: while this is "undoubtedly illuminating", it "presupposes a particular view of the human condition" which is "partial, distorting as well as illuminating". Where such terms are emphasized, and "human individuality and action correspondingly neglected", then "the natural trend is to a deterministic picture of life within which events ought in principle to be predictable and forces calculable". ("And yet", Canovan adds, "political events constantly stagger the onlooker by their unpredictability".)[33]

That political action can have unforeseen results, or, more precisely, that the results of political actions cannot be fully predicted, is a result not necessarily, or not only, of bad judgment or of imperfect knowledge (or of the sheer scope of, the range of potential 'beneficiaries' of, political decisions) but of the intervention, beyond the knowledge or control of the chooser (whether free-standing or embedded), of contingency.

Steve Buckler speaks of the 'enigmatic quality' of public action, and its irreducible contingency. For both of those reasons,

> To say fully why one did things as one did and not otherwise is, given the character of public action, akin to, and as impossible as, saying fully why one is who one is and not other.

This works against "the kind of generalized classification presupposed in any full explanatory account".[34] That being so, it is not, perhaps, surprising that Buckler instances drama as explanatory, as I cite novels for the same purpose: works of literature may be better than theory at capturing 'the spontaneous and unique nature of actions', and the stories of the characters responsible for those actions.

Novels show that much of what appears to be a matter of choice is actually subject to arbitrary intervention – contingency and coincidence – or that choice, the capacity required for action or agency, takes up, or follows from, chance incidents or occasions. In *Leviathan*, the element of chance in the plot, and Sachs's reactions preclude rationality as understood theoretically.[35] And *Mao II* shows how 'rational' decisions may stem as well from chance or accident as from rational decision-making, and, indeed, that in actual situations the two become inextricably mixed. Neither Sachs nor Gray are, apparently, men who consider their options, weigh advantages and disadvantages, to arrive at rational, considered, decisions. But as both characterizations suggest, 'going with' the contingent does not necessarily hinder political action, or adversely affect political outcomes.

5. Even where radical theorists accept the ubiquity of contingency, there are still particular problems. I have already noted that such theory quite often takes a pessimistic view of contingency: that it is to be avoided or, at best, to be negotiated, coped with. For example, Connolly's remarks quoted above emphasize disasters - 'the death of a parent, the intrusion of war', that which is 'dangerous, unruly, and obdurate'; and similarly Young takes Connolly to be referring to "our ultimate human fragility in the face of mortality, disease and disaster". However, not only do novels show that even the direst events – death and near-death, for example – can be opportunities for action, or for the development of characters who turn to action[36], but narrative accounts also allow that less dramatic (or negative) contingent occurrences may also – and more often – have their effect: and that effect may impinge directly on political behaviour.

In the novel the contingent just *occurs*, in the plot (as in 'real life'). Theory wants to *resolve* it, to explain and explain away; for literature it *remains* contingent, and open. The contrast is well made by Stuart Hampshire's contention that

> The experience that carries a person beyond the successive routines of experience is initiated suddenly and unpredictably ... However carefully a person deliberates, in Aristotelian style, about the ends of action, assessing what most makes life worth living, he ought always to be open to surprises, discoveries, and uncertainties.[37]

Theory needs to accommodate contingency: novels not only show this to be the case, they also show how that might done.

The Narrative Process

(Fictional) narratives violate the systematic nature of theory: they remind theory of the sheer *messiness* of much lived existence: but they also – co-incidentally – unite the fragments, through emplotment, the process of narrative construction.

There is a sense in which much of what is said about narrative is underlaid by a notion analogous to political usages of control. The ordering process of narrative in action – construction, selection, arrangement – equates to control of the elements of narrative, demonstrating the capacity for achieving a complete(d), organized whole. While in terms of narrative *content* chance and coincidence upset the flow of events, disturb expected directions in the development of character and action, narrative *form* incorporates contingency within an ordered whole.

Novels 'contain' contingency by way of emplotment, whereby isolated events are placed within a developing network of further acts. An account of narrative in relation to the social sciences speaks of "constellations of *relationships* (connected parts) embedded in *time and space*, constituted by *causal emplotment*". The distinction from other forms of explanation is that meaning is not attributed by categorization:

> narrativity precludes sense-making of a singular isolated phenomena. Narrativity demands that we discern the meaning of any single event only in temporal or spatial relationship to other events. Indeed, the chief character of narrative is that it renders understanding only by *connecting* (however unstably) *parts* to a constructed *configuration* or a *social network* of relationships (however incoherent or unrealizable) composed of symbolic, institutional, and material practices.[38]

Thus, for instance, in *Leviathan*, as the story unfolds events are placed, reported by Sachs and interpreted by Aaron. And in that process, the plot – the pattern of these events within the narrative (including the disturbed time sequence consequent upon the combination of Aaron's conjectures and Sachs's occasional appearances and corrections of the story as Aaron understands it)[39] – 'explains' the changes in Sachs' identity which we know to have been occasioned by chance occurrences.

It is particularly significant here that narrative accounts are *retrospective*. Contingencies are then assimilated into the story (of a life, of instances of political agency) by way of relating them to, 'relating' their place in, an ongoing narrative - as, for instance, in the example cited above of Sachs' understanding of his life 'back to the beginning'. Quentin Skinner has noted the extent to which justifications of actions are made retrospectively: narrative fictions both show this to be the case and (thereby) justify the incorporation of narratives and narrative method into 'theoretical' accounts of politics.[40] However, an understanding and acceptance of retrospective narration does not entail a teleology nor a supposition that pre-determined outcomes determine the narrative process.

In his essay *Contingency and Poetics*[41], Gary Morson discusses the conventional view that literary works are 'closed worlds', where everything in the work contributes to the end in view (to the author's intention). Then 'chance' "intrudes only to be tamed", and anything that apparently does not "emerge from the causal chain", "yet accomplishes what the design requires".

This treatment of contingency by a literary critic would appear to contradict and negate my argument here. However, having developed an argument from Aristotelian poetics in various ways related to the literary reading of texts, Morson turns to a problem not dis-

similar to the issues I raise here. Despite theories of causality and necessity, "the future is not guaranteed ... The world is rife with contingency and the unpredictable, the future is anything but given in advance". There are, he suggests, three possible responses to our experience of contingency. It is only apparently such, 'in reality' subsumed to a greater design; or we advance by coping with it as best we may (a Darwinian response); or contingency is part of a world characterised by 'causality for the most part', where "causality flows only from the past and present to the future, but includes no backward causation". And that latter view allows at least some works of literature to be compared with 'real life' (as I have been doing here).

Morson admits that "poetics in its many variants" does not allow for this – hence, for example, his earlier emphasis on closure. But some novels do demonstrate his point – these are "works which operate by process rather than by overall design". Unity (coherence) is achieved by "forward, rather than backward, causation"; and "the unity we sense is that of a coherent process. We sense not an overall structure but a more or less regular heuristic". Such works display 'aperture' rather than closure – there are endings but no *final* accounting (the story could continue). And in this 'process literature',

> the story as it has developed is one of many possible stories ... if it were possible to play the tape over again, there are many points where something else might have happened.[42]

Two points relevant to my discussion arise from the later stage of Morson's argument. Firstly, and in general, the type of novel relevant to political theory is, I would claim, the 'open' work as Morson characterizes it. That is, those social scientists who strive after the first of Morson's options on causality – a kind of 'god-guaranteed' causality – *also*, if they turn to literature at all, are likely to favour the realist novel with plot, (leading to) denouement, (leading to) closure. But recognition of the limitations of causality (or, acceptance of 'for the most part' causality – and probability rather than predictability) should sit more comfortably with the non-realistic novel – 'process literature' as Morson would have it.[43]

Secondly, as my usage of 'emplotment' is intended to emphasize, it is the *process* of arranging events into a coherent narrative, rather

than the understanding of *plot* as overall design with a pre-determining effect on the story being narrated, which is significant. *Leviathan* is especially helpful in this respect in its foregrounding of the narrative process. That Aaron is a confused, unreliable narrator, prone to misunderstandings, hasty judgments which have later to be revised, and to an inability to decide which versions of events are 'true', makes the point very plainly. *Leviathan* is presented as a (exaggeratedly) *closed* narrative: in 'plot' terms, we know the end at the beginning. However, the 'narrative within a narrative' structure shows the process of construction; and the internal narrative is open. Paradoxically, although Aaron begins at the end, as it were – and in that respect is almost a parody of the omniscient author – it becomes only too evident in the course of the novel that he gets things wrong, *does not* see connections, *does not* see what is coming.

Narrative can 'contain' contingency, not in any sense of explaining it away, or of subordinating it to (pseudo-scientific) theories of causality or to (pseudo-psychological) notions of intention and motivation, but in that it acknowledges it as a factor in human lives – simply, makes it part of the story. The point for political theory is that political life is also prone to contingency, and that is not necessarily a bad thing. And novels may, at the least, help in the understanding that this is so.

Conclusion

Life is full of contingency; and not all contingency is malign. Much political activity (the actions of political agents) springs from responses to contingency - more than from reasoned judgment? Narrative shows how the contingent can be incorporated into a coherent story, by the process of emplotment, *and* restores the element of reason and judgment by way of retrospective telling, *accounting* for the place of contingency and its effects.

Fictional accounts depict characters whose fulfilment, or, identity, is achieved precisely by way of their response to the contingent. I query whether these accounts are 'merely' fictional, or whether they present valid pictures of human behaviour and 'motivation' that are

applicable politically. Are the plots of novels like *Leviathan* and *Mao II* (too) contrived – or (along with other fictional narratives) are they more 'life-like' than many detached theoretical accounts of the possibility of action? Auster is quoted as saying that

> there's a widely held notion that novels shouldn't stretch the imagination too far. Anything that appears implausible' is necessarily taken to be forced, artificial, 'unrealistic'.[44]

A sense of 'implausibility' may stem from the part chance and coincidence play in these novels: but to find this implausible may be to deny the extent of chance in 'real life'.

One 'conclusion' to be drawn from readings of these novels is that, in addition to the obvious, that life is indeed prone to contingencies (and that, therefore, the fictional is not necessarily as 'fictional' as all that), political life is like that. And that being so, the absence from many theoretical accounts of an equivalent to the contingent elements of emplotment present in (fictional) narratives is problematic for political understanding, for political theory.

'Dealing with contingency' carries a double sense, of 'seeing to', or of 'playing with'. The former suggests that contingency is a problem, the latter, 'dealing with what's dealt', acting on the basis of the cards in one's hand, is potentially both more open and more prone to risk.[45] Political theory does not always deal well with contingency; to the extent that politics treats contingency as abnormal or outside of its own normal sphere of operations, as it were, then the novel, with its account of the contingently-induced behaviour of political agents, is likely to be more realistic, and therefore more helpful in this respect, for political understanding, than the theoretical account.[46]

Notes

*A first version of this essay was presented in the workshop 'The Political Uses of Narrative' at the European Consortium for Political Research Annual Sessions of Workshops, Mannheim, Germany, 29-31 March 1998: I am grateful to the discussant of that paper, Professor Thomas Lancaster, to other members of the workshop, and to the reader for the *Finnish Yearbook of Political Thought* for their perceptive and helpful comments.

1 'Contingency' may mean several things: the common dictionary definition is that which is "neither necessary nor impossible"; theoretical discussions characterize it as that which escapes control, the disordered, the random; my literary readings associate it with coincidence and chance, the unpredictable or unexpected; all of these (not incompatible) meanings are relevant, and referred to, at various points in my discussion.

2 Cf. J.A Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Tradition* (Princeton: Princeton University press, 1975), 166: when time is regarded, in the secular outlook, as "the domain of pure contingency", there is no place for temporizing, and action is necessary because one doesn't know what fate will bring and so the assumption is "that unless acted upon, it will bring change *to one's disadvantage*"(my emphasis).

3 Cf. William Connolly *Politics and Ambiguity* (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1987), 141: Connolly identifies some of the elements involved in a "contemporary devaluation of the future available to our civilization", including "the capacity to launch nuclear holocaust"; and cf. John Dunn *Interpreting Political Responsibility: Essays 1981-1989* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), 210: Dunn is pessimistic about the capacity of modern political theory to cope with the political choices consequent upon and the hazards facing human kind – economic mismanagement, and environmental and nuclear disasters – he comments on the "imprudence in the politics of advanced capitalist societies", for example in "the question of safety in the design of energy installations".

4 Indeed, inasmuch as the political is defined as 'the art of the possible', as a process of adjustment to the unexpected and unforeseeable, and political society is characterised as secular and timebound, then politics itself is bound up with contingency: cf. Pocock, *The Machiavellian Moment*, 8, and passim.

5 I focus here on this kind of (mis)understanding of contingency: the concept has received more positive attention from theorists such as Merleau-Ponty or Deleuze, and notably in Richard Rorty's *Contingency, Irony and Solidarity*; cf. Connolly's comment on Rorty that "It is notable to me that the issue of the resentment of contingency gets little play in his recent work", William Connolly, *Identity\Difference: Democratic Negotiations of Political Paradox* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1991), 226n11.

6 It may be maintained that the opposition of narrative and rational choice theory is invalid – that the latter is not incompatible with 'telling stories, indeed that the ordering of priorities may entail just that: thus, for instance, (ostensibly) sub-optimal choices can be explained by reference

to more complex choice-making processes than are prima facie apparent – a different and more complex story needs to be told – cf. George Tsebilis *Nested Games: Rational Choice in Comparative Politics* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1990): Tsebilis's is a nice example of an attempt to contain 'irrational' decision-making within a given theoretical mode; my focus on contingency, however, directs attention to those situations where there is no 'choice' available, or, where 'choice' is not an appropriate term at all; and cf. Emery Roe, *Narrative Policy Analysis: Theory and Practice* (Durham N.C. and London: Duke University Press, 1994).

7 [unsigned review], *New Yorker*, 9 November 1992, 147; cf. Dennis Barone, 'Introduction: Paul Auster and the Postmodern American Novel' in *Beyond the Red Notebook: Essays on Paul Auster*, edited by Dennis Barone (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), 1-26, 15: "'Anything can happen': this phrase occurs in all of Auster's books and these books are examinations of struggles to find one's way, to make sense of this fact", and Barone quotes Auster's remark that "chance is a part of reality" (25n3); and cf. Pascal Bruckner, 'Paul Auster, or the Heir Intestate' in *Beyond the Red Notebook*, 27-33: Auster, he claims, loves "coincidences that rhyme the most remote, improbable events. He excels at sprinkling his characters' adventures with correlations, which have no a priori meaning, but to which the story gives unexpected consequences"(29); cf. Eric Wirth, 'A Look Back from the Horizon' in *Beyond the Red Notebook*, 171-82, 175; Arthur Saltzman, '*Leviathan*: Post Hoc Harmonies' in *Beyond the Red Notebook*, 162-70, 164; Peter Kirkegaard, 'Cities, Signs and Meanings in Walter Benjamin and Paul Auster: or, Never Sure of Any of It', *Orbis Littterarum, International Review of Literary Studies*, Copenhagen, 48 (2-3), 1993, 161-79, 176.

8 Saltzman, '*Leviathan*: Salzman follows this observation with a query – "how then can one be responsible in a mysterious, unpredictable world?" – a relevant political question.

9 Mark Osteen, 'Phantoms of Liberty: the Secret Lives of *Leviathan*', *The Review of Contemporary Fiction*, 14 (1), 1994, 87-91, 91.

10 Daniel Aaron, 'How to Read Don DeLillo', *South Atlantic Quarterly* [Special Issue, The Fiction of Don DeLillo, edited by Frank Lentricchia], 89(2), Spring 1990, 305-319, 308.

11 Philip Horne, 'It's Just a Book', L*ondon Review of Books*. 17 December, 1992, 20-21.

12 That is, political theory might be expected to address how things actually are, or could be, rather than abstractions: and see Quentin Skinner on 'trivial instances', p.17 below.

13 Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 142.

14 Connolly, *Identity\Difference*, 119.
15 Iris Marion Young, [review], *Political Theory*, August 1992, 511-14, 512.
16 Connolly, *Identity\Difference*, 174-5.
17 Dana Chabot, 'In Defense of "Moderate" Relativism and "Skeptical" Citizenship', presented at the American Political Science Association Annual Meeting, Washington D.C., September 1-5, 1993, 21; note that 'second-order' commentaries on seminal worksare themselves significant in the transmission of received ideas in the wider field of political theory (that of taught courses, for instance).
18 Benjamin Barber, *The Conquest of Politics: Liberal Theory in Democratic Times* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), 11, see also 206-9; cf. *Rational Action: Studies in Philosophy and Social Science*, edited by Ross Harrison (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); John Dunn, *Political Obligation in its Historical Context: Essays in Political Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), Chapter 5, 'Practicing History and Social Science on 'Realist' Assumptions'; and cf. Paisley Livingston, *Literature and Rationality: Ideas of Agency in Theory and Fiction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).
19 Connolly, *Identity\Difference*, 28.
20 John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 15, 102, cf. 72-3, 585.
21 Mark Warren, *Nietzsche and Political Thought* (Cambridge, Mass, and London: MIT Press, 1988), 1.
22 Thus for example, "We associate actions with ... a unit of agency: the person or group or entity treated as the author of and held responsible for the action", Ronald Dworkin, 'Liberal Community' in *Communitarianism and Individualism*, edited by Shlomo Avineri and Avner De-Shalit (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), 208; cf. Peter Johnson, *Frames of Deceit: a Study of the Loss and Recovery of Public and Private Trust* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 77: "It is a necessary feature of contractualist method that individuals are seen as rational constructs whose attributes are determined by the requirements of theory".
23 S.L.Goldberg, *Agents and Lives: Moral Thinking in Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), xv, and cf. 75-6 on considering people as agents.
24 Saltzman, '*Leviathan*, 169; and cf. Seyla Benhabib, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (London: Polity, 1992), 77-78: Benhabib suggests that the (modernist) sense of loss of agency and efficacy may be a result of the contradiction between various spheres in which the person operates.

25 Goldberg, *Agents and Lives*, 76.

26 Stanley Hauerwas and David Burrell, 'From System to Story: An Alternative Pattern for Rationality in Ethics' in *Why Narrative? Readings in Narrative Theology*, edited by Stanley Hauerwas and L Gregory Jones (Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B Eerdman Publishing Co., 1989), 178.

27 Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas' in *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics*, edited and introduced by James Tully (Polity Press, 1988), 59, and see 60-61.

28 Jerome Bruner, *The Culture of Education* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 16, 123.

29 Peter Johnson, 'Three Theories of Narrative Gaps', *Contemporary Political Studies*, 1996, 1352-1357; W.B Gallie, *Philosophy and the Historical Understanding* (Chatto and Windus), 41, and see 211-215; cf. Livingston, *Literature and Rationality*, 8: Livingston suggests that we tend to look for rational explanations to fill in gaps.

30 Robert Siegle, *The Politics of Reflexivity: Narrative and the Constitutive Poetics of Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986), 103.

31 Cf. John Dunn, *Interpreting Political Responsibility: Essays 1981-1989* (London: Polity Press, 1990), 2: "politics today, as at every previous point in human political history, consists ultimately in human agency, and the latter, in turn, necessarily involves both an intentionality which is partially dependent on conscious human evaluation and a wide range of unenvisaged and potentially keenly undesired consequences".

32 Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in *From Max Weber:Essays in Sociology*, Translated, Edited and with an Introduction by H.H.Gerth and C Wright Mills (London, Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd, 1970 [1948], 117.

33 Margaret Canovan, *The Political Thought of Hannah Arendt* (London: Methuen, 1974), 124-5.

34 Steve Buckler, 'Hamlet and Hannah Arendt's Theory of Action', *Contemporary Political Studies*, 1576.

35 Cf. Noel O'Sullivan, 'Difference and the Concept of the Political in Contemporary Political Philosophy',*Political Studies*, 45, 1997, 739-754: the world is "an aggregate of possibilities", and "the central problem raised by postmodernism, [which] is how we are to respond constructively to the sense of contingency".

36 Cf. Bruckner, 'Paul Auster', 29: the challenge for the novelist is to give the unexpected "the weight of necessity", to convert "the improbable into the inevitable"; cf. Saltzman, '*Leviathan*, 168: "The trick is to discover the opportunities that chance provides and transform them, through

the fervency[*sic*] that the political activist and the novelist share, into a calling".

37 Stuart Hampshire, *Innocence and Experience*(Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1992 [1989]), 132-3.

38 M. Somers, 'The Narrative Constitution of Identity: a Relational and Network Approach', *Theory and Society*, 23 (5), 1994, 605-649, 616.

39 On narrative sequence see Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, xi, xiii; J.M.Bernstein, 'Self-knowledge as Praxis: Narrative and Narration in Psychoanalysis' in *Narrative in Culture: the Uses of Storytelling in the Sciences, Philosophy and Literature*, edited by Christopher Nash (London: Routledge, 1993), 55; Haurewas and Burrell, 'From System to Story', 177-8.

40 See Quentin Skinner, 'Some problems in the analysis of political thought and action', *Political Theory*, 2(3), 1974, 277-303.

41 Gary Saul Morson, 'Contingency and Poetics', *Philosophy and Literature*, 22, 1998, 286-308.

42 Cf. my reference earlier to Barber's reference to 'the constraints' and the 'logic' of necessity: in that view, if life was to be re-run, the paths taken would be the same?

43 The 'open' or 'process' literary work is such by virtue of *structural* features – most obviously lack of closure, or unreliable and/or multiple narration, or non-linear sequentiality, for example; it is formal qualities, rather than a function of reading, or the degree of 'aestheticism' which are significant in this respect; nor is there an absolute distinction in this regard between 'realist' and 'experimental' or 'postmodern' work.

44 Barone, 'Introduction', 19.

45 Cf. Nancy Huston, 'Dealing with What's Dealt', *Salmagundi*, 106-7, Spring-Summer, 1995: Huston discusses the identity issues involved in being [contingently] beautiful *and* intelligent, features 'I'm not responsible for', and she concludes, "I don't mean that once you get your cards the game is tantamount to over. I simply mean that all of us play the game according to the cards we have in our hand – bluffing and feinting, discarding and drawing, trying to influence the other players, winning and losing..."(268).

46 The last word here has to be that I do not advocate reading novels *instead of* theoretical texts, but *as well as*.

John S. Nelson

JOHN LE CARRÉ AND THE POSTMODERN MYTH OF THE STATE

Most of our politics is a matter of talk: not material interests alone, not military or other resources, not rational decisions by individuals or institutions – but talk. In politics, if not always in war, these other matters are configured in, of, by, and for talk.[1] The popular genre of spy stories shows episode by episode, scene by scene, how political events, motives, opportunities, resources, and situations turn on talk. This holds not merely despite the international settings but because of them. Stories of international intrigue often turn on troubles of mutual translation and comprehension across cultures or institutions. These begin and end in codes and practices of talk.

At root, the very meaning of inter-national is between-or-across-nations – where nations are peoples or cultures defined less by genes pools and territories than by distinctive languages and modes of speech. Thomas Hobbes said that only the institution of a sovereign, a modern state or government, could order people into a society, a nation; and the first thing that this "common power to keep them all in awe" must do to create a nation is to invent its language, giving the subjects a sense of mutual identity in community and a way to communicate constructively. The warlike chaos that Hobbes and the

modern world have taken to remain between nations is therefore importantly a result of confusion and misunderstanding at the levels of language, talk, and translation. International relations are first and foremost phenomena of troubled talk. Put more broadly, modern politics recognize no international community in the strict political sense of sovereignty, and so international relations are defined by difficulties of communication. Time and again, spy stories insist on this characterization.

Troubles of talk and communication are importantly challenges of information. Late-modern spies act to keep their country's information secret from competitors. This protects their country's strategies and powers. Chief among those resources is the proprietary information or knowledge itself. In the modern world of Hobbesian sovereigns, reputation is power. In the late-modern world of national-security states, information is the power to produce or penetrate reputations. In the practice of spying, therefore, information is the supreme power. Gaining information through passive or active intelligence operations is surely the classic work of spies. They act covertly to penetrate the defenses of their competitors, to defend their own information, and to propagate misinformation, even disinformation. These three activities define spying and animate spy stories. All three are communicational, treating international relations as politics of talk – never exclusively, but almost always primarily.

The Myth of the (National-Security) State

> *I have always been opposed to violence, even when it's in a manner of speaking.*[2]
>
> Len Deighton

Spy stories help to make the myth of the national-security state. As a concept, this has become intrinsically critical of the development of the modern nation-state into forms more bureaucratic and adventurous, both at home and abroad. Thus the genre sometimes treats the national-security state as a late-modern replacement for the modern sovereign. But the genre also treats the national-security state as a late-modern exaggeration of the modern state, especially of its worst

proclivities. Then the genre faults the national-security state for extreme editions of the same maladies that beset any modern state. Along the way, spy stories find saving graces in a few of the departures or exaggerations practiced by the national-security state. Sovereignty, democracy, and bureaucracy are the watchwords of this critique.

The overall argument of the genre is that neither the modern state nor its national-security descendant can achieve genuine sovereignty or democracy. Conventionally the genre tends to applaud the first finding and fault the second. Nor, the genre suggests, is either type of state suited to the liberal-unto-libertarian ideal of the nightwatchman state. Instead the governments that dominate affairs of international relations are bureaucratic. Given the ambition and scale of governments late in the twentieth century, spy stories judge their bureaucratization to be less admirable than inevitable. But perhaps the most intriguing possibility raised of late by the genre is that the best governments possible for our times would surmount both nightwatchman and bureaucratic models to embrace templates such as the night-manager state recently evoked by John le Carré.

Not Sovereignty . . .

> *"You have so many voices, Mr. Pine," she resumed, after too long. "I have no idea anymore who you are. . . . You say one thing, and you are that person. And I am moved by that person. Then that person is called away, and somebody quite different takes his place. And you say something else. And I am moved again. So we have a changing of the guard."* [3]
>
> John le Carré

In *The Night Manager*, the title character may be taken to personify the author's (and perhaps the genre's) sense of desirable government in the wake of the Cold War. Given le Carré's sharp eye for emerging conditions, the state as night-manager may even be taken more generally as a recommendation for postmodern times. The notion of states as selves, like that of selves as governments, is an old one in the west. Comparisons between polities and psyches go back at least as far as Plato's *Republic*, where the just commonwealth and the good

soul are characterized in tandem. From Hobbes onward, the modern state and the modern self are idealized as rational sovereigns. Both are in complete ownership, possession, and control of their bodies and acts. But to read le Carré and other spy writers these days is to infer either that the days of sovereignty are numbered, that no sovereignty in any genuine sense ever really existed, for states or for selves, or that no sovereignty the strict sense was ever possible for states or selves. The postmodern view is that selves encompass several levels and many voices. The spy-novel convention is that states do the same. "The secret world, [le Carré] says, 'is also the national subconscious.' It takes you to the 'secret center' of a country. If you want to know the deepest longings and anxieties of any nation, then look at what its security and intelligence services are being asked to do."[4] But not even the secret center can be sovereign.

Moving away from the Cold War, the state no longer is nor should be a unified sovereign, speaking with only one voice. Like "the Night Manager" Jonathan Pine to his first great love, Sophie, states now have many voices at once. They may attain a kind of unity in commitment to their citizenry. Even that, however, is unlikely. Jonathan claims to have given his all to Sophie; but she suspects otherwise, and she is right. For Jonathan knowingly, though with great misgivings, betrays Sophie's trust. With grave reservations, he puts the cause of his country ahead of his love. Does this mean that a unified sovereign would be better than a multiplicitous regiment? That is not le Carré's meaning. His complex characters are seldom unified in classical or in modern terms. Nor are his states "sovereign" in most senses of the word. Even were unified selves and sovereigns possible for earlier times, le Carré shows how the spying and other covert actions of international intrigue make such unity impossible and undesirable for the diverse and dispersed conditions of late-unto-postmodern politics.

Le Carré's work agrees in this regard with the conventions of international intrigue as a popular genre. Spy stories portray covert action as undoing any sovereignty as absolute authority or power within a specific territory. Add propaganda to covert action, and spying may be said to undo sovereignty as the monopoly on the legitimate means of violence in a society: Max Weber's test and definition of any modern state. The dynamics of international intrigue keep

governments and cultures too permeable to retain the sovereign integrity of clear boundaries between the domestic and the foreign, the inside and outside. Spy stories trace how states and societies are immensely complex sets of institutions and individuals, many with standing also in other cultures and countries. In the case of double agents and dual citizens, both of whom figure prominently in spy stories, individuals may even have standing in other governments. Prominent as well are governmental institutions and their non-governmental equivalents that cut across boundaries between nominally sovereign states.

Whatever the intentions of their authors, recent spy stories tend to take modern sovereignty apart in virtually every way possible. They deconstruct modern states by covert actions, transnational institutions, revolutionary upheavals, resurgent tribes, global economies, cultural imperialisms, the multiple identities of postmodern individuals, and the cross-cutting loyalties of many peoples. Likewise spy stories tend to deconstruct modern selves: through torture and brainwashing, through the plasticity of spies, through dispersing the self-discovery plots of earlier eras. Yet spy stories also decenter states and selves. They feature economic, educational, and other institutions that stand mostly outside modern governments. Sometimes these serve as fronts for spying, but more often they become separate grounds for international intrigue.

Largely in place of modern sovereignty as unified decision and control, spy stories see postmodern government as overt and covert action coupled with political accountability. As le Carré says, "There's no such thing as a decision. There never was."

The mode of decision is too tidy and tyrannical to satisfy the genre's realistic interest in conditions, complications, improvisations, and the like. No decision stands by itself in spy stories; but no decision could stand otherwise by the standards of modern sovereignty, either for states or selves. Despite their penchant for clockwork plots, spy stories tend to challenge the modern concept of control, similarly crucial to the very idea of sovereignty. To conceive states or individuals as "controlling" in the strict sense of "sovereignty" would be to banish the intrigue from spy stories. So the genre undoes sovereignty as a political program for states or selves. Eschewing most attempts to characterize whole systems of politics at the level of the

country, spy stories turn instead to the political excitement of covert action.

. . . But Covert Action

> *She shuffled listlessly through the cables and reports on her desk. She had already handed out the morning's assignments to her researchers, and now she was faced with reading her own stack of material, sifting through it for a relevant fact on any one of hundreds of subjects, files, and cases. This, if the thriller writers only knew, was ninety percent of what intelligence was all about; reading, remembering, associating, analyzing, and occasionally, discovering. It was mornings like this that made her sometimes yearn for foreign duty, where there was, at least, the stimulus of outside contact.*[5]
>
> Stuart Woods

Spy stories tend to glamorize covert action. Even realist novels and films in the genre can hardly help themselves. In *Deep Lie*, Stuart Woods cautions his readers and himself against romanticizing the professional life of the spy. But look at what is already happening by the last sentence, when his professional spy lets her thoughts turn to "foreign duty," with its "stimulus of outside contact." Just raise the possibility of covert action, of operations out in the field, and the spy thriller is off and running – to exciting events in exotic places.

Spy stories imply that covert actions epitomize and pervert late-modern politics. This holds primarily for international relations, but spy stories also show how their machinations infect putatively domestic politics. And in any event, international intrigues typically depend on the dissolution of many separations posited by modern politics between international and domestic realms. Spy stories know that covert action has become a persistent, characteristic focus of the foreign and defense policies of America and most other countries which have, on occasion, exercised a major influence on this century's overt, official politics among nations. This makes covert action a symbol for the international politics of our times.

Sooner or later, according to the genre, nearly all espionage tries to make in direct ways some of the changes that the spymasters want to effect in others. When le Carré's Alec Leamas, *The Spy Who Came*

In from the Cold, becomes entrapped in manipulating a communist country to discredit one major figure and advance another, he passes fully (if unknowingly) into the realm of covert operations. Immersed in covert action, he enters completely into the contest of spy versus spy. As covert action across borders, tales of international intrigue project bureaucratized versions of reputational politics, eventually to the nth-degree. They display the national-security state as a covert manipulator of almost anything that comes its way. And thus they lay the foundation for one of the biggest indictments lodged by the genre of international intrigue against the professional practice of spying for late-modern states.

Not Democracy . . .

> "*The ethic of our work, as I understand it, is based on a single assumption. That is, we are never going to be aggressors. . . . Thus we do disagreeable things, but we are defensive. That, I think, is still fair. We do disagreeable things so that ordinary people here and elsewhere can sleep safely in their beds at night. Is that too romantic? Of course, we occasionally do very wicked things." He grinned like a schoolboy. "And in weighing up the moralities, we rather go in for dishonest comparisons; after all, you can't compare the ideals of one side with the methods of the other, can you now? . . . I mean, you've got to compare method with method, and ideal with ideal. I would say that since the war, our methods – ours and those of the opposition – have become much the same. I mean you can't be less ruthless than the opposition simply because your government's policy is benevolent, can you now?" He laughed quietly to himself. "That would never do," he said.*[6]
>
> John le Carré

Spy stories tell time and again how the international intrigues of late-modern states go astray or succeed so as to debilitate and eventually destroy democracy. *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* is typical in this regard, for the genre as well as for le Carré. It relies on intense figural resonance among its many levels of theme and detail to show how western democracies are torpedoed by their secret services. To save these democracies, the covert manipulations of spies are destroying them. In spy novels, this is evident in personal, everyday events as much as affairs of state.

Since le Carré's classic contrasts democracy to political manipulation, we should ask who manipulates whom? Control manipulates Alec Leamas, his lover (Liz Gold), and the opposition. As the spy ready to come in from the cold, Alec is ripe for misuse. As a naïve leftist and lonely librarian, Liz is vulnerable to manipulation through Alec. But notice that the novel does not treat covert action as categorically "secret." Instead the whole spy apparatus is oriented as much or more to various public manipulations. Control is a power in "the Circus," a name that echoes Guy Debord, Jean Baudrillard, and Murray Edelman on politics as spectacle.[7] The bread and circuses of the Roman Empire become the late-modern spectacle of political entertainment for the masses. Is it any longer "democratic?" Neither the novel nor the genre is confident that it ever was, but they suggest strongly that it is not now.

Circus and Control routinely manipulate "the public," allegedly for its own good. Spying is put in the service of lying to the local citizenry. Some of them, such as Liz, become targets of more grim and outrageous manipulations. Liz is an ordinary person who gets caught up in the spy game and destroyed, never having been asked to volunteer or approve any part of the plot. The pervasive deceit means that much the same happens to Alec. He is a run-of-the-mill, patriotic operative, still human and democratic enough to have compunctions about some kinds of covert activity. So he, too, must go.

The novel is too sophisticated to identify democracy with "right" and its opponents with "wrong." But it does show how spies and ordinary people need to believe in something akin to democracy and human decency. The specific substance is not as important as the act of belief, as even Control mentions at an early point in the story. Control's abstraction from human details is what enables him to view everything as relative to changing interests, shifting purposes in a bureaucratic war of seemingly unending attrition. Insofar as Control makes himself the epitome of the political, the novel might pit the personal against the political. The personal is moral, the political is not. But the ambiguous figure of Smiley together with the evident politics of Alec and Liz stand in the way of anything so simple. Is Leamas to take a personal stand, to stop spying in defiance of the larger political considerations about what is advantageous for his

side to do? This personal stand need not be a good thing. Much of the book is compatible with reckoning Leamas's personal stand to be selfish, to meet his own needs to come in from the cold. He craves warmth in a loving, ordinary, true relationship. He needs caring in his life. So he sets aside the hard, cold things that must be done for the good of the espionage operation and, by extension, the free world of democratic nations. Yet the connivance of Control is supposed to save the democracies at the cost of a dupe or fellow traveler and possibly also a spy. The speeches by Control leave readers with more than a few reservations about this claim of the end justifying the means. They put into question the compatibility of democracy with the national-security state.

Take Control's longest declamation, a part quoted at the start of this section. It argues that the spy state is ethical precisely because it is willing to set aside the ordinary morality of personal life in order to defend the conditions needed for ordinary people in western democracies to get on with their lives, free of regimentation by the alien powers of the Communist East. By this end of this performance as carefully crafted by le Carré, we are troubled by the reasoning and the reasoner. In the abstract, Control's case for playing hardball politics and doing all sorts of dirty, nasty stuff might be persuasive. But the precise words and rhythms of Control tell us to think again. Maybe the evil of our side is merely responsive and defensive, not offensive. But why is the other side in that posture, and how are covert actions of the kinds implied going to stay consistent with democratic principles or procedures? Control no doubt would answer in a clever way, but would his words be persuasive after we know what he is using them to defend? Furthermore the cold-war logic of preemption twists the meanings of words like "responsive" and "defensive." So we know that Control is talking half-truths at best when he declares that there is only one big principle at issue: never to let an attack go unanswered.

Here the question of ethics is predicated on the hardball ideal of protecting us citizens through elite methods. Not only ordinary people, with their private codes of morality, but also spy stories are wont to contemplate objections. Democracy is supposed to benefit the common folk. When they are raw material for manipulation in the interest of an allegedly democratic state, can the ends still justify the

means? Le Carré doubts it, and so do his colleagues and conventions in the genre.

These considerations of publicity are the flip side of secrecy, another theme of spy novels that ties closely to the topic of information. Secrecy is treated by the cold warrior as the withholding of information from a public. What is secret might well not be known by the enemy, and probably should not be. But in the world of spy versus spy, it definitely is not and should not be known by a public – even on your own side. Such secrecy is the antithesis of democratic politics which depend on visibility.[8] Democratic politics are supposed to be overt and public, not covert and secret, so that citizens can know enough about what is happening to join in the making of public decisions.

Secrecy states are national-security states: antithetical to liberal, democratic, and even republican modes of government. National-security states rely on secret agencies or bureaus of government, usually in the fives and tens so that one arm will not (need to) know what the others are doing. These agencies are to do things exactly counter to the overall ethos, the atmospherics and principles, of democratic regimes. The cold-war argument is that this is the only way to protect democracies in hard and dangerous times. The need is to fight fire with fire, and the enemy's secrecy with our own. Seldom are democratic publics good at organizing themselves to face subtle threats and sustained crises. Republics might provide for crisis leadership in international relations through the office of the dictator or, more likely, a presidency modeled on the Roman institution. Yet democratic politics tend to distort such an institution by hedging it in with various electoral concerns and countervailing powers. When we "know" that the enemy will resort to all sorts of evil deeds and dirty tricks, the realistic response is to reply in kind and to anticipate, even pre-empt, this if at all possible. Yet these are the kinds of deeds that cannot be decent in democratic terms. Therefore they cannot be acknowledged publicly without officials and their agents suffering disgrace, impeachment, resignation, or the like. But in the secrecy-security state, by contrast, these official resources need not be squandered in such ways. The dirty deeds of covert action remain secret, not so much from the other side as from the public on our own.

Spy stories do not rule out the possibility that the visibility of

democracies might need protection by the invisibility accorded cadres of secret agents who engage in covert actions. Nevertheless spy stories do discredit most of the facile defenses of covert operations that have become commonplace in electronic societies since the Second World War. More than a few spy stories are suspicious of ideal models of democracy. But even the tales that promote such models prefer to describe most governments as "bureaucratic" rather than "democratic."

At numerous points in *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*, secrets are kept by various people from diverse others. The novel's world is full of secrecy, and so the world of secrecy turns out to be cold and dry and discouraging. Quite specific consequences seem to follow for the people who keep things secret, and others for the ones who do not. Yet there is an ironic twist or trick about the secrets kept. At the level of the laudable characters, keeping secrets cause events to go awry. The less trustworthy characters are so busy learning everybody else's secrets that we might describe them as managing or manipulating secrets more than keeping them. Their work, measured by their actual ends, goes much better. Presumably this testifies to the bureaucratic politics that inflate specific acts and tactics of secrecy into a larger strategy for secrecy that we could call "compartmentalization." Spies proceed only on a "need-to-know basis." You tell only people in your own part of the operation, and then only if they must know in order to operate well. That way, no spy caught can blow the covers of other spies in the secret service. By extension, spy agencies keep each piece of information restricted to one or two private, conspiratorial spaces. Think of them as closets, rather than forums. Because there is no "public space" where the knowledge becomes fully pooled or shared, however, the intelligent interpretation of information becomes difficult or impossible.

Systemically and personally, then, the compartmentalization and secrecy go awry. We readers do not know what is going on for much of le Carré's novels, though we get more clues overall than any actors save the few supposedly in Control. Liz does not know what is going on; but this is not surprising, since members of the public often become mere pawns for the players at the game of international intrigue. Nor, more tellingly, does Alec know. He often flatters himself that he does, but we learn that he has been cut out of the key loops.

Until it is too late, he fails to understand the whole strategy pursued by Control. By the time he senses how Control is using him, he has little latitude left but to die. He thinks that he is engaged in one last act to get (revenge against) Mundt. Actually he is helping to solidify Mundt's position as a double agent. Alec does not know that Mundt is the mole burrowed high on the other side with the help of Control. Such a strategically placed double agent is far more valuable to Control than a lowly contact and runner like Leamas. By inference, we can look back on the first episode in the novel to suspect that Karl Riemeck probably was betrayed, not by his tie to a lady, but by his danger (or advantage) to Mundt. Anything that troubles Mundt imperils Control. Liz does not know, Fiedler does not know, Alec does not know about Mundt. Yet Control does. An ironical twist is that time and again the players in this game keep losing because there is a master manipulator behind the scenes. Secrecy has its intended effects only for Control – and by extension for Mundt too, though he remains Control's pawn.

Locally, at the level of the individual, secrecy insistently produces disasters in the world of spies. To be sure, publicity seems at least as liable to producing disasters in such a world, and spy stories develop that theme as well. In the le Carré classic, we may associate publicity with the heat of the spotlight that pins Alec to the wall where he dies, and secrecy with the cold that Alec suffers as a spy who must withhold himself from the caring of ordinary life. That is why Alec find his imprisonment (to make him look ready to defect) such an easy time. It differs little from the life he already has been living. Warmth, aside for heat and cold, would be the lot of everyday life and care.

Heat and cold also could evoke a contrast between idealism and realism in politics. This is standard imagery for the western hardball of *Realpolitik*. It pits warm and fuzzy idealists such as Liz or hot and passionate fanatics such as Fiedler against such cold-blooded and hard-nosed players as Control and Mundt. Within the world of international intrigue, Fiedler and Alec count for idealists; and notice how Alec warms to Fiedler as a fellow spy. Both, of course, get taken to the cleaners by Mundt and Control. Consistent with conventions of international intrigue, however, everyone in the novel is at least a would-be realist. Alec is a spy, with spies gener-

ally supposed to be realists and hardball players. They are to break any eggs needed to make the patriotic omelet. Even though Liz is a warm, idealistic, touching person, one exceptionally large in spirit, her universalistic desire for justice contributes to a naïve Marxism that has her professing vague pieties in its hardball language. In the end, the book leaves us sad but thankful that neither Liz nor Alec has what it takes to keep playing hardball. Yet look at how the real hardballers fare.

Practitioners of international intrigue virtually require a labyrinthine, compartmentalized setting for politics. When deprived of it, they build it through their own deeds and weird surmises about the alleged plans of others. They love roundabout politics. They need circuitous appearances and subterfuges. They crave this as the clouding of human judgment that the cold-war character of "The Shadow" was able to achieve in order to render himself invisible to others. Here is the absurdly roundabout game of "Spy vs. Spy" ridiculed for decades by Mad Magazine. It is the world of James Bond gizmos, Rube Goldberg contraptions, *Mission Impossible* plots, and the relentless camouflage that leaves nearly nothing as it seems. It is a world that manufactures appearances so misleading that what is transparent or ordinary can be the best camouflage, and therefore the most suspicious, of all. It is a world where Descartes' "Evil Genius," who generates strange and misleading appearances for the rest of us to mistake as realities, would be right at home. It is one of the worst horrors of the late-modern political imagination made real. Then spy stories teach the awful truth that it is made real precisely in self-professed attempts to combat or even prevent itself.

Thus Alec Leamas recognized belatedly that he was starting to believe his own lies. By Control's early speech, if not before, we readers sense that something odd is happening; and we fear machinations far beyond Alec's control or awareness. We hope that they will be revealed as an action-adventure plot, where Alec turns out to have been a master planner or improviser. We hope that, somehow, off-stage, Alec has been orchestrating the eerie figures who watch him from a distance throughout the story. We hope that the end envisions him able to live happily ever after with Liz. But we "know" even so that we are in the clutches of a conventional spy tale done

especially well, leaving happy endings less than likely and betrayals the order of the day.

So our hopes prove forlorn. Alec has been undiscerning. He has missed crucial clues, because he has been numbed by the long cold of spying. He is no longer suitably sensitive to his surroundings. He has ceased to stay alert in the coldly calculating manner required of successful combatants in this terrible war. He has been distracted by the warmth, the caring, the love forbidden to any proper spy or any other cold warrior worthy of the name. He has been swallowed whole by the maws of bureaucracy, to be chewed alive then spit out dead.

. . . But Bureaucracy

> *Longmead and Orrell, like most career politicians and administrators, enjoyed machinations, complexities, office politics. Such exercises had often seemed glutinous as mud to Aubrey, and with little reward to the spirit. Cleverness, mental agility, the arts of deception – for the purposes of probity, and good, of course – were truly pleasurable. His was not the deception of princes; rather, the jester's detached, vigorous, mocking intelligence.*[9]
>
> Craig Thomas

Spy stories are superb instructions in bureaucratic politics. Hannah Arendt argued in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* that bureaucrats and spies are essentially indistinguishable. She explained, moreover, how spying became a late-modern profession in connection with the same nineteenth-century imperialisms that developed the bureaucratic state.[10] This enables us bureaucrats to glamorize our lives with small comparisons to James Bond. It connects the machinations of the spy to the political convolutions routine for businesses, churches, schools, or other organizations prone to the rationalization, red tape, image contests, turf wars, and information struggles of bureaucracies. It also links the humble micro-politics of bureaucracies experienced in our everyday lives to the arcane macro-politics of foreign affairs or international trade that can seem so distant from our personal concerns.

Bureaucrats are spies insofar as bureaucracies are arenas where information is power. To protect bureaucratic turf is, in part, to keep

its defining information inaccessible to others – while augmenting that information and turf with activities from other agencies. The scholarly and political ideal defines bureaucracies as the most efficient modes of organization for large-scale activities in mass societies, regardless of substantive purpose. The reality, as everybody knows, is not so much efficient organization as a restoration of something like the chaos that Hobbes argued to afflict any state of nature. Bureaucracies tend both internally and externally to become wars of all against all. But now the object is scarce information, the key resource in late-modern life. This makes bureaucrats and their clients into something like secret agents, acting covertly to turn against others whatever information and turf they enjoy already, in other to secure more turf and information.

As Arendt argued, bureaucracy is the political arena of Kafka's K. Strangely, anonymously accused within a maize of agencies, K is turned around and upside-down in trying fruitlessly to get helpful information about his case. Eventually he is defeated utterly, becoming a lonely and confused fragment by story's end. Spy stories partake amply of this ethos, and they share Kafka's persistent concern with metamorphosis. In spy stories, this relates to alienating concerns of disguise and playing roles. Like Kafka's stories, moreover, tales of international intrigue often assume such transformations to be changes for the worse, not the better.

Spies are bureaucrats insofar as the craft of espionage operates within the bureaucratized setting of governments, business firms, and various other organizations late in modern societies. In playing these versions of king-of-the-mountain, we bureaucrats try to do unto others before they can do it unto us. We conceal our plans and penetrate the plans of others. We misinform and disinform the opposition, which often includes coworkers down the hall. And we do all this to give ourselves the best chance at bureaucratic success. When we read spy stories, we relive these personal episodes. We also acquire vicarious experience of bureaucratic situations we haven't faced yet but might at any time.

Bureaucratic intrigue and spying are species of hardball, realist politics. The standard criticism of having ends justify means is that the actual ends seldom accomplish the justification. What our ideals can seem to defend, our results cannot. Often what happens, as eve-

rybody knows, is that the means supplant the intended ends. A familiar version of this disaster is the myth of Faust. We know it best these days through Mary Shelley's story of Frankenstein, arguably the founding novel of horror and science fiction as popular genres.[11] Many spy stories also partake amply of the Faust myth. The spy sells his soul to the devil of an enemy, an ideal, a self-conception, even a romance. The devil – usually as secret information, powerful weaponry, or the dirty tricks of the spying trade that remain when its scruples go – is supposed to provide the spy with great powers to do good (and look good doing it). Without a soul, a code of proper conduct, however, the international actor loses track of the original ideals (such as legality or democracy) that might have justified the covert and dirty means that the spy actually pursues. The means become the ends: democracies turn into bureaucracies, laws into pretexts, pretenses into treacheries. By story's end, the question is whether the Faust figure will have gained the wisdom and humility to repent of his ruthless ways (redeeming the spy within his secondary world) or not (limiting the redemption to learning for us about the international relations of our primary world).

Again the conventional politics of spy stories seek to reconcile Machiavellian politics with the codes of honor that can keep them from self-betrayal and -destruction. The cold-war condition where anything goes is the hell to which Faustian spies are damned. International intrigue explores how to keep enough distance between the ends sought and the means used for calculations of means to ends to stay meaningful and legitimate. It tells how, when we fail to do this, when we bureaucrats or spies act without proper limits or restrictions, the ends collapse into the means. Then the spy story immerses us in the upshot: a mean existence where life is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Late-modern spying is not simply penetrating enemy lines in order to know what is going on. That might be enough for military scouting in the nineteenth century, which entered the world of the western in the form of Kit Carson and other frontier scouts. From America's Civil War onward, though, even the scouting becomes highly technologized. Hot-air balloons fly over battle lines to photograph from above an enemy pattern of deployment. As late-modern espionage moves ever further into realms of techno-

logical surveillance, the spy genre assimilates the scout ever more to the bureaucratic realms of high technology. The ties of spy to technology configure the settings of international intrigue in terms of the politics of technocracy: rule by technologies and their elites.[12]

Technocracies develop the myth of “the technological imperative,” the precept that can implies ought or must. If you can do it, you will do it. If you have the technical knowledge and resources to build that bomb, you must build it. If you have the means to build a new aircraft, you will assemble it. The spy genre put this into institutional forms that differ from everyday life, but the political dynamics are familiar readers from their daily experiences. The interdependent politics of bureaucracy and technology are no strangers to the inhabitants of advanced-industrial societies. Spy stories put these together to give readers a sense of technocracy at the levels of international relations and the national-security state.

By extension, the genre of international intrigue reaches beyond spy stories in any narrow sense. Tom Clancy’s techno-thrillers of military and international relations are examples. They enjoy huge sales in America. They also exercise a great hold on Hollywood, where his intricate plots and technological extrapolations play to the penchant of films for lengthy thrillers with special effects. Clancy’s novels are worth analyzing in the terms of this essay, but they are very long and less well-crafted than the efforts of Deighton, Thomas, and le Carré.[13] Apparently, though, they are read just as avidly by professional spies, diplomats, and politicians – making their penchant for reliance on technological fixes all the more worrisome.

By the initial, cold-war logic of secret services, moreover, the rule is that they always already are doing it to us first. The spy genre acknowledges this *mythos* as (only a) part of our settings for international situations. Always it concedes there to be branches or divisions or officers of spy organizations committed to the proposition that the other side has escalated the technological confrontation to the next level that we can conceive. By analogy to the Peter Principle of bureaucratic promotion to the level of incompetence, a few spy stories show how we define “the next level” precisely by our current inability to conceive it in any specific terms. The challenge becomes to stop the principle of anticipation from turning into the principle

of preemption and thence into the principle of escalation. Even Clancy shows interest in this perverse dynamic.

All the more, then, principles for international politics in the condition of cold war require that we get and keep (secret) information. So we act overtly and covertly to collect lots of data. Spy novels know that the main challenge is to configure the data, to see its patterns in order to interpret them. Otherwise we do not know what the data mean; we lack a determinate sense of their significance. Interpreting data is the classic and primary function assigned to "intelligence agencies." The covert activities of spies are mainly means to collect more grist for the intelligence mill. As spy stories tell, however, there are bureaucratic and reputational (as well as literary) reasons for the tail to wag the dog. So spy stories explore how the typical failures of intelligence are bureaucratic and interpretive, more than operational.

As operatives, spies work at the behest of officials bureaucratic and otherwise overtly political. Spies are the (secret) agents of the visible officials. "Agent" and "operative" are apt terms, implying that spies are mainly means: sheer tools or instruments of the state for international relations. Consequently officials tend to repress the humanity of their operatives. The genre suggests that spies get little respect as humans who are ends in themselves. Instead they are mere actors, performing scripts prepared by others. Their initiatives are supposed to be limited to the small adjustments necessary as any particular performance unfolds. Thus spies are instruments of someone else's "Control," the only name for the supervisor who runs Alec Leamas into the ground.

Le Carré tells us that "Control always came in on success."[14] This says a lot about who and what Control is politically, at least as Alec Leamas suffers him. Underlings often regard their bosses this way in bureaucracies. Alec notices that Control is an expert bureaucratic operator who is seldom tarred with failure but always starred with success. Underlings can either envy or resent this. But Alec keeps his resentment all too much in check. He does the dirty work, whereas Control claims the credit. As underling, Alec's success is Control's, but Control is nowhere around when Alec gets into trouble.

Within bureaucracies, these devious devices are standard operating procedures. They are how people climb bureaucratic ladders. As

overlings, moreover, Control and Mundt never seem to know anything self-incriminating about underling failures, leaving them to hold the bag on their own. Deniability of information is escape from responsibility. Overlings do not know what an underling is doing when he fails. Surely the underling was operating outside orders, at least outside their orders. Alec let Karl get friendly with a woman: that was his mistake, counter to Control's orders. To say that "Control always came in on success" is to evoke bureaucracy with precision.

One way to stay a step ahead in bureaucratic contests is, paradoxically, to resist regarding the process as a linear progression of one step after another. Spy stories practice us in conceiving the situation as a whole, a complex, a network of characters and events that reveals its structure at strategic points. If spies get the pattern well and tweak the pressure points, everything folds together into effective acts. Control does this brilliantly; Alec not nearly so well.

In this sense, we may say that Control genuinely controls, though this and many another spy novel stands by the generic lesson that even the best-laid plans "gang aft aglay." This authorial sense of control is one of the major attractions of the spy genre. An especially pure development of this aspect of the genre was the television series of *Mission Impossible*, in both its runs. In times of large institutions and repressions, the one experience denied most people most of the time is control. It is not surprising that we fantasize about it in popular forms such as international intrigue. The genre implies, as a corollary of the principle that "pride goeth before a fall," that a good sense of control is likely to signify its absence and a special susceptibility to manipulation. An enjoyable feature of many spy stories, nonetheless, is the idea that someone can be so clever in calculation and so skillful in performance that even an "agent" or "operative" could be "in control." For the business version of this bureaucratic fantasy, read *The Firm*, a legal thriller by John Grisham that takes *Mission Impossible* plotting to new heights.[15]

By this standard, the truly skillful agents are the ones who are able to control themselves. In the language of modern political theory, of course, this is to be sovereign. Or more simply, it is to become an independent agent – what we moderns call a self. Many spy tales have *Mission Impossible* plot structures of tightly scripted and tautly

acted deeds meant to deceive and manipulate others into doing what the spy's side needs them to do but which they would not do without the spy's covert operation. (Here is the definition of power from Robert Dahl and many other Archimedeans that troubled political science in earlier times.) The television series of that name featured intricately, exquisitely timed operations with many gadgets, masks, and impersonations. Why doesn't a clockwork operation of this kind becoming boring? Because everything is cut so close and timed so finely that immense suspense builds about how the plans, equipment, or targets will prove themselves unpredictable – or the agents will prove themselves fallible. Can they keep functioning like machines long and well enough to make the risky business work? And if not, what then?

Most of the time, of course, there is some slight slip up near the end. Or at least, something appears to go wrong. At that point, the three standard plots for *Mission Impossible* diverge from their common stem. We might learn that something really did go wrong, but we learn that careful planning for contingencies enables the spy team to succeed anyway. This is control raised to a higher level of expertise. Or we might discover a bit later that the apparent bobble was actually a part of the plan, perhaps meant to distract or reassure the other side. This information is strategically withheld from us viewers, of course, and we thrill to the authors' and actors' deft manipulation of us through the story – as much or more as we thrill to the clever manipulation of the operatives' human targets. That raises the control to a still higher level, because then the agents are moving others through some sense of apparent failure by the agents, cunningly enabling the operatives to escape failure in the end. Or third, we find out that something really did go wrong but human courage, inventiveness, or luck can still carry the day. We are reassured that humans and their lives are not (mere) machines. When genuinely unforeseen problems arise, and a member of the *Mission Impossible* team spontaneously invents an ingenious and effective solution, the virtuosity of the response to changing conditions excites our highest approval.

The ability to adjust extemporaneously to shifting circumstances is what rhetoricians call invention. We might also call it innovation. And in jazz, the ability to adjust to rapid changes and turn them to advantage while coordinating responses with other players is called

"improvisation." There it is celebrated as the highest mode of control. Improvisation is self-improvement perfected, made spontaneous and potentially endless. It exceeds or transcends other levels of control, because it leaves no controller on the scene. Great improvisers achieve what they do because they are at one with their colleagues and the situation. Little or no self-awareness remains. Improvisers immerse themselves in the music (or spying) at hand.

There are rules of thumb for improvisation, and it typically calls on a huge knowledge of music (or spying) generally and improvisational moves and modes particularly. During the time of improvisation, however, there is no time to stand mentally apart from the music (the covert operation). There is no time to criticize. There is no time for cognitive calculation of what notes to play next or how to play them.[16] There is no time for planning what moves to make next or how to make them. As Zen has it, you are most yourself when you are not yourself, when there is no self there. Improvisers play "out of their minds" in the creative kind of insanity that Plato invoked in the *Symposium*. Thus do spies as secret agents transcend the limits of modern planning or calculation, of the modern self, even of the western civilization.

In political terms, improvisation is the Machiavellian ability to adjust to circumstances changed continually by the other actors in the situation – what Machiavelli termed *Fortuna*. Improvisation is the virtuos ability to take advantage of situations unforeseen and still changing before your very eyes. The genre of international intrigue agrees with most other popular genres that important dimensions of our politics at every level tend to transcend ordinary senses of control or even anticipation. These genres provide myriad experiences of vicarious action, enabling readers to refine their second-nature capacities of political judgment for comparable (but never identical) situations in their later lives. When you are improvising well, you are acting well. And then you are truly, in the fullest sense, in control of yourself and for yourself. Then you are not just being manipulated by others. Spy stories agree with most other genres on these political principles. More than that, they exercise us in the practice of such principles of political virtuosity.

That is the ambition of action stories generally: that the actor becomes so good at spontaneous and instantaneous responses to changing conditions that the actor survives and succeeds. As an impro-

viser, the actor manages to do this in ways that we readers can anticipate in some respects (due to the conventionality of popular genres) but not others (due to the convention of improvisation). This ambition becomes prominent in recent spy stories, because they turn away from master controllers. They offer no sovereigns able to manipulate everything, because they agree with Hobbes that a lasting monopoly on power and resources is impossible in modern times. Increasingly, spy stories presume that there can be no puppet-master, pulling all the strings from behind the curtains or behind the scenes. In the international conditions beyond sovereignty, whether in cold-war situations where everybody has reason to distrust everybody else, or in code-of-honor settings where the plans of others are equally unpredictable but not so uniformly threatening, the challenge is to respond skillfully to new information.

Even bureaucracies have codes of honor; and the spies of Deighton, Thomas, and le Carré often honor those codes in clever ways that work to their professional and personal advantage. That is a big part of how they improvise. Even so, most spy stories reserve more room for codes of honor among spies than their supervisors. At times, therefore, the bureaucratic struggles are ruthless, cutthroat, with no holds barred, and no codes of honor observed. Control embodies this in *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*. He talks as if spies on the same side enjoy a nearly professorial game of honor among professionals. But that is another feint and manipulation in a most ruthless game. Le Carré's stories insistently de-romanticize and un-chivalrize the Cold War in this way, not because he takes all thoughts of honor to be delusory and dangerous, but because he knows that they are desperately imperiled in our international politics. Perhaps the same may be said of bureaucracy as presented by the whole genre.

And the Night-Manager State

He would crop the secret octopus. He would give away its powers to separate, smaller agencies and make each of them separately accountable. He would deconstruct, decentralize, humanize.[17]

John le Carré

When spy stories do get around to posing replacements for modern ideals of the sovereign state (and self), they tend to depart from the model states proposed by all the main ideologies of modern politics. They come to reluctant and partial accommodations with the late-modern cultures of bureaucracy and mass-mediated reputation. Yet they push beyond to something on the order of a postmodern politics. (This is what we should expect of a popular genre, since most are importantly postmodern innovations and include postmodern sensibilities from the very start.) The closest I can come at the moment to summarizing the spy genre's sense of an emerging state for postmodern conditions is to borrow the title image from le Carré's novel on *The Night Manager*.

The attunement of John le Carré's spy novels to problematics of late-modern political theory is manifest in many details. *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold* is, as I have tried to show, a brilliantly concise and deadly accurate tale of cold-war politics at the state and personal levels. Already it is renowned as a small classic of twentieth-century literature, likely the greatest of spy stories, and the first in his succession of best-sellers. *The Quest for Karla*, three of the novels on the enigmatic George Smiley, would surely rate as the top series in the history of international intrigue.[18] A preface to that quest (*A Murder of Quality*) and its postscript (*The Secret Pilgrim*) are fascinating in themselves and for their ties to the other Smiley novels. Literarily and politically, le Carré's only rival in the genre has been Graham Greene, who wrote earlier kinds of spy stories, less relevant to current conditions.[19] Even so, my sense is that le Carré has outdone himself in *The Night Manager.* It is a long novel that hints in detail how we might theorize a distinctively postmodern state in international relations. In fact, one of its characters ruminates at various points about how to restructure the spy apparatus in particular, reigning it into a more democratic order.[20]

Le Carré moves from a strictly Hobbesian template for national and international affairs to problematics inspired by Lockean liberalism and Machiavellian republicanism. Other popular genres make similar moves, since the late-modern polities we most admire have become odd blends of democracy and bureaucracy with liberalism and republicanism. Westerns provide the most obvious examples, but many legal thrillers and science fictions come also to mind. In

spy stories, conventionally and not just in the writings of le Carré, these confrontations often create nightmare conditions for a while, especially when the genre's preoccupations with less savory ideologies such as fascism and communism enter the picture. The usual suggestion of the genre is that the late-modern, bureaucratic politics of the national-security state imperil a genuinely postmodern politics of popular democracy or republican revivalism. As a result, many spy stories turn away from large institutions of politics to stress personal codes of personal honor. A recent le Carré novel includes this move along the way, but works overall to evoke a provocative model for postmodern states.

The model articulates features of the title character, *The Night Manager*. The title resonates to Hegel's famous phrase in describing the classically liberal notion of any modern, sovereign government as "the nightwatchman state." Hegel's argument is that, by contrast with the later liberal ideal of the welfare state, promoted by Hegel himself, the early liberal state is to be minimalist – virtually libertarian. The welfare state is to pursue the well-being of its citizens in every way possible, acting like a parent to the civil society it nurtures through programs administered by expert, rational, middle-class bureaucracies. It is activist, and it regards politics approvingly, as an appropriate part of the life of any individual or institutions. Humans achieve full development and maximum rationality through their participation in the welfare state, though it is to preserve ample spheres of private initiative and enjoyment in the form of a civil society of (increasingly) entrepreneurial individuals.[21]

Hegel maintained that the liberal state is a crude anticipation of the welfare state. This would leave the libertarian state as a strange ironization of it. Thus these images of minimal government appreciate only a part of the principles that Hegel and the twentieth century have presumed to make the welfare state into the acme of modern civilization. Ignoring or renouncing the ambitions of the welfare state, early liberal government is concerned mostly (and the libertarian state is occupied exclusively) with the bare essentials of national security and domestic tranquillity. Early in modern times, John Locke's *Second Treatise of Government* would provide the inspiriting sense of a minimal state for classical liberalism.[22] Then the *American Constitution* as ratified with the *Bill of Rights* would offer a middle-modern

template for the liberal state; while Robert Nozick's minimal government as proposed in *Anarchy, State, and Utopia* can exemplify the austere version of the nightwatchman state promoted by the libertarian politics of late-modern times.[23] It reacts against the bureaucratized welfare states embraced by late-modern species of liberalism, socialism, and even (if more reluctantly) conservatism.

In principle, therefore, the nightwatchman state restrains itself from activities reaching beyond these rudiments of order. It strives only to enforce a minimal civilization necessary to take the brutal edge off the free-for-all competition among individuals and institutions in society. This is enough, classical liberals and libertarians argue, for private enterprise to become productive and pleasurable. Anything more, in fact, and the state not only violates (rather than enforces) human rights but also impedes productivity and the private enjoyment of goods. The sovereign and its associated politics are evils, because they coerce and constrain private individuals and institutions. Yet the classical liberal holds them to be necessary evils, because they provide the order and authority of civilization.

The image of the nightwatchman emphasizes that the sovereign is not supposed to finance or build or run any apparatus for producing the (private) goods that liberals suppose to make life collegial, rich, congenial, civil, and long. These production and payoff activities are daytime duties – conducted by the investors, developers, managers, and workers in the light of calculative reason. The nightwatchman works in darkness and shadow, by force and by fraud. But these evils are kept from infecting daylight production and consumption through strict limits on what superintendence is needed at night. The nightwatchman merely protects the plant while the owners and others sleep. Security and a few subsidiary services (such as stoking a furnace to keep temperatures suitable for the productive equipment in the off-hours) are the humble, dirty business of the nightwatchman. Thus he is a marginal employee of the main operation: low in responsibility, low in pay, lower in esteem. Yet the position is one of trust and therefore of honor, at least so it is supposed to be in relation to the daylight world of owning and doing.

Mainly, though, the nightwatchman keeps the building and its site under surveillance. As Michael Foucault emphasized, surveillance is the modern principle of politics presupposed by the Hobbe-

sian sovereign and later highlighted by Jeremy Bentham's model for the modern prison, the Panopticon.[24] To "discipline and punish" subjects, enforcing the compliance with civil law that takes the cold edge off competition, the activities of subjects must be visible to the sovereign. Thus the sovereign develops means to super-vise or over-look the citizenry. Then the national-security state takes technologies and practices of surveillance to new highs (or lows, depending on whether we regard it from the perspectives of the sovereign or its subjects). In this way, as spy stories stress, the libertarian minimizing of state powers gets swept aside in the interest of national security for times when the survival of the nation (or at least the state) seems imperiled from without and within. The surveillance state (as we may call it also) is big, muscular, active, and intrusive into the lives of its citizens – at least where its own security is at stake and, in the welfare-state versions, theirs as well. Thus do spy stories display the nightwatchman state turning into the nightmare state evoked by late-modern cacatopias of surveilliance such as *We* by Evgeny Zamiatin and dystopian devices of surveillance such as the two-way television in George Orwell's *1984*.[25] These developments receive ample attention in le Carré's novels, but the latest takes a more constructive turn.

As a stand-in for the postmodern state, le Carré's night manager is not a nightmare but a nightwatchman and much more. Thus the night manager is not only a model spy for our times but also an analogue of the model state. In a hotel, the night manager can be the second or third most responsible person. The overall manager is likely to be the (head) concierge. Little signals from le Carré suggest that we are to treat that "office" as our own, since he makes the head concierge at the main hotel served by Jonathan Pine into a rather ordinary fellow, something of a common man or average citizen. Serving the concierge most directly are the hotel's day and night managers. Which is the more important to the hotel's operations can vary from one hotel or time to the next. In general terms, though, the night manager has a strong claim on that position. The modern hotel is to serve its customers unobtrusively. This may require a bit of surveillance and a good more in the way of welfare services, but both should be kept off-stage as much as possible. Thus the night manager is not only responsible for welcoming late-comers into the

hotel, but also for supervising quietly its major preparations and accommodations for all the guests. The night manager is usually the one who must respond to the odd requests at odd hours, handle the crises of the night, and the like. In addition, the night manager is the one who supervises the care of the physical plant (rather like the nightwatchman, but with much greater latitude and expectation). And finally, the night manager is the one who undertakes the genuinely distasteful and unpleasant business that is necessary at times for a hotel to do for its guests. These are key features of the postmodern state as night manager, and that last responsibility is where the spies and their covert action are placed: behind the scenes and working under cover of darkness but still within the larger picture.

Le Carré's further suggestions go beyond this model, so that we may say that the state is a night manager and more – just as Jonathan is a night manager and much more. In the epigraph to the section on sovereignty, le Carré himself suggests this move. The man with many voices is the night manager, Jonathan Pine. Each of the voices evoked in this passage, along with the many others that Pine sounds later in the novel, can be heard as an expression or style or aspect of the state as appreciated by recent tales of international intrigue. Likewise we might say that each of Pine's costumes, gestures, and roles could be a face or function of the best governments emerging in our times. (Not all the faces of a good government are good, handsome, or otherwise praiseworthy – except insofar as they contribute to an effective and worthwhile whole.) We may say that the officers discern, plan, decide, and on occasion command. The ranks listen, notice, act, and adapt any orders to their specific circumstances, then they report back to the officers. The cooks care for the basic sustenance of the rest, adding at the same time a little zest to their lives. By the same token, the deserters dissent, criticize, and eventually migrate elsewhere. And the "hidden reinforcements" of which Sophie speaks are not only sexual energies but Pine's efforts as a spy, an arms dealer, a surrogate father, a promising husband, a usurper of power, an enterprising soldier, a loyal son, and more.

Notice that the night-manager-and-more is still not sovereign in the modern, Hobbesian sense. Not even the concierge or the owner has that position. The hotel of postmodern culture is not so unified and Grand as the modern ideal wanted to make it, and the same

goes for the state.[26] Relatedly, the night-manager-and-more is not the center of the hotel. If there is one, it would lie with the guests. Not only are the guests a greatly mixed lot, going in all directions, but where would they be without the staff and the myriad support industries crucial for any great hotel? As the night manager is well-positioned to appreciate, the postmodern hotel (culture) has no center, not in the western sense. As Yeats taught, that kind of center can no longer hold, culturally or politically or personally. To redress the anarchy that does or would otherwise result, depending on how we regard the new conditions for international relations, the need is for another mode of cohesion and coherence. As the night manager would know, spy stories suggest we locate this in the talk that permeates the hotel as a building, a (temporary) residence, an operation, a vocation, and even an ideal.

International Relations as (Mythic) Talk

> *We won. Not that the victory matters a damn. And perhaps we didn't win anyway. Perhaps they just lost. Or perhaps, without the bonds of ideological conflict to restrain us any more, our troubles are just beginning. Never mind. What matters is that a long war is over. What matters is the hope.*[27]
>
> John le Carré

Spy stories display international intrigue as talk, and they take talk to be not only tactical or strategic but also symbolic and mythic. Yet they emphasize that these capacities of talk are not always nice or neat. At times, they involve plenty of nastiness and ambiguity. And if talk means lying, though only in part, surely the spy story is the genre of popular culture most interested and intelligent about the politics of lying. As fiction, spy stories themselves are an exercise not only in talk but a kind of lying – the kind we should call myth-making.

In the realm of spies, of course, there is lying and lots of it. Mainly there is the lying of leaving misleading impressions through leaving out something. "Lied by omission, as they all do, agents the world over. You teach them to cheat, to cover their tracks, and they cheat you as well."[28] Control's lament is the standing accusation against

rhetoric implied by Aristotle when he defined it as enthymematic speech. The enthymeme is a matter of elliptical persuasion in public: it omits some of the potentially important premises or other steps in reasoning, maybe to save time or possibly to manipulate listeners. From Plato onward, myths have received the same criticisms as rhetoric. They are stories instead of arguments, but they leave out some prospectively important information while featuring other aspects of a situation, perhaps manipulatively.

Detective fiction addresses myth and rhetoric by investigating a claim or story and testing it against the clues, the evidence. Spy stories do some of this as well; but they do it more in the manner of westerns, where the cowboy tracks down the rustler who has absconded with a big part of the herd. Tracking figures importantly, if subtly, in even the earliest work by le Carré. All tracking depends on spies or other trackers reading the signs within their situations. What they can recognize as signs depends on a prior knowledge of how the situation should seem. For this to work in an international setting, the spy must know a lot, in order to work from a large base of informed expectations about a wide range of situations. The secret agent notices the clues, patterns them, and then interprets their significance. For the spy, many clues come in the form of talk; and much of the interpretative information concerns ordinary patterns of talk, which is to say, myths. Likewise the spy must know how to twist talk and myth to advantage, by lying to omit, misinform, or disinform. And the spy must know the myths to invoke persuasion, that the mis- and dis-information may appeal to the people to be misled. Of course, Control manages to do all these things with (and to) Alec.

Spy stories display bureaucracy and the national-security state as organized misrepresentation by lying and other means. As the Control complaint about lying agents may imply, the runners for agents have to expect to be treated as a part of the world of spy versus spy. It is not just spies for one side versus spies for the other side; it is each and every spy against each and every spy. The distrust, deception, and cheating happen in every direction, in almost every relationship.

Connotations of the world agent are telling in the bureaucratic connection of orders and obedience, deniability and blackmail. (All

are modes of manipulative talk.) The agent is a mere means, a mere tool or instrument for accomplishing what western civilization regards as the will of another – say, Control. Agent is also our word for actor. We westerners say that we are "free agents." But then we drop the "free," and we (mis)understand that an agent pure and simple is someone permitted and able to act independently.

In the twilight zone between the modern poles of pure personal freedom and pure interpersonal determination stands what the study of international relations has been developing of late as accounts of "rational choice." In its terms, "agency theory" involves specifying how delegated authority and limits on choice can operate to extend one person's scope of action by extending a sphere of control over others who serve as its designated delegates. We westerners want to understand politics as re-presentational; and so we want to treat political actors as our agents, our operatives, our representatives. To represent can be to receive a considerable latitude about what to decide or do, though, and that is what is at issue in cold-war stories.

America had the OSS and then the CIA, the Soviet Union had the KGB, Britain has had its own Secret Service. Le Carré's insider talk of "the Circus" is a wonderful way to regard such spy institutions. These become "agencies" in a very peculiar sense that can escape the western politics of representation and the rational-choice accounts of agency. They become highly autonomous operators; worse, they end up becoming the tails that wag the dogs. They are supposed to be governmental means; they are supposed to be instruments of the people, to protect us from international intrigues. To impressive extents, however, they end up conducting their own foreign and military policies. As spy stories trace, they sometimes drive or even run the official foreign and military policies nominally administered by such institutions as the State Department or the Foreign Ministry. The Iran-Contra Affair, for example, displayed all these dimensions.

What spy stories try to do, therefore, is track the processes of international intrigue. The genre goes about this in ways meant to give us a sense of the bureaucratic and reputational politics of activities that might seem far away from ordinary people, but come home to them in important ways. The genre knows that international intrigue is a realm of lies, myths, rhetorical misrepresentations, and the like. Indeed it glories in the room for further myth-making that

this creates. When the conditions are ripe, the genre's myths of international intrigue become insightful as criticisms and suggestions. Theorists and practitioners of international politics stand to learn more than a little from paying the popular genre of spy stories careful attention.

Notes

1 See John S. Nelson: "Stories of Science and Politics: Some Rhetorics of Political Research." In John S. Nelson, Allan Megill, and D. N. McCloskey, (eds.): *The Rhetoric of the Human Sciences*. Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987, pp. 198-220.
2 Len Deighton: *Spy Hook*. New York, Ballantine Books, 1988, p. 223; italics added.
3 John le Carré: *The Night Manager.* New York, Ballantine Books, 1993, pp. 77-78.
4 Timothy Garton Ash: "The Real le Carré." *New Yorker*, 75, 3, March 15, 1999, pp. 36-45, on p. 45.
5 Stuart Woods: *Deep Lie*. Avon Books, New York, 1986, p. 59.
6 John le Carré: *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*. New York, Bantam Books, 1963, p. 15.
7 See Guy Debord: *Society of the Spectacle*. Detroit, Red and Black, (1967), 1977; Jean Baudrillard: *Simulations*. Paul Foss, Paul Patton, and Philip Beitchman, trans., New York, Semiotext(e), 1983; and Murray Edelman: *Constructing the Political Spectacle.* Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1988.
8 See Norberto Bobbio: *The Future of Democracy.* Richard Bellamy, ed., Roger Griffin, trans., Minneapolis, University of Minnesota Press, (1984), 1987.
9 Craig Thomas: *A Hooded Crow*. New York, HarperCollins, 1992, p. 259.
10 See Arendt: *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New York, World, enlarged second edition, 1958, pp. 185-266.
11 See Mary Shelley: *Frankenstein*. New York, Bantam Books, 1818, (1981).
12 See Jacques Ellul: *The Technological Society*. John Wilkinson, trans., New York, Random House, 1964; *Propaganda*. Konrad Kellen and Jean Lerner, trans., New York, Knopf, 1971.
13 See Scott Shuger: "Paperback Fighter," *Washington Monthly,* 21, 10, November, 1989, pp. 10-18.
14 Le Carré: *The Spy Who Came In from the Cold*, p. 6.

15 See John Grisham: *The Firm.* New York, Island Books, 1991.

16 See David Sudnow: *The Ways of the Hand*. London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1978.

17 Le Carré: *The Night Manager,* p. 62.

18 See John le Carré: *Tinker, Tailor, Soldier, Spy.* New York, Bantam Books, 1974; *The Honourable Schoolboy.* New York, Bantam Books, 1977; *Smiley's People.* New York, Bantam Books, 1980. More recently, le Carré continues in fine form in: *Our Game.* New York, Knopf, 1995; *The Tailor of Panama.* New York, Knopf, 1996; *Single and Single.* New York, Knopf, 1999.

19 See Cawelti and Rosenberg: *The Spy Story*, pp. 101-124, 156-186, and 231. Also see Graham Greene: *This Gun for Hire.* New York, Viking Press, 1936; *The Confidential Agent.* New York, Viking Press, 1939; *The Power and the Glory.* Viking Press, 1940; *The Ministry of Fear.* New York, Viking Press, 1943; *The Heart of the Matter.* Viking Press, 1948; *The Quiet American.* Viking Press, 1956; *Our Man in Havana.* New York, Viking Press, 1958; *The Honorary Consul.* New York, Viking Press, 1977; *The Human Factor.* New York, Viking Press, 1978.

20 The character is Rex Goodhew, a telling name in this connection. See le Carré: *The Night Manager*, pp. 61ff.

21 See G. W. F. Hegel: *Philosophy of Right.* T. M. Knox, trans., Oxford, Oxford University Press, (1821), 1952. Also see Shlomo Avineri: *Hegel's Theory of the Modern State.* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972.

22 See John Locke: *Second Treatise of Government.* C. B. Macpherson, ed., Indianapolis, Hackett, (1690), 1980.

23 See Robert Nozick: A*narchy, State, and Utopia*. New York, Basic Books, 1974.

24 See Michel Foucault: *Discipline and Punish.* Alan Sheridan, trans., New York, Random House, (1977), 1979; Thomas L. Dumm: *Democracy and Punishment.* Madison, University of Wisconsin Press, 1987.

25 See Evgeny Zamiatin: *We, Gregory Zilboorg*. trans., New York, Dutton, 1924; George Orwell, Orwell's *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, Irving Howe, ed., New York, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, (1963), second edition, 1982.

26 See Jim Collins: *Uncommon Cultures.* New York, Routledge, 1989.

27 John le Carré: *The Secret Pilgrim*. New York, Ballantine Books, 1990, p. 11.

28 Le Carré: T*he Spy Who Came In from the Cold*, p. 6.

Risto Eräsaari

WHY RECOGNITION OF CONTIGENCY IS NOT SURRENDERING TO CONTINGENCY?

Introduction

The concept of contingency – for the most part understood as chance, opportunity, or problem of "*Spielraum*", and not as some sort of "endism", corrosive message, or bottom of hope – is a regulative idea, one that conceptually refers to something that is neither necessary (inevitable) nor impossible (unthinkable). Because it is a regulative idea (or a conducting concept), it has to be understood as playing a role that is at once unattainable, structuring and motivating. Looking at contingent chances or possibilities in the world is to get bogged down in the world's diversity, pursuing determinations of what are possible orientations and thinkable trends, and grasping grounds for particularized understanding. Contingency as a regulative idea is seen in this paper as something that might be relevant for diagnostic strategy: namely, how to find orientation in the contemporary world (see Lepenies 1998), even how to exist, how to find intelligibility, perspectives and visions beyond the boundaries of

normal scientific communication or discussion.[1] More precisely, I will discuss three aspects of the concept of contingency as a regulative idea in the diagnosis of our time: first, the motivational background of the *discovery* of contingency; second, the *perspective* of contingency as the eigenvalue of *Zeitdiagnose*, and third, the role of the non-differentiated (reduction to unity, continuity of being, the essential shared nature of phenomena, etc.; see Gauchet 1997) in the effort to *eliminate* contingency, or as self-defence against surrendering to or being captured by it.

The Discovery of Contingency

The Japanese philosopher Shuzo Kuki (see Light 1987, 21-23), who belongs to the early history of existential phenomenology, introduced exciting new concepts in existential philosophy in the late twenties and early thirties. Not only did he write about art, aesthetics and ethics, but his work culminated in efforts to produce a systematic treatment of contingency. His work also had some influence on Sartre, who felt in his student years felt that the notion of contingency had been neglected: "All Marxist thought culminated in a world of necessity; there was no contingency, only determinism, dialectics; there were no contingent facts .... I thought that if I had discovered contingency in films and exits into the street, it was because I was meant to discover it" (Light 1987, 20-21). Contingency was the topic of Kuki's doctoral dissertation, of which his 1935 work *Guzensei no Mondai* (The Problem of Contingency) was the considerable elaboration.

Kuki thought that we need not linger over re-entry of necessity by way of destiny. Contingency and finality can be reconciled. This means that such conditions as nihilism or nihility should not be taken as a simple negation of or the antithesis of being. One has to trace the "true emptiness" that is not posited as something outside of and other than "being", but which is to be realized as something united to being (anticipation of and liberation from time; the order of our experience). In his systematic treatment Kuki made substantial efforts to define contingency in three different modalities: categorical, hy-

pothetical, and disjunctive. Contingency is basically revealed as the metaphysical absolute, and goal of the work is the derivation of an ethic – the *interiorization of contingency*. He interprets Heideggerian temporality (possibility/chance as a coming towards) through the logical nature of possibility that lies in the future. All this speaks in favour of the interiorization of contingency: "That nothing takes place in vain signifies my future possibility of interiorizing the very thou conditioning me" (see Light 1987, 24). Even the almost impossible possibility becomes reality in contingency, and this contingency, ever giving rise to new contingencies, leads on toward necessity.

Contingency thus becomes a means of problematizating chances and opportunities. Contingency means freeing possibilities from simple necessity and simple reality. This formulation distancies itself from the conventional approaches of confronting reality: it becomes separated both from the *assertoric* (the power of the real and the destiny of the nonreal), and from the *apodictical* (the determinism of necessity and the inevitability of impossibilities). Kuki understands the question as not about playing with the concept *of* contingent possibilities but *with* contingent possibilities. Thus Kuki comes to emphasize the radical meaning of contingency mainly in the area of Lebensphilosophie: a sense of eternal destiny or necessity can be given to contingency, containing nothingness or emptiness in itself, whose destiny is ever to lose itself only by vitalizing the present by means of the future.

Kuki seems to think that contingency is an inevitable condition of concrete reality in the domain of theory. As far as action or activity is concerned, Kuki's only receipt perhaps lies in the attitude or horizon of vitalism, i.e. in constructing an order of life in which one's encounters are not allowed to take place in vain. Thus perhaps the validity of Kuki's contingency lies mainly in traditional aesthetic problems, especially poetic forms where he finds more or less pure systems of the destiny of language and interiorates, and conditions them with contingency. For example, Zygmunt Bauman's (1996, 51) discussion of ethics and morality in the age of contingency, and other writers efforts to recognize contingent chances as something that leave room for manoeuvre and allowing (see Oakeshott), or even as emancipation of necessities or the circularity of necessities (see Luhmann 1997, 143, 140) may in terms of their motivation grow

out of similar to interests Kuki's, but direct their concepts to completely new understanding of the modern socio-cultural world.

The discovery of contingency has to do with the unhappiness of defining being as a triad of necessity (what must be the case), possibility (what may/can be the case) and of reality (what is the case). They always appear in combination with one another, and their elaborations seem to take us to rationalist ontologies and decisionist strategies, in other words specifications that can only be done in their contingency, or that are open to the Kantian subjective necessity of the faculty of judgement. There is a discreet silence in the face of the demand for understanding the trend or the basis of a situation or the nature of time.

Contingency as a Perspective

It is important to notice the tension between an effort to achieve self-creation by *recognition* of contingency and an effort to achieve universality by the *transcendence* of contingency (see Rorty 1989, 25). This kind of tension has pervaded diagnostic thinking and analyses since the great nineteenth century thinkers, and perhaps particularly since the turn of the century. There are those who break with the older thinkers and see freedom as the recognition of contingency. This can be seen as an effort to detach insistence on historical reduction to unity and continuity of being, as well as essentially shared nature of context of action and community. Recognition of contingency is thus identified with a strong perspectivist or critical rather than scientific analysis, which traditionally is seen as a finder of possibilities, alternatives or choices, or what is regarded as the only means delivering valid knowledge for orientation in the world.

To boldly defend the position of acknowledging contingency means to find oneself in an odd, but exciting situation where the attempt to see life steadily is based on reflection and contemplation instead of the permanent grounding of life. While defending this position, the contingency figure may be even experienced with certain dangerous moments of exaggerating the role of the temporal and the transient. This is the case because it seems to bring self-creation so far forward

that it blinkers the condition of the possibility of experience. No wonder that in diagnostical discussion like in tendency literature and thesis novel (see Habermas 1979, 17-21), in analyses of new layers of theoretical assumptions (see Kusch 1991, xi-xii), in epochal analyses that try to trace the specific nature of time, or in sociological diagnostic thinking that tries to locate trends or orientation discourses, a comprehensive critique of our time is often accompanied by the tones and postulations of actual being, the potential lucidity of knowledge, the potentialities of the self, etc. The individual is often represented as something accustoming himself to being double-faced and double-tongued in order to exhibit the universality and necessity of the individual and contingent.

Diagnostic thinking is caught in quarrel between the analytical and the perspectivistic, between great continuities and great ruptures, and often finding itself in trying to work out compromising terms on which analysis of presence might surrender to recognition of challenges. The concept of contingency can be made to appear as an effort to specify both the contingency of modernity and the contingency of expectations and hopes in relation to it (see Luhmann 1992, 93-128). But universality of contingency is brought up to legitimatize transcendence of contingency, because one might get more satisfaction out of finding traces of orientation which applied to all human beings. As Rorty (1989, 20) writes: "Think of finding such an impress as being the discovery of the universal conditions of human existence, the great continuities – the permanent, ahistorical, context of human life. This is what the priests once claimed to have done."

If someone will explain to us the ultimate locus of power, the real nature of reality, the actuality of the possibility of experience, he would also inform us what we really are, and how are we shaped or produced. He would exhibit the character or nature which had been made to appear in all of us. This would not be random or blind, because it would not be a matter of chance, or a mere contingency. It would be necessary, essential, and constitutive of what is to have the potential to be a human. It would give us a structure and a framework, in other words, the acknowledgement of that very necessity, the self-consciousness of our essence. Within it we are asked to go beyond accidental appearance, open contextualism or relativist

spatiotemporalism which reduce us to mere contingent circumstance, to learn to apprehend the context in which we necessarily live. This would give us a mind like a mirror image of the universe itself (see Mauss 1989, 19), "a lading-list which so to speak was a copy of the universe's own list" (Rorty 1989, 26). What in other words counted as existing, as possible, or as important for us, would be what really is possible or important.

The diagnosis of our time could, with the recognition of contingent chances, acquire another view without the slightest need to be ready to abandon the idea of discovering the causes of who we are, where we come from, what we are waiting for or what awaits us. We do not even have to leave the job of tracing factors of orientation that have affected our life. What becomes a challenge to such diagnosis is becoming aware of whether it is a process of *discovery*, or a process of *recognition*. In other words, are we coming to know a true reality which was out there all the time awaiting us, or are we stressing self-knowledge as self-creation? The process of coming to know oneself is a process of confronting one's contingency, the not inevitable and the not impossible, the chance that is determined by neither of them (see Gauchet 1997).

We would then deny the existence of the universe's lading list (Rorty 1989), the already-existing orientation discourse (Gauchet 1997), the tacitly renewed order of things (Taylor 1997), and the great continuities sustaining our way of thinking. We would instead stress the ways in which we become inscribed to that reality, the creation of one's mind through creating one's own language, or inventing a new language – that (as Rorty points out) actually is to think up some new metaphors. Jorge Louis Borges (1964, 51) makes an interesting remark here on the perplexity confronted in this kind of situation by citing to imagining "hereditary work, transmitted from father to son, in which each new individual adds a chapter or corrects with pious care the pages of his elders". This is not a satisfactory solution to the problem of recognizing possible futures, because in all fictional works, whenever a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others. But in the fiction of Ts'ui Pen, he simultaneously chooses all of them. In this way, he creates diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork.

This sort of attempt is not undergirded by evolutionary or dialectical theory about inevitable or impossible progress, nor by unspecified claims for social or economic (pre)determinism. To stress the role of human freedom and fortuitous contingency is to stress that they happen within a certain fixed set of a priori possibilities showing that nothing has to happen, but that only certain kinds of thing can happen. These possibilities derive from the circumstances of the insertion or orientation of subjectivity into the world. The moment of contingency becomes an actual perspective, because there is the element of not inscribing in somebody else's description of oneself, not to executing a previously prepared program and not to orientating oneself according to a copy or a replica. This means that they also are detached from the burden of premetaphysical "first thinking" with its universal experience of the presence without names, without time behind the time, the pious persistence of being (see Theunissen 1998). Nowhere else has this burden perhaps has a better characterization than in Samuel Beckett's *L'Innommable* (The Unnameable): there is complete disintegration; no "I", no "have", no "being", no nominative, no accusative, no verb (see Bair 1990, 422-423).

The human subject orientates towards the other, reflexively thinking as if from another person's perspective. Orientation here means not simply symbolic purposes of every particular person, or redescribing particular persons, objects, or situations. Recognition of contingency rather than of necessity as the decisive element in orientation has a double meaning here, namely the contingency of orientation itself, and the contingency of expectations concerning orientation.

Human subjects are collectively situated in time and may orientate themselves either to the unalterable givenness of the past, or to the immediacy of the present, or else to the open horizon of the future. To bring orientation to action and thinking is a very special case. Even if we can convincingly demonstrate that we are in a crisis of orientation that seems to affect all the guiding principles of our cultural and social activity, it is difficult to express, and still not clear what the crisis is about, as Lepenies (1998, 18) points out. A self is a tissue of contingencies rather than a potentially well-ordered system of faculties. We can then take the next step to see how human sub-

jects are driven to speculate about the invisible and yet unavoidably implied undifferentiated whole of reality.

Overstepping Contingency: The Return of the Undifferentiated?

When looking at the contingency of selfhood there are three specific moments that may be seen as mechanisms of self-defence against overwhelming contingency or against being taken over by contingency: one inhabiting our thought process (a); one dominating the processes of the imagination (b); and one controlling the forms of the problem of the self (c).

Contingency of thought process? A special thought content, perhaps a reminder of what used to be the explicit experience of the Other, continues to provide us with intellectual objects, perhaps in the guise of discoveries that reveal the motifs that necessitated the actual conflict between freedom and necessity (see Levinas 1993, 9). It is nonthematized, and hence extremely difficult to pinpoint. It is used in a supportive manner as a secret, decisive source of orientation discourse. These are the reasons why Gauchet (1997, 201) thinks we ought to call it the *nondifferentiated*. In his cartographic schema Gauchet explains that we are just taken into an understanding of the orders of reality in how it merely splits up into appearance and truth, sensible and intelligible, immanence and transcendence, etc. He explains that part of the world is given to immediate perception, and something else is presented when we take into account its nondifferentiated global nature, about which the only legitimate statement we can make is *that it is*. This other part is something beyond the visible and beyond sensible qualities, infinite networks of distinct objects, actual differences, etc.

Gauchet (ibid., 201) speaks about a thought content that in a constitutive mode works by apprehending the real, that continues to provide us with religious type of backrest, but "which does not intrinsically produce faith, does not involve any particular conviction, and does not wish to be extended in sacral terms". Forms of eastern spiritualism he mentions as a special case, because they contain no

theistic implications and no reference to separate subjectivity. Thus the void or the nothing they conjure up is in a good position to express the pure experience of thought. Nothing and indeterminacy are completely continuous qualities (cf. the burgeoning literature on "endism" and "beyondism") in helping us to escape from belief in plural phenomena, as well as the illusion of our own separate existence. Perhaps this could be considered the mystical pole of the nondifferentiated.

The operative, positive pole of the nondifferentiated can be seen at work in modern science. It clearly postulates the objectivity of phenomena, but simultaneously disqualifies any direct sensory observation of them in favour of investigating the object's real properties, which it locates in the invisible. An example of transition from direct knowledge to indirect knowledge, or from direct to unintended consequences, appears to be the increasing enthusiasm for the language of "beyond" by social science writers, where "beyond" does not necessarily need to be interpreted as some higher, deeper, or less superficial factor affecting our life and institutions, but can also be seen as the hereafter, something at the back of, or at a distance from appearances, thus slightly mystical and thus perhaps also rhetorically effective.[2]

If this sort of anticipation of certainty became installed at the very heart of the world, something more certain than the contingent world would surely appear. In other words, here the categories of the nondifferentiated play the role of trying to reach the unattainable, structuring and motivating. In the most extreme case only one basic mystery to be understood is left, namely, why there is something rather than nothing. The basic notions sustained by this source can in some cases be "flesh", "fire", "body", "risk", "emotion", etc., especially if the core argument remains unspecified. They then merely represent another name for this sustaining nondifferentation guaranteeing behind the apparent differences and distinctions between things. As Gauchet (1997, 202) clearly sees, this does not disqualify them: they correspond to an authentic requirement of thought. However we would be in a better position if we recognized the diagnostic characteristic of this requirement rather than kept on conforming to conventional concerns about great continuities.

Contingency of imaginative processes? The aesthetic experience is

amenable to similar interpretation, insofar as it can be related to a primordial (orthogenetic) source, which in turn renews the anticipation of the continuing harmonious existence of a relation to the world. The question is here about the immanent possibility of aesthetic experience – "an experience of difference making this involvement meaningful for us by showing it to us in an unfamiliar light, by presenting it as other, an opening onto unknown mystery" (Gauchet 1997, 203). This is an experience of a special kind of difference which in the premodern world does not appear as such, but was absorbed in and regulated by religious experience. Through an aesthetic experience something completely other makes its way in the familiarity of things.

Thus it is clear that the aesthetic experience can also be radically other (cf. the classic examples of Peter Weiss), and can in fact become a subject strategy for recognising and appropriating the opposite, namely the differentiated, the contingency of the world. This is, generally speaking, the case in for example Wolfgang Welsch's (1991, 43-52) account of the reactualization of aesthetic thinking: aesthetic thinking becomes realistic thinking, our "first philosophy" becomes aesthetically embellished, the subject strategy itself becomes as aesthetic, etc. For Gauchet, on the other hand, the question is about manifestation of what is normally hidden from the senses and protected from human grasp, and it is in this sense that art "is the continuation of the sacred by other means" (Gauchet 1997, 203).

This means that the world itself begins to seen other, to disclose the special kind of depth that becomes the object of a special quest (referring only to itself, operating for itself, becoming independent of previous content, etc.). The quest for meaning, understanding and interpretation acquires a special dominance, and all registers and diverse possibilities have to be explored within the spheres of our fragmented everyday life. This of course means certain detachment form routines: intensified experience, passion and dreamlike absorption into the imaginary, etc. where the ambivalent and the uncertain may appear as contingent possibilities which become emancipated from the circularity and the determination of necessities.

But within this the perspectivism or its anticipations also become interconnected with the other deep inside: the discovery of hidden worlds or hidden truths, constructing new mirrors of otherness, con-

cerning new futures, bringing completely forgotten things of the past to life again for us. It is easy to see that alongside this sort of thinking there always is the possibility of grasping the truth of the aesthetic experience as a nondifferentiated unity, as achieved sensory universality through the aesthetic transcendence of contingency. Probably there is constant struggle in these matters, a struggle that is the eigenvalue of the times. The interface between the process of reducing the world to sameness in the intelligible activity and the process where it becomes revealed as other in sensory activity is itself radically changing.

Recognising and tracing of mechanisms and places through which we are in transit has become an object of diagnostic subject strategy, where special events (cf. the constructive differentiating and dedifferentiating of the influences of the media), normative horizons (cf. the work of life styles and life politics) have become special sources of orientation as well as channels through which orientation itself may take place. Within all this it is not so easy to tell the difference between actual recognition of orientation discourse and a renegotiation of the necessary elements of a orientation discourse. The former is of course more open to acknowledgement seeking use of oscillatory mechanisms and places and tolerating groundlessness, fragmentation, deceptiveness, etc. Contingency consciousness has so to speak become a built-in mechanism of the mentality which expects that one's encounters, constructions, etc. should not take place in vain. The latter, on the other hand, operates in a more pragmatic way, and there is not much room for the issue of, and still less problematization with contingent possibilities. This is because the reconstruction of what is to be done, or reconstruction of a new balance between risk and security, freedom and necessity, changes and the guaranteeing framework, etc. inevitably means adopting a certain universalistic approach, based on the transcendence of contingency.

Contingency of problems of the self? This is the experience of the problems that we are for ourselves, of the variants of the question of being a subject. Individual beings uncomfortably experience as problematic what the traditional world has presented to us as resolved (see Mauss 1989). This is why the questions of orientation, the worlds of faith, the recognisability of possibilities, groundlessness, ambiguity and ambivalence are solved no longer, but are simply reconstructed

in different ways. These wisdoms hold a mirror before us, in which we see our concerns and uncertainties, but presented in a form that does not give us much support for personal navigation. They have diagnostic value for consideration of orientation, but it is impossible to follow them. Perhaps this is why individuals are led by their peculiar concern with the transcendental: "The greater the degree of individualization, the greater problem of the self, and hence the greater potential interest in an age when one knew how to deal with this dreadful uncertainty that fills us", as Gauchet (1997, 205) concludes.

At the same time individuals become unable to subscribe to any of the earlier belief systems that seemed to offer the chance of transcending contingency, and seem to find themselves in an unstable compromise between acknowledging the problematic and choosing the solution, between detachment and presence, between seeing their life at a distance and seeing their life within its immediacy, between provisionality and the profoundness of their belief systems.

Instead of the often insecure and disappointing chances of positive freedom, the methods of neutralizing the self come to the fore. All can calmly present becoming assured of their necessity due to their role, position, place, etc. all of which at least somehow place them in a preordained socio-cultural framework. In this sense nothing could lead them to ask what is he or she doing here. Personal contingency is thus neutralized. In this sense you cannot be marginalized or excluded. Mere ascription takes care of you. There is no divergence from your own position. The concerns and problems should then also be neutralized, cemented, harmonized, etc. instead of activating one to choose the solution, or choosing to tolerate ambivalence and indifference. You just stay in your position: no reforms, no new thinking, etc. is needed, or as Gauchet (1997, 206) puts it, "The order of things does not come from you; all you have to do is to piously renew the order without raising the issue of your difference from it."

Birth and death, beginning and end have been easier through this order, which seems to signalize universal advice. You need not to jump to oscillatory movement, ambivalence, rootlessness and fragmentation of the world where uncertain change reminds you of the double contingency of your selfhood (see Rorty 1989). Within a world that constantly remains the same, thinking of birth is immaterial.

Likewise thinking about death: things will continue to be done as fully as you were able to do it during your presence among the living. All in all, neutralizing personal contingency becomes a means that supplies magical understanding of events, and of threats and dangers. As Gauchet (1997, 206) notices, we are then "confronted with a perfect system for both 'necessitating' and 'desubjectivating' the self". Whether recognition of contingency could be discussed together with "struggle for recognition" (see Honneth 1996), in other words, with distinct forms of moral harm and respect, which must play its own role in the evaluation and assessment of social change, may be seen as a new field where the discussion could be continued. We would then find ourselves discussing presuppositions of the self-relation, and the ways in which they are established or maintained in patterns of recognition within the family, legal institutions, and solidarity.

Notes

[1] Diagnosis of the time or our time (*Zeitdiagnose*) may be seen as a *seismographical value* for diagnostic consideration (Habermas 1979, 17-21), as an effort to bring home the *authority of the present* (see Gauchet 1997, 200), as an *analysis of causes and reasons* for the present situation (see Niethammer 1994), as an *epochal analysis* or an ontology of the present (see Kusch 1991), as an interpretation of the *intellectual atmosphere* (like Die geistige Situation der Zeit by Karl Jaspers), or as a critical interpretation of *trends and normative coordinates* in contemporary society (Beck & Giddens & Lash 1995). The effort to activate a contingency perspective is not the diagnosis itself, but a prior understanding of the regulative principles.

[2] Cf. expressions like "beyond the lamentation about the erosion of values" (Ulrich Beck), "beyond left and right" (Anthony Giddens), "beyond despair and conflict" (Gianni Vattimo), "beyond this Millennium" (Manuel Castells), "beyond normal divides" (Jürgen Link), "beyond being and authority" (Jeffrey Librett), and "beyond socialism and liberalism" (Göran Therborn).

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ARTICLES

Mikko Salmela

THE FIGHT FOR EUROPEAN CULTURE

Finnish Philosophers' Perspectives on Totalitarianism during World War II

Introduction

Eino Kaila (1890-1958), J.E. Salomaa (1891-1960), and Erik Ahlman (1892-1952) were the most prominent Finnish philosophers in the period between the two world wars. They all viewed World War II as a fight for the future of European culture. Still, they disagreed on whether or not totalitarian political ideologies fit this invaluable cultural heritage. Kaila first turned to Germany as the stronghold of European culture against the aggressive Soviet communism. He also suggested that there are essential affinities between the modern holistic field theory and totalitarian ideologies. Finally, he embraced the view that Erik Ahlman had adopted in the early 1930's and sustained until the end of the war, a view that communism, fascism, and national socialism were equal threats to the basic values of European culture: individualism, liberalism, humanism, and democracy. Salomaa defended parliamentary democracy throughout the war. Yet his philosophy of education during the war had

some totalitarian undertones. The totalitarian affiliations of Kaila and Salomaa remained, however, politically inspired and philosophically superficial.

Eino Kaila

Eino Kaila is perhaps the most influential philosopher in Finland in the 20th century. Kaila acted as Professor of Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Helsinki in 1930-48, and was later nominated to The Finnish Academy. Kaila distinguished himself in both philosophy and psychology, and his academic legacy set the course for an entire generation of Finnish scholars, both scientists and humanists. As an outstanding scholar and a most accomplished lecturer, Kaila conveyed fresh ideas and approaches to Finland. These included experimental psychology, Gestalt theory, the psychology of personality, philosophical and mathematical logic, and logical empiricism, all of which merged within the broader mainstream of analytic philosophy after World War II. Kaila thus became the originator of analytic philosophy in Finland, even though he disliked the label 'analytic'. The antipathy for this term sprang from his lifelong search for a synthetic philosophy that would unify the findings and theories of modern science.[1]

The Threat of the Soviet Union and the Pan-European Promise

Eino Kaila regarded the Soviet Union as the gravest threat to European high culture. This was a belief generally held among the Finnish bourgeoisie and intelligentsia between the two World Wars. This belief motivated and directed Kaila's political thinking throughout the 1930's and during World War II. Kaila first leaned on the Pan-Europe-movement that was founded and headed by the Austrian count Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi.[2] This movement had as its principal aim was to preserve the world domination by the white race and its cultural hegemony. World War I had already broken this domi-

nation, and the process was escalating all the time. It was therefore urgent for European nations to settle their mutual conflicts and to unite in order to defend themselves against common enemies: a new world war, general impoverishment, and rising bolshevism. Coudenhove-Kalergi claimed that if the European countries could not agree voluntarily on a customs union and an association of states, a different kind of European union would ensue after a Soviet invasion.[3] These allusions to the protection of European culture from a Soviet threat also appealed to Eino Kaila. He emphasized that it was especially vital for Finns to awaken to European awareness, because the next world war could bereave Finland's national sovereignty in the same way as the previous one granted its opportunity to gain it.[4]

The development of international politics was a great disappointment for Kaila, whose dream of a European union was crushed before his eyes. Kaila cynically concluded that visions of supranational associations with real power have turned out to be illusions. Nevertheless, he admitted that "the course of development cannot be denied and one must yield in the face of facts."[5] A kind of yielding can perhaps be seen in Kaila's participation at the 1938 summer festival of the *Nordische Gesellschaft* -society in Lübeck. The official purpose of this society was to coordinate the cultural cooperation between Germany and the Nordic Countries. Yet, the society had acquired a propagandistic reputation on the grounds of its former activity.

It has been asserted that Eino Kaila belonged to the antifascist and socially conservative, elderly Finnish intelligentsia that was worried about the totalitarian ideas that attracted youth in the 1930's.[6] Nevertheless, there is no doubt that Eino Kaila was among the majority of Finnish intellectuals who embraced German orientation during World War II. The traditional sympathies of Finnish intellectuals for Germany and German culture may provide a partial explanation. Little was known about the new Nazi Germany and so powerful were the positive images attached to the classic Germany of Kant, Goethe, and Beethoven. This, together with a recent memory of companionship-in-arms between Germany and the White army in the Finnish Civil War in 1918 explains, that the new Germany inherited the former German affiliations, even if the intellectuals did not have strong or particular sympathies for national socialism itself.[7] Furthermore, even if they were aware of serious restrictions of civil rights,

antisemitism, or even concentration camps, Germany was still considered to be a lesser evil when compared to the Soviet Union. This motivation became understandable especially after the Soviet attack on Finland in 1939-40.

Germany as the Saviour of European Culture

Concern for European civilization and Finnish national sovereignty were the touchstones of Eino Kaila´s political thought during World War II. Kaila feared that Europe has finally drifted into a mortal power struggle that was destroying its traditional high culture. And if the culture was ruined, the whole civilization would be gone: "science will boil down to mere technology, philosophy to official propaganda, and justice to phrases."[8] This gloomy prognosis is quoted from a newspaper article with a telling title, "Culture as religion" (*Kultur som religion*), an article that was published in Sweden in January of 1941. In this paper, Kaila outlines a suggestive portrait of the three-millennia-old "temple" of European high culture. This temple brings together the Hellenic aspiration of virtuous life and objective knowledge, the Christian ideal of love of ones neighbour, with the modern progress of science and technology. Together these elements build up a unique whole with immeasurable value. "*That* [temple] is the reason for living on earth, *that* makes the life worth living," confessed Kaila in a semi-religious manner.[9] He also emphasized the individualistic aspects of European mentality. "Higher life of spirit cannot be anonymous collective product of masses, but it has been created by individuals with unrestricted personal freedom of research and judgement."[10] It must have been obvious for Kaila that the Nazi Germany had renounced the ideal of individualism together with many other pillars of his temple of culture. Notwithstanding, Kaila did not hesitate to take sides with Germany when it launched its attack against the state whose offences against the European tradition Kaila deemed even worse, the Soviet Union.

Kaila's contribution to the German orientation in Finland consists of one treatise and three articles. The historical treatise "Three hundred years of academic life in Finland" (*Kolmesataa vuotta suomalaista yliopistoelämää*, 1940) was published in honor the 300th anniver-

sary of the University of Helsinki. It was first published in German, and only later in French and Finnish translations, and it was sent to all headmasters of German universities. The reason for this procedure was the disappointment the Finns had felt after the defeat of Winter War. They supposed that Germans had rejected Finnish requests for help because they were ignorant that Finland was an inalienable part of the West. It was, therefore, Kaila's purpose to show that this indeed was the case: that the history of Finnish culture abounds with German influences and that the Finns belonged in every way, both culturally and racially, to Western Europe; not to the Slavonic East. This legitimation of the Fenno-German *Schicksalsgemeinschaft* through historical and cultural connections also became Kaila's self-appointed task also after the outbreak of the Finnish Continuation War in June 1941. It was in this war that Finland fought as a companion-in-arms with Germany against the Soviet Union.

Kaila published three articles in Germany during World War II. *Der finnische Mensch* (1942) echoes the contents of the earlier treatise, with some rhetoric allusions to the Nazist ideas of *Lebensraum* and leader principle. *Zur Idee einer Europäischen Friedensordnung* (1941) that was published soon after the outbreak of the Continuation War is even bolder in terms of leanings on Nazi ideology. Kaila begins with an indirect condemnation of the League of Nations. Snellman, says Kaila, would have considered such organization that claims for supranational rights without having respective powers of enforcement as some superpowers' masked instrument.[11] Kaila also confirms Snellman's prediction of the rising importance of nationality in history: the new national socialism is one expression of this trend. Kaila even offers a sketch of his own for national socialism in its "wide European sense".

> Es heisst, das Nationalprozip *weiter* zu entwickeln, so dass aus der Volksgemeinschaft eine organische Einheit entsteht, in der es für eine "soziale Frage" keinen Platz mehr gibt. Es besagt, den Idealismus, dass heisst den Realismus der *ganzheitlichen* Betrachtungsweise auch im Gebiet des sozialpolitischen Denkens restlos zum Geltung zu bringen, im Gegensatz zu dem Materialismus des marxistischen Denkens das auf eine kurzsichtige Weise nur *einen* Faktor des grossen Werdens, den wirtschaftlichen, zu erfassen vermag. Es heisst die Besitzlosen zum Besitzenden zu machen und jedem Volksgenossen zu dem Bewusstsein zu verhelfen,

> dass der wertvollste Besitz von allem das heilige Erbe der dreitausendjährigen europäischen Kultur ist.[12]

Kaila saw that this kind of Europe is taking shape by the power of Germany. He even regarded Germany as the only stronghold that could save Europe once England has betrayed European civilization by allying with the anti-cultural Soviet Union. This "unholy allience" motivated Kaila´s strong sympathy for Nazi Germany. "*In hoc signo vincis*. Unter diesem Zeichen wirst du siegen, Europa – oder du wirst aufhören zu sein," he concluded.[13]

These quotations show that Kaila had at least political grounds to support Germany in the beginning of the Continuation War. Finland and Germany fought together against the Soviet Union and it was necessary to strengthen and foster spiritual ties between the two nations. This task fell naturally on Finnish intellectuals whose German sympathies had traditionally been high. Kaila's contributions to this task did not, as such, differ much from the treatises of Jalmari Jaakkola, V.A. Koskenniemi, and Väinö Auer, and Eino Jutikkala that were published at the same time.[14] But did Kaila really believe that the national socialist Third Reich could and would secure the three-thousand-year-old heritage European high culture?

Totalitarianism and the Weltanschauung *of the 20th Century*

It is impossible to determine Kaila's precise philosophical involvement with national socialism, or totalitarianism in general. Still, there are some rather strong allusions to totalitarian, or at least proto-totalitarian, ideas in his wartime texts. The problem is that Kaila does not subscribe to these ideas directly. Instead, he attributes them to G.W.F. Hegel and to his eminent Finnish follower J.V. Snellman (1806-81) while presenting their thought in a rather neutral fashion. The main evidence for Kaila's own sympathy for totalitarian ideas resides in his willingness to interpret Hegel's and Snellman's ideas with the concepts and theories of modern holism and field theory, ideas to which he emphatetically subscribes.

Stated simply, Kaila's basic idea is that there are essential affinities between the modern scientific *Weltanschaung* and totalitarian ideologies. He takes, for instance, the Nazist catchwords "voice of blood" (*Stimme der Blut*), "*Lebensraum*", and "totalitarian". The first notion, maintains Kaila, refers to the unconscious psychic forces that determine the courses of human life; the second is a political parallel to some – unspecified – notions in field theoretical biology. The third notion refers to the tremendous social upheaval that during the past two decades has brought along social levelling and uniformity, that is, totalization.[15] The connecting link between political totalitarianism and the modern *Weltanschaung* is field theoretical holism. Kaila asserts that the basic ideas of holism were put forward by Hegel and Snellman in their "faltering" metaphysics as early as in the 19th century.[16]

Kaila claims that Hegelian idealism is a plausible position if it is interpreted from the point of view of modern holistic biology.[17] Holism, in general, states that the laws of the more complex structures are not deducible from the laws of less complex structures. According to Kaila, this view is applicable to such Hegelian notions as objective spirit and national spirit. These are empirical regularities that are characteristic of certain cultural phases and some world historical peoples. Kaila claims that "modern ausgedrückt heisst dies, dass der 'objektive Geist' und der 'Volksgeist' insbesondere die durch Eigengesetzlichkeit ausgezeichnete übergeordnete Ganzheit der Gemeinschaft ist, die nicht durch die Summe der Individuen besteht, sondern deren unselbständige Glieder diese sind."[18] This means that the laws of world history are irreducible to the laws of national communities (*Volksgemeinschaften*), just as these are irreducible to the laws of the solitary behavior of individuals. Kaila further subscribes to the other tenet of methodological holism, a tenet in which all the variables that constitute the system interact with each other. It is just because of this mutual interdependency within the system that new regularities will emerge in a whole that are not present in its parts. This methological holism does not, however, remain merely explanatory. It also takes a normative turn when Kaila, *pace* Hegel and Snellman, applies it to the explanation of social phenomena, including legal and moral norms.

Kaila attributes the totalitarian tenet to Hegel and Snellman, according to which a community exists both conceptually and normatively prior to the individuals that comprise it. Thus Kaila maintains that the most important practical aspect of an individual person's identity, or "substance", is neither one's spirituality (*Geistigkeit*), nor one's religious humanity. Instead, the most important factor is one's membership in a particular national community. This membership defines our identity so essentially that Kaila does not hesitate to assert that "die Substanz eines Einzelnen sei der Volksgeist."[19] Moreover, national spirit also determines one's ethical consciousness.

> Das sittliche Bewusstsein z. B. ist dasselbe wie dieses Nationalbewusstsein. In dem sittlichen Bewusstsein erlebt der Mensch seinen individuellen Willen als identisch mit dem allgemeinen Willen, der der gemeinsame Wille der Volksgenossen ist, in denen der Volksgeist die gemeinsame Substanz ist. Aus diesem Volksbewusstsein kann der Einzelne nicht heraustreten, weil es seine Substanz ist.[20]

From this metaphysical and ethical dependency of individuals on their national communities, ensues a normative tenet, according to which the national spirit and national customs are the highest truth and the highest right for the individual, and there is no higher right whatsoever.[21]

The demand of absolute obedience to the moral rules of one's national community affects also to one's relation to the state. As the state is a realization of the national spirit, it is, therefore, an intrinsic end with no further purpose. Furthermore, it is a moral end, because it is only in a state where one can be free in the sense of participating in the spiritual process in which the nation creates its norms and rules. Kaila emphasizes the difference between this Hegelian view and the liberal conception of the state as a means of civil society and individual citizens. Since every nation aspires only to rise above other nations to lead the world in historical progress, this progress can only take place through the inevitable and continuous struggle between nations and their representative states. It is also important to realize, according to Hegel and Snellman, that this struggle cannot be evaluated by means of ordinary moral criteria. On the contrary,

the highest command of political morality is the interest of the state. And "wer diesem etwa seine Ideale der Menschenliebe, der Gerechtigkeit usw. vorzieht, ist ein Verräter des Vaterlandes".[22]

What can we make of this short summary of Hegel's and Snellman's thought? There are, no doubt, some historical connections and affiliations between Hegelian ideas and the tenets of modern totalitarism, as Sir Karl Popper, together with several other writers, has forcefully argued.[23] The extent to which Hegelianism and national socialism are affiliated is not, however, the issue here. More importantis the historical fact that the the neo-Hegelians of the Third Reich used Hegel's political philosophy and the philosophy of history to legitimize the main tenets of national socialist ideology and its policies, as Hubert Kiesewetter has shown in his treatise *Von Hegel zu Hitler* (1995). The Hegelian features of national socialism included the theory of an organic state based on ethnic nationality, the introduction of vocational corporations instead of labor unions, the absolute power of a charismatic leader, the replacement of civil rights and liberties by social duties and a more "concrete" and "higher" within the state community, and national chauvinism together with legimation of aggressive and total wars, including World War II, as historical necessities.[24]

I believe that it is fair to argue that Kaila emphasizes the affiliations of Snellman's Hegelian thought and national socialist ideas, although there are only few allusions to this in this articles.[25] Still, Kaila points out that "wie zwanglos sich die Snellmansche Philosophie des Volksgeistes im Sinne einer modernen Ganzheitslehre deuten lässt und wie aktuell sie dadurch immer noch ist".[26] Kaila's evaluation of Snellman's contributions to Finnish philosophy and culture is also revealing. Kaila states that Snellman imported the characteristically German, organic view of community to Finland and thereby contributed to the fact that the Finnish culture remained as an original version of the "Nordic-Germanic" (*nordisch-germanisch*) culture. Kaila describes Snellman himself as broadminded, without being liberal, for Kaila concludes, "Er hat keine besondere Sympathie für die allgemeine Stimmrecht gehabt, sondern er hat einen korporativ aufgebauten Staat vorgezogen. *Er war ein Mensch unserer Zeit*."[27]

The Painful Disillusionment

Whatever Kaila's motives may have been for his German sympathies, he soon fell silent after it appeared obvious that Germany could not remain victorious in the long run. His next public appearance was only in the fall of 1943. At this time, Kaila protested against the persecution of Jews in Denmark in the newspaper *Uusi Suomi*. Kaila first explained the reasons for his and his colleagues' support of Germany.

Who can secure the three-millennia-old Western civilization in whose atmosphere we exist, live, and move if not the domain of German culture? This, undoubtedly, has been the opinion of the majority of Finnish intellectuals. This opinion has also determined the attitude we, friends of Germany, have taken towards German national socialism. We have been abound with good will of understanding towards it. It has not only seemed to us that in it, history has created a powerful political and military weapon against the Russian threat. We have been ready to acknowledge without any reservations the great achievements of national socialism in other areas as well, especially in the levelling of social differences. And when this revolutionary movement has revealed features that we have not been able to comprehend, we have remained silent, since we have not considered ourselves capable of judging such matters that we are not familiar with in detail.[28]

Nevertheless, Kaila continues that he cannot remain ignorant when Germany, by persecuting innocent people, violates the fundamental values of European culture, truth, equality, justice, and love of one's neighbour. Kaila was not the only Finn to protest agaist the persecution of Jews in Denmark and Norway during the fall of 1943.[29] Nevertheless, Professor Edwin Linkomies, who served as the acting Prime Minister at the time, stated in his memoirs that it was this particular protest of Kaila's that infuriated Hitler and made him demand stricter censorship from President Risto Ryti.[30]

The looming defeat of Finland and Germany made Kaila desperate. He emphasized that the heated dreams of a Great Finland that were popular in the early days of the war had to be buried once and for all. The only greatness that Finns could show "in the middle of this world historical catastrophy" is spiritual. That is, Finland had to

be ready to pay the price, whatever it was, in order to maintain its national sovereignty. Kaila referred, of course, to the Baltic states that had been annexed to the Soviet Union in 1940. Armistice with the Soviet Union in Septemper 1944 eased Kaila´s torments about Finland's destiny. Even so, he considered it likely that large-scale political purges and "Bolshevization" would ensue. But those fears never actualized in Finland, and even Kaila's own contributions to the German orientation during the war remained relatively unnoticed. Kaila and Rolf Nevanlinna, together with other German-minded intellectuals, including Wäinö Aaltonen, Yrjö Kilpinen, V.A. Koskenniemi, and Mika Waltari, were even nominated to the Academy of Finland in 1948.

J.E. Salomaa

Jalmari Edvard Salomaa was a philosopher with broad learning. His works include treatises on metaphysics, the theory of knowledge, value theory, philosophy of education, philosophy of history, and the history of philosophy. In comparison with Kaila, Salomaa represented a more traditional approach to philosophy. His main influences came from the German neo-Kantianism and from phenomenological value theory. J.V. Snellman was also an important intellectual mentor for Salomaa, especially in his philosophy of culture and philosophy of education. Salomaa held the Chair of Philosophy at the University of Turku from 1930 to 1958. His influence on Finnish philosophy has remained rather weak, but he was an active and well-known person in his own time.

Democratic Finnish Nationalism

Salomaa was above all a democrat with a strong Finnish nationalist bent. His nationalist affiliations began to emerge already in the 1920´s. Salomaa embraced the popular demand of the nationalist students that the Swedish language needed to be abolished from the University of Helsinki. Salomaa even suggested that this kind of solution would have been supported by Snellman himself.[31] Even so, Salomaa

distanced himself from the highly influential Academic Karelia Society (*AKS*), a student organization with aggressive Finnish nationalism and annexationist claims on the Soviet territories in Eastern Karelia. Salomaa did not subscribe to this organisation's passionate hatred for Russians, nor did he accept the idea of the racial basis of nationality.[32] Salomaa's clearest evidence for his democratic conviction was, however, his public condemnation of the right-wing nationalist Mäntsälä rebellion in 1932. Salomaa sympathized with the rebels' worries about the communist revolutionary activities. Yet he was also determined to reject right-wing terrorism and illegal actions.

Democratic emphasis continued to remain the touchstone of Salomaa´s political thought during World War II. Salomaa tried to encourage his fellow citizens before the outbreak of the Winter War by pointing out that we have friends especially in the Nordic countries and in the United States, "to whom we are connected by the same free and democratic form of government [and] the Western civilization."[33] This was also the message of his radio speech on the Finnish Independence Day on December the 6th, 1942. Salomaa thus asserted that the democratic and republican form of government "corresponds to the historical conditions and national characteristics of the Finnish people to whom a Nordic sense of freedom has become firmly rooted."[34] The same democratic conviction is repeated in his popular adult education manual *Suunta ja tie* (Direction and the Road, 1942) and its more scientific counterpart *Yleinen kasvatusoppi* ("A General Theory of Pedagogics", 1943). Still, these works are also characterized by rather totalitarian emphases on education.

Totalitarian Tones on Education

Salomaa agrees with Snellman [and Hegel] on the national character of culture, for he states, that "it is a generally acknowledged fact nowadays that culture is *national*. -- It would be senseless to talk about a nationless culture or a culture that shared by all nations."[35] Salomaa shared with Snellman also the view according to which cul-

ture could only be created by nations aware of their cultural mission and that are bound together by a living national consciousness and national spirit. Salomaa intends to separate his own position from "nationalism"; the latter results in heated national chauvinism and in the elevation of state and nation to absolute values. Respect for one's own national culture may not be accompanied by contempt and underestimation of other nationalities. Salomaa is nevertheless willing to admit that "every genuine and high culture has always tolerated only little of that which is digging ground under that particular culture."[36] Futhermore, he contends that "the nation-state must become a common cause, or even the highest common value for everyone so that its furtherance is held as a self-evident, holy duty."[37] This communitarian emphasis reaches even totalitarian tones as Salomaa concludes that education aims to foster "citizens that are ready to sacrifice themselves to the state, that will not be frightened even by the last and greatest sacrifice, the sacrifice of ones' life."[38]

The most important philosophical problem of education is the choice between individualistic and communitarian views of education. Salomaa maintains, *pace* Kant, that humans beings must always be treated as ends and never as mere means. Yet Salomaa adheres to the Hegelian tradition that emphasizes the individual person's metaphysical and moral dependence on his or her community. One can learn and assimilate culture only in interaction with one's tradition. It is also obvious that each individual's contribution to the culture of his or her community is bound to remain quite insignificant, compared to the amount we inherit from our family, tribe, nation and from humankind. It is, therefore, evident that education "intends to mould the object of education for communal life and by means of that, in the last resort, to a life in a state community".[39] Salomaa's strongest comments in favor of the communitarian view of education date from the warperiod. In a popular article *Individual and Community in Education* published in 1943, he even declared that:

> an individual only exists in order to enhance the life of a whole, a community. Not the individual but the community, *the nation*, has historical significance. An individual has value only to the extent that he serves the community. The community can tolerate only such individuals that

> in their behaviour realize the ends of the community. Useless individuals it excludes from its circle.[40]

This kind of annihilation of intrinsic value of individual persons, together with the demand that individuals must submit to the ends of their community, contradicts with the Kantian principle of human dignity and is congenial to modern totalitarianism.[41]

The communitarian view determines also the content of education. Salomaa protests against an universalist ideal of humanity as the sole aim of education. He admits that there are some universal elements in the ideal of education. These include such virtues as truthfulness, respect, dedication, judgement, and physical fitness. However, there are also some special ideals that vary between national cultures. "The aim of education here in Finland is not to foster a perfect human being in his or her abstract bloodlessness, but to produce a vigorous and nationally aware *Finnish human being*, just as education in Germany intends to foster Germans, in Italy Italians, etc."[42] Salomaa's list of special Finnish virtues includes the need for autonomy, uprightness, loyalty, trustworthiness, endurance, perseverance, courage, patriotism, righteousness, honesty, obedience to the law, sense of beauty, as well as religiousity that gives basic tenor to the entire Finnish ideal of cultivation. The recent two wars (the latter of which was still continuing) have, according to Salomaa, shown that this aim is not merely a dream, but a feasible ideal.

Despite the overwhelming importance of nationality, Salomaa argues that the governing principle of education must, nevertheless, be the education to fight. Never-ending spiritual and physical fight is both an irreversible world historical fact and the force that maintains all progress. Salomaa claims that "in battle with oneself and other people, in battle with other peoples and states, must every generation secure itself those spiritual values that it wants to own."[43] From this we can conclude that, "the unity of governmental system of education can only be founded on the uniform, primordial idea of the state development, *that is, ecudation to fight*." In short: "Whomever we want to cultivate to be a human being, we must educate him or her to fight."[44] This idea of progress evolving through continuous struggle is basicly a Hegelian idea but it is also congenial to national socialism. The concept of fighting as the governing principle of edu-

cation, instead, is a Nazist surplus. Its original context was a pseudo-Darwinian view of cultural evolution by survival of the fittest races and nations that justifies the struggle. Salomaa´s interpretation of the principle of fight was, however, much less belligerent than was the original Nazist interpretation. For Salomaa this means that people "are taught to comprehend genuine, enduring values of human dignity. --[Thus] education to fight does not, in fact, mean anything else but *cultivation of personality*."[45] The whole idea of the education to fight also disappeared from Salomaa's texts after World War II.

Reorientation after the War

Salomaa distanced himself from the German orientation after World War II, even though he had not involved with in it in any direct way. Still, there are somewhat different emphases in his interpretations of Snellman's philosophy during and after the war. In his Snellman monograph that was published in 1944 Salomaa claims that Snellman adheres to a totalitarian theory of state, in which the state is an intrinsic end and individuals exist for its sake, not the other way round.[46] In the next spring, however, he introduced Snellman as a true pioneer of democracy, even as a radical in his own time. Salomaa now emphasized Snellman´s demands for freedom of the press, civil marriage, rights of illegitime children, freedom of religion, separation of state and church, together with the free promulgation of socialist and communist ideas. Salomaa complains that the previous research has neglected the strong liberal and reformist elements in Snellman's social, political, and religious thought. Past research has, instead attempted to use Snellman as a precursor of all sorts of reactionary views. Salomaa even claims that Snellman's social and political philosophy were much more in harmony with the democratic tradition of French and British philosophy than with German philosophy.[47] This evaluation is astonishing, because it was only six months ago that Salomaa had asserted that Snellman's political philosophy approaches Hegel more than in any other domain of philosophy.[48]

After the war, Salomaa's philosophy of education also shifted toward a more individualistic position. The communitarian argument

for a ‘situated’ self was still there, but Salomaa was also willing to emphasize our right to “authentic and personal existence”.[49] This ideal could only be realized when individuals are allowed to use and develop his or her internal power of growth without hindrance or coercion. Nonetheless, this power needs social environment and human interaction in order to actualize. Hence, there is no contradiction between the aim of individual self-realization and societal interests. Individual self-improvement is also a benefit to the whole society, as both Bernard Bosanquet and John Stuart Mill have pointed out. Still, Salomaa maintained that individuals must exercise their freedom for socially acceptable and valuable purposes.

Erik Ahlman

Erik Ahlman began his academic career as a classical philologist. However, he was attracted to philosophy by some strong inner urge enould to gradually exceed his philological interests. In 1935 he was appointed the first Professor of Philosophy and Theoretical Pedagogics at the recently-founded Jyväskylä Institute of Pedagogics (later the University of Jyväskylä). In 1948 Ahlman returned to Helsinki to become the Professor of Practical Philosophy. However, he was able to hold the post only for a few years as a terminal illness put an end to his life in 1952. All in all, Ahlman published seven books and several articles on philosophy, mainly on ethics, philosophy of culture, and philosophical antropology.

Totalitarianism as a Threat to European Culture

Erik Ahlman was a politically neutral intellectual who derived his inspiration for political thought from the First World War. In 1932 he estimated that the war had created a trauma “that left the Western soul into a condition of sickly lability.”[50] This lability, together with moral vacuum created by the declining authority of the Christianity, provided impetus to communism, fascism, and national socialism. Ahlman considered all these political movements to be equally threatening to European peace as early as in the 1930’s.

Ahlman thus observed the rise of totalitarian regimes in Europe with acute interest. He soon realized that there was a fundamental change going on, replacing traditional European invidualism with a new collectivism. According to Ahlman, the introduction of absolutist state and restriction of civil rights, one-party dictatorship, voluntary organizations of violence, repression of freedom of the speech and severe propaganda, together with subordination of science, religion, and culture to politics were all characteristic of both fascism, national socialism, and communism. A partial explanation for the rise of these ideologies was the religious and moral vacuum, created by the decay of Christian moral authority. Totalitarian ideologies were substitutes of traditional religion that provided their adherents a clear sense of meaningful life and absolute values.[51] Still, their fanaticism and conceptual confusions made them poor candidates for this task. Therefore, "we must nevertheless either develop individualism further, or else the entire European form of culture is bound to die," as Ahlman concluded in his diary already in 1934.

Ahlman summarized his analyses of modern political ideologies in a concise paper in 1939. These ideologies were the liberal-democratic, the nationalist-totalitarian, and the marxist-bolshevist one. The first is characterized by tolerance and extensive civil rights, individualism, racial and sexual equality, internationality, principled pacifism, and the autonomy of science, art, and religion. The nationalist-totalitarian ideology is the complete opposite of the liberal-democratic one, except for the respect for private property. Nationalist totalitarianism emphasizes the authority of the leader, subordination of individuals to the community, racial and sexual inequality, nationality, militarism, and the subordination of culture to politics. Marxism and liberalism are therefore tied together by the ideals of justice, racial and sexual equality, and internationality. On the other hand, marxism resembles the anti-Christian nationalist totalitarianism by valuing the subordination of individuals to community, of culture to politics, and of state to ideology. Ahlman anticipated that the pattern of three major ideologies would not last, and that the a new situation would emerge with only two fronts. Yet he hesitated to predict whether or not the nationalists and marxists would find themselves in a common, totalitarian, camp, or whether the Western pow-

ers and the Soviet Union would band together in the name of their common ideals.[52] This was a wise decision because, as we know, both alternatives were eventually realized.

Erik Ahlman's scrupulous meditations on the common features of Soviet communism, Italian fascism, and German national socialism were rare in the ideologically divided Finland of the 1930's. Although the later research on totalitarianism by, for instance, Raymond Aron, Carl Friedrich and Zbigniew Brzezinski, and Hannah Arendt has corroborated Ahlman's views on several affinities between communism and fascism[53], this claim would have been a sacrilege both to the right-wing nationalist *Academic Karelia Society* and to the *Kiila* ("Wedge")-group of leftist intellectuals and artists. Equally untimely was Ahlman's conception of individualism, liberalism, and democracy as the cornerstones of European culture. "Democracy" was a concept with leftist aura in Finland of the 1930's, and it was separated from liberalism and individualism in this context. The bourgeois intellectuals with patriotic and nationalist sympathies, especially the influential *AKS*, were suspicious of or even reluctant towards democracy.[54] Ahlman admitted that there are some problems with democracy, such as reaching an agreement in decision-making. The respect for personal autonomy that lies behind the ideal of democracy still overrides these problems. Ahlman also insisted that democracy, with its extensive civil rights, is superior to its challengers in the sense that its defects can be pointed out and remedied openly.[55]

The Quiet Opposition during the Continuation War

The Second World War was the darkest period of Erik Ahlman's life. For him, the only relevant things at stake in the war were not Finnish national sovereignty and supremacy over Europe, but above all, the war was about the future and destiny of European culture and its basic ideal of humanity. Ahlman suffered from intellectual and moral isolation and solitude, especially during the Finnish Continuation War, when he opposed the companionship-in-arms of Finland with the dictatorial Germany. The latter had renounced the fundamental Western ideals and plunged Europe into war by its ruthless and ex-

pansive politics. Ahlman's aversion to Germany was also heightened by the fact that his spouse, Else, was a Dane by birth and Germany had occupied her native country since 1940. Ahlman did not, however, make his critical opinions public during the war. The only witness of Ahlman's internal moral conflict, besides his family, was his diary in which speculations on war and its effects on European culture took primacy over philosophical meditations.

Erik Ahlman's wartime diaries are "a rare document of a single person's attempt to keep to consistent and moral thinking in a hard situation", as his grandson, Professor Eerik Lagerspetz has suggested.[56] Ahlman's estimations of the course of the war and its effects on European culture were also astonishingly correct. Yet Ahlman had no access to secret information, nor did he have any political or military expertise. His main sources were the Swedish radio and newspapers that passed Finninh censure. On the other hand, lack of politcal involvement may have been the secret to Ahlman's farsightedness: he had no interest to interpret course of events in favour of any particular party.

There are three distinct periods in Ahlman's wartime thought. The first was the period of German success from the outbreak of the war until the fall of 1941, and this was characterized by meditations on justice in world history and the effects of war on humankind in general. Ahlman witnesses with shock the German triumph and the colossal destruction of European cultural treasures. Nevertheless, he hopes and believes that Germany will finally call up punishment for its injust actions. On the other hand, the war may have created a chance for fundamental change in human minds that could lay the foundation for a new, even more humane, refined, and noble culture. Ahlman also predicted that philosophy would concentrate on ethical and existential questions after the war. His disappointment was considerable when the opposite was the case, at least in the Anglo-American analytic philosophy.

Ahlman found the second period, which extended from the outbreak of the Finnish Continuation War in 1941 until the German defeat in Stalingrad, to be the most strenous phase of the war for him. He suffered from his isolation more than ever, and he was increasingly uncertain about the result of the global war. Ahlman had met his old friend the professor-poet, V.A. Koskenniemi, only few

days before the outbreak of the Continuation War, but they turned out to hold complete opposite views. Koskenniemi was very excited about the war that he supposed would be over in a few weeks. Ahlman, in contrast, had anticipated as early as in the spring of 1941 that Germany would eventually lose the war if both the Soviet Union and the United States joined as its enemies. Ahlman describes in his diary how he had told to Koskenniemi that "it is best for us as a small nation to take the road of justice. That, eventually, is our only protection. VAK [Koskenniemi] said that we are powerful now. To this I replied that we are powerful only as long as Germany is powerful, but not for a minute longer. This he did not bother to take into consideration."[57] The dispute created considerable coolness between old friends. Koskenniemi was elected to the position of the vice-president of the German oriented European Society for Writers. Ahlman, who was reluctant to support the German cause by propaganda, retired to privacy.

The prolongation of the war led Ahlman to a serious personal crisis. His mind was filled with doubts about the rationality of world history, with self-critical evaluation of his own previous thought, and torments about the future of humankind and the European cultural tradition. Belief in rationality in world history seemed irrational, for lies and violence were racing from one triumph to another. Ahlman's worries about the result of the global war eased a little when the United States joined the war. Still, signs of a turning point started to appear only in the fall of 1942, and Ahlman suffered from the delay. He was tormented about the propaganda that intended to make nations to hate each other. Furthermore, the future of European culture seemed desperate. Germany could not save culture even if it would win the war: culture would not flourish in a New Europe that was united with iron and blood. The Allied victory would, in turn, lead to the "Americanization" of European culture, "which means that it would not be culture in the previous sense of the concept any more." European culture may also begin to flourish in the United States. Even so, Ahlman feared that it would not be the same as in Europe, "not as delicate, sophisticated, probably not even as internal and deep. -- The 'New Europe' will in any case be only a political or economical, not a cultural notion," concludes Ahlman his rather apt prediction.[58]

The battle of Stalingrad was the turning point of the World War II for Ahlman. It meant that his original anticipation of German defeat was now only a matter of time, although Finland´s destiny became a new major concern. Defeat seemed inevitable for Finland too, but public opinion was reluctant to face the facts, which made the situation even worse. Nevertheless, the looming end provided Ahlman with reason for a private conclusion from World War II already in January 1943. Ahlman repeated his view from the 1930's according to which liberalism, democracy, individualism, humanism, and autonomy of science are the basic ideals of the Western culture. Germany has betrayed all these ideals, therefore the United States will inherit its position as the spiritual leader of Western humankind.

The clarified war situation released Ahlman's energies to academic work. The subject he was interested in was justice. Ahlman was convinced that one major reason for the outbreak of the war had been humankind's lacking sense of justice. In the treatise *"Oikeudenmukaisuus ja sen suhde moraaliin"* ("Justice and its Relation to Morals", 1943) he attempted to elucidate the content of that fundamental notion and the demands it sets on our actions. For instance, Ahlman emphasized that good intentions are not enough to make acts just. He also critisized the German "might is right" and *Lebensraum*-policies and political propaganda that despite the factual legal anarchy pompously presents ones own state as champion of justice.

A public evaluation of the Finnish Continuation War was possible only after the war. Ahlman made his as the Headmaster of the Jyväskylä Institute of Pedagogics. In his opening speech for the term 1944-1945 he asserts that the main reason for the war was a heavy pressure of external forces and conditions. There are, nevertheless, grounds for slight self-criticism. Ahlman scolds his fellow Finns for defective sense of reality and lack of cold deliberation. National arrogance has also contributed to these defects. Instead, Ahlman stresses our Nordic tradition of democracy and respect for the value of individual personalities and their rights. It is deplorable that some quarters of Finnish society, including academic youth, have forgotten respect for this tradition that fits "the essence and needs of our people". Still, Ahlman thinks that the totalitarian attitudes have mainly been fashionable import from abroad.[59]

Ahlman chose the topic of the public evaluation of the whole World War II for his opening speech for the term of 1945-1946. He argued that together with the Axis Powers had been destroyd an idealogy that was

> a fateful, perhaps even mortal threat to humane culture and humanity. Principles of freedom of the thought and speech, autonomy of science, social justice, [and] equality before the law and court were so precious cultural achievements that one cannot renounce them as lightly as one throws away an old cloth. Nations could not adjust to such conviction that e.g. some particular race supposedly was determined to achieve world domination, that e.g. Jews are not allowed even the most elementary human rights, that talk about women's equality with men is a declined liberalist prejudice, that democracy must be replaced by authoritarian system, that humanity is a symptom of weakness.[60]

Here Ahlman deplores Germany being eliminated as a cultural and economic power in Europe. Its destiny is tragic, but the German people can only blame themselves. The Third Reich that was possessed by inhumanity, fanaticism and violence betrayed the classic German heritage of Kant, Goethe, Schiller, and Herder that will always be remembered with respect and gratitude.

Conclusions

It appears that all three Finnish philosophers were basicly reluctant towards political totalitarianism. They all feared communism, but neither did national socialism interest anyone of them before World War II. Yet the Winter War and the fate of Baltic republics showed that it is bad to stay alone in the midst of an international conflict. Germany was a European superpower whose support the Finnish government and army sought after the Winter War primarily for political reasons. Intellectuals knew these reasons as well, and most of them felt that cultural and spiritual defence was their patriotic duty, even if it involved tolerating national socialism or German-minded propaganda. Totalitarianism was also a powerful new ideology and a political system whose rise had naturally provoked ques-

tions concerning its historical origins and present connections. These kind of reasons may account e.g. for Kaila's comparison of totalitarianism and the modern *Weltanschaung*. Yet the various interpretations of Snellman before and after the war reveal a distinguishing feature of philosopher's political thought: their possibility to present fashionable political ideas without subscribing to them.

Nevertheless, it seems to have been rather difficult for Finnish philosophers, with the exception of Ahlman, to frame an adequate account of the essence and historical relevance of totalitarianism, especially national socialism. Its historical connections to Hegelianism, hinted at by Kaila and Salomaa, may have provoked an impression that old ideas were returning in a new form, and that no radical change was taking place, even though the Nazist writers were anxious to insist to the contrary. In addition, the tremendous fear of the Soviet Union may have distorted judgements in Finland. It was no doubt obvious for many intellectuals, such as Kaila's young pupil Georg Henrik von Wright (b. 1916), that fascism and national socialism aim at making fundamental ideological changes in Western culture. Yet intellectuals thought that the restrictions of civil rights in totalitarian countries would possibly turn out to be temporary and that ideological and political disagreements between the Allied and the Axis would be of secondary importance compared to the world historical perspective of Finland's and Europe's survival from Soviet communism.[61]

Notes

[1] von Wright 1979, xxiv.

[2] Eino Kaila was a founder and a board member of the Pan-European Society in Finland (Suomen Paneurooppalainen liitto) that was established in 1930.

[3] Coudenhove-Kalergi 1931.

[4] Kaila 1934; Kaila 1931.

[5] An unpublished manuscript "Mitä valtiollinen itsenäisyys voi tarjota kansakunnalle?" ["What Can National Independence Offer to a Nation?"] Eino Kaila's archives.

[6] Klinge 1990, 175.

[7] See Hiedanniemi 1980.

[8] Kaila 1941a.

[9] Kaila 1992 [1937], 48. The quotation is from an earlier Finnish paper from which Kaila translated large sections for his Swedish article.

[10] Kaila 1941a.

[11] This accusation was also presented by the Nazis, see e.g. Rosenberg 1934.

[12] Kaila 1941b, 540. Original italics.

[13] Ibid.

[14] See V.A. Koskenniemi, *Finnland – Schild des Nordens* (1941), Jalmari Jaakkola, *Finnlands Ostfrage* (1941), Väinö Auer & Eino Jutikkala, *Finnlands Lebensraum* (1942). These treatises, as well as Kaila's atricles illuminate the euphoric atmoshere in Finland right after the outbreak of the "Continuation War". German sympathies and speculations of a new European order together with Finnish annexations reached their peak. Even the supreme command of the Finnish Army and the Finnish government described the war as a crusade against bolshevism that aimed at the annexation of Eastern Karelia. See Rusi 1982, 101-132.

[15] Kaila 1992 [1940], 242.

[16] See Kaila 1992 [1941], 256: "When, therefore, in our days that which is suitable to be called field theoretical thinking, is gaining prevalence in every domain, from theoretical physics to day-to-day high politics, among the first impulses of this field theoretical thinking was the German so-called romantic thought of 150-100 years ago --."

[17] Kaila 1942, 242: "-- die Hegelsche Betrachtungsweise des historisch-sozialen Lebens könnte man sogar im Sinne eines modernen ganzheitlichen Biologismus deuten. Eine solche Deutung würde noch klarer zeigen, dass die Hegelsche Geistesphilosophie in der Tat der erste Ansatz zu einer modernen Ganzheitslehre ist."

[18] Ibid., 238.

[19] Kaila 1942, 247.

[20] Ibid.

[21] See Kaila 1942, 250: "Die höchste Norm eines jeden Volksgenossen ist stets die, dass er den Sitten und Gesetzen seines Volkes gehorcht. Diese vertreten den Volksgenossen das absolute Recht und die absolute Sittlichkeit. Dies besagt, dass jene Gebote objektiv und allgemeingültig sind." See also Kaila 1992 [1941], 259.

[22] Kaila 1942, 252.

[23] Popper 1963; see also Hayes 1973; Kiesewetter 1995.

[24] See Kiesewetter 1995.

[25] The allusions are most obvious in the article "Zur Idee einer europäischen Friedensordnung" (1941).

[26] Kaila 1942, 252. J.V. Snellman's role as a historical precursor of Finnish national socialism was emphasized more clearly by his grandson, Teo Snellman, together with Jussi Leino in thei pamphlet "Suomalainen kansallissosialismi" ("The Finnish National Socialism", 1942). In his paper *Vapaa Suomi* ("Free Finland") Teo Snellman even called his grandfather the first national socialist in Finland. See Ekberg 1991, 183.

[27] Kaila 1942, 253.

[28] Kaila 1992 [1943], 295.

[29] Rusi 1982, 300-312. Similar protests were extended by the social democratic and Swedish-language press in Finland that time.

[30] Linkomies 1970, 282. Rolf Nevanlinna (1976, 158) tells in his memoirs that Kaila's protests against German actions did not limit to the defence of Danish Jews. Kaila also took initiative in an academic declaration that criticized the arrest of several professors of the University of Oslo.

[31] Salomaa 1924.

[32] See Alapuro 1973.

[33] Salomaa's speech on October the 12th 1939. J.E. Salomaa's archives.

[34] Salomaa's speech on December the 6th 1942. J.E. Salomaa's archives.

[35] Salomaa 1943b, 121-124.

[36] Ibid., 130.

[37] Ibid., 101.

[38] Ibid., 127.

[39] Ibid., 100.

[40] Salomaa 1943a.

[41] On the destruction of human dignity in totalitarianism, see especially Arendt (1966).

[42] Salomaa 1943b, 125-126. In a later treatise that was published after the World War II in 1950, Salomaa's exemplary states have changed into Sweden and England, although it is not clear whether the educational systems in those countries intended to enhance the pupils' national awareness and characteristics to the same extent as the totalitarian regimes in Germany and Italy.

[43] Salomaa 1942, 44; see also Salomaa 1943b, 130.

[44] Salomaa 1942, 45; see also Salomaa 1943b, 132.

[45] Ibid. The principle of education to fight was a much more concrete and comprehensive ideal for national socialist writers. For Ernst Krieck (1940) and Alfred Baeumler (1943), for instance, this meant that individual citizens are to be educated into absolutely obediant servants of the political and military ends of the *Führer* and the *Reich*.

[46] Salomaa 1948, 324. But see also Salomaa (1947, 107) for a similar, totalitarian interpretation of Snellman.

[47] Salomaa 1945.

[48] Salomaa 1948, 314. Salomaa here only states that Snellman underlines freedom in the state more than Hegel and thereby approaches liberal endeavours. Tuija Pulkkinen (1984, 2-3) has also reported inconsistencies in Salomaa's interpretation of Snellman. These inconsistencies concern the content and scope of natural law in Snellman's moral theory, and the justification of human actions.

[49] Salomaa 1947, 117.

[50] Ahlman 1932, 11.

[51] Ahlman 1932; Ahlman 1934; Ahlman 1936; Ahlman 1938, 123-131.

[52] Ahlman 1939.

[53] See Aron 1968; Arendt 1966; Friedrich & Brzezinski 1965. Aron (1968, 193-194) summarizes the five main elements of totalitarianism. Firstly, totalitarianism presupposes a regime which gives to one party the monopoly of political activity. Secondly, the monopolistic party has an ideology on which it confers absolute authority and which consequently becomes the official truth of the state. Thirdly, in order to impose this official truth, the state reserves for itself the monopoly of the means of coercion and persuasion, including the media. Fourthly, most economic and professional activities are subject to the state and become part of the state itself. Therefore, fifthly, as all activity is state activity and subject to ideology, an error in economic or professional activity is by the same token an ideological fault. This politization of all the possible crimes justifies ideological terrorism.

[54] See e.g. Sallamaa 1997; Sevänen 1997.

[55] Erik Ahlman's unpublished diary, 3.8.1935.

[56] Lagerspetz 1993, 52.

[57] Erik Ahlman's unpublished diary, 21.1.1944.

[58] Erik Ahlman's unpublished diary, 21.11.1942.

[59] Ahlman 1944.

[60] Ahlman 1945, 90.

[61] von Wright 1941. Later after the war, von Wright (1981, 15-24) avowed that the ideological struggle between totalitarianism and liberal humanism had been the crux of the war, as well as in the world historical perspective

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CHANGING CONCEPTIONS OF PARTY PROGRAMMES IN FINLAND

From the Ideas of 'Government by the Best' and 'Manifesto Democracy' towards the Idea of a Party Programme as an Initiator of Debate

Introduction

The aim of this article is to analyse the changing conceptions of party programmes in Finland from the early 1950s to the 1990s.[1] One problem of the research on political parties has been that discussion and research on the role of party programmes is too often missing.[2] At best you will, in general, find only more or less loose remarks about the role and conceptions of party programmes. The main pitfall of the discussion of party programmes has been that programmes have usually been studied from one-side only, i.e., concerning their plans and promises for future action. However, party programmes also have other roles and functions which too often have been neglected by researchers.[3]

In this study of the conceptual changes in the party programmes we want both to revise the contemporary discussion on the changes

in party politics and to make a contribution to a better understanding of changes in the Finnish political culture. Our findings, on the one hand, confirm the general trend towards the model of a cartel party and, on the other hand, indicate the specific Finnish schedule for the changes. Changing conceptions also show, in an illuminating way, that traditions of political representation are today mixed in such a way that parties no longer have a self-evident understanding of what their representative role in fact means. Our main argument is that, because of the increasing political contingency, it is increasingly more difficult to write a party programme in a traditional sense: that is, to define and to determine in advance what the principal goals of a party in the coming years will be, when international and national surroundings are in turbulence, how to carry out the programme in a situation which is changing all the time, and whom the party is representing when voters are becoming more volatile all the time.

Approaches to the Party Programmes

Our main interests in the article are: first, to adapt a conceptual analysis to the analysis of party programmes, then to analyse changing conceptions of party programmes with respect to the ideas of political representation, and the stages of party development. By using these three approaches we try to combine the following three aspects: the development of organising political representation, the changing models of party development, and the rhetorical viewpoint in politics. All three aspects are important in understanding the changing conceptions of party programmes.

(a) The Analysis of Concepts

As in other northern European countries, political parties in Finland also have a strong tradition of programme writing. Since the first elections of the unicameral parliament with universal suffrage in 1906, all the parties offered explicit programmes.[4] According to the

"Party Law" from 1969, the programme is a precondition for getting a party officially registered.

In spite of this long history of party programmes in Finland, research of party programmes was a popular topic as late as the 1960s when manifestos were studied as 'papers' telling about the identities, characteristics and policies of parties. Political scientists were inspired by the methods of content analysis, for instance. In general, the focus was on current ideological questions in manifestos. These were, then, contrasted with debates on the 'end of ideologies', to left-right dimensions, or to the historical background of parties. At the end of the 1980s, research on party programmes revived again in accordance with the linguistic turn in political science. It became common to see a programme as action in itself, a specific genre for interpreting current political culture. At present, political science research on party programmes focuses often on the linguistic aspects of texts (i.e., argumentation, rhetoric, and concepts). Thus, new dimensions of programmes, including acts, symbols, political language and communication have gained significant relevance (Aarnio 1998, 21-23).

An important approach for studying the legitimation of conceptual changes has been presented by Quentin Skinner. Conceptions that political actors and people have about a party programme can be seen as a way of thinking, which both set rules for feasible action and also make the action feasible. This is the way Quentin Skinner describes the role of concepts in thinking. Let us take an example about principles. Skinner (1974a and 1974b) explains the role of principles in politics, focusing on intentions in speech acts and possibilities to manipulate the existing speech act potential of a vocabulary. Skinner sees the principles as playing the role of legitimisation in choices which every actor has to do. Principles are constitutive for policy choices, for instance. The available range of action to an actor is limited by the chances to justify the action and justification, again, is dependent on recognisable political principles.

Skinner speaks about the ideal type of innovating ideologist who is obliged to legitimate a new range of action in terms of the existing ways of applying the moral vocabulary prevailing in his/her society. On one hand, an innovative ideologist has to refer to some already accepted political principles as a means of seeking to legitimate his or her own – maybe disapproved or unfavourable – actions. On the

other hand, an innovating ideologist can reach reinterpretations of policies or revisions of principles with conceptual changes which legitimate those unfavourable actions (1974b, 296-298). In other words, when an agent identifies the principles to manifest this also puts bounds to policies available, which are by no means fixed, but can be reinterpreted and legitimated with conceptual changes.

The general conclusion of the case of an innovative ideologist derives from the fact that any course of action is inhibited from occurring if it cannot be legitimated. This means that any principle, which helps to legitimate a course of action must be among the enabling conditions of its occurrence. The more specific conclusion derives from the fact that the nature and range of the evaluative concepts which any agent can hope to apply in order to legitimate behaviour can in no case be set by the agent himself or herself (1974b, 299-300).

In brief, if we apply this to party programmes we can draw from Skinner's discussion the conclusion that programmes are important even if their writers or others deny that. The meanings or interpretations are not limited to those the writers identify, but all political agents can utilise programmes for their own purposes. Purposes are, however, circumscribed both by principles agreed in party programmes and also conceptions of party programmes. Therefore, thinking, reflecting and speaking about principles in a party programme process are important for future action and that is why a programme process with its many phases is always important.

However, it is not self-evident what expectations people have about a party programme in different situations. Eeva Aarnio has analysed (Aarnio 1998) both the concept of the manifesto in the party arena and the conceptual changes that took place during the period of 1950 to1990 in Finnish parties. The concept of a party programme cannot be defined unambiguously because there is no one definition which would cover every situation and every party and on which every political actor could agree. It is, however, possible to study the use of concepts, i.e., conceptions of party programmes. This means necessarily that there can simultaneously exist variable conceptual assumptions and interpretations of the concept of a manifesto. Aarnio's analysis focused on the development of the concept by trying to indicate the main changes of conceptions in party programmes.

Her conceptual analysis also indicated that subsequent interpretations do not succeed in displacing earlier ones. Various interpretations of the concept of a manifesto are accumulated, as well as a range of expectations concerning its status and use. Many conceptions of a party programme can, on one hand, be understood to signify the plurality of the concept of a political party: that there no more exists one ideal model of a party. There are only different kinds of political parties with different ideas about what a political party is. On the other hand, many conceptions can be understood to represent 'a critical era' in which traditional ideas of the role of political parties in a democratic process and in organising political representation become challenged.

(b) Stages of Party Development

Conceptions of party programmes do not change at random or in a vacuum. Different conceptions mean different questions and different answers to the questions. Stages of party development can also be seen as new questions which demand new answers.

Richard S. Katz and Peter Mair (1995) present, in their well-known article, the following stages of party development. First, parties were usually of the "cadre" type. Then the socialist parties in particular gave rise to the "mass-party" model. The beginnings of an erosion of traditional social boundaries in the late 1950s and 1960s led to the emergence of what Otto Kirchheimer (1966) called the 'catch-all party'. The latest stage is, according to Katz and Mair, the development of the "cartel party" model.

According to Katz and Mair (1995, 17), the emergence of cartel parties is uneven, being more evident in those countries in which state aid and support for parties is most pronounced, and in which the opportunities for party patronage and control are most enhanced. Katz and Mair claim that "the process is likely to be most developed in countries such as Austria, Denmark, Germany, Finland, Norway and Sweden, where a tradition of inter-party cooperation combines with a contemporary abundance of state support for parties, and with a favouring of party over patronage appointments, offices and

so on." We discuss below whether the Finnish case really gives support to Katz's and Mair's hypothesis and what the stages of party development might mean to the conceptions of party programmes.

(c) Traditions of Political Representation

The stages of party development in Western democracies are connected to the problems of political representation and to the ideas and traditions of representation in general. According to Anthony F. Birch (1993), there have been three main traditions of political representation in Western democracies: 'the people as sovereign', 'parliament as sovereign', and the third tradition is what Birch calls a 'manifesto democracy'.

In the first case, sovereignty is inherent to the people. Political representatives are regarded as deriving their authority from the people. The people should always keep the politicians in check, for example, through frequent elections. This doctrine, of course, has its 'eternal' value in democratic thinking. But when we think about political representation organised through political parties – and the Finnish case in particular – it is evident that the traditions of 'parliamentary democracy' and 'manifesto democracy' are more important here.

According to the doctrine of 'parliamentary democracy', sovereignty belongs to the parliament. The parliament should represent the whole nation and, accordingly, should decide independently what the general interest and the will of nation are concretely in each case. Members of parliament should not be bound by the instructions of their constituents and electors. On the contrary, the elected representative should be viewed as an independent maker of national laws and policies.

The doctrine according to which sovereignty belongs to the parliament is accompanied by the Burkean idea that the 'best of the nation' should be members of parliament. It would be beneficial to the nation if the 'best' are gathered together in parliament to discuss freely and independently and decide the will of the nation.

Birch describes the theory of 'manifesto democracy' as follows: "Each party has a duty to present the electorate at a general election with a detailed manifesto setting out the policies that the party proposes to follow, and the legislative changes it proposes to introduce, if it wins the election and forms the next government. The incoming government would then be entitled to claim that it had a mandate from the electors to carry out its promises and would therefore be acting democratically in using party discipline to press these policies through Parliament" (Birch 1993, 64).

It is evident that the different traditions of democracy and political representation give different answers concerning the role of parties in organising democracy and also concerning the idea of a party programme. For example, programmes are in closer association with electoral behaviour and government policies in two-party systems than in multi-party systems. Voters have then, in principle, an opportunity to base their vote on one particular party programme and to expect the winning programme to be carried out. It is also evident that political parties are leaning on different traditions and that the importance of traditions varies in different political cultures and eras. Finally, individual political actors favour different traditions. Ultimately, this is related to the variable conceptions of a party manifesto. We discuss below how traditions have influenced Finnish parties.

Stages of Party Development and Changing Conceptions of Party Programmes in Finland[5]

According to Aarnio's (1998) analysis, four general historical phases can be discerned in the changing conceptions of party programmes since the 1950s. Party programmes were written without controversy concerning either content or form in the 1950s and the early 1960s. Completed manifestos were thought to stand for the policies parties were to carry out. At the end of the 1960s, however, the concept changed towards a more ideological debate in wider and more public forums than earlier. Younger generations began to challenge older 'conservative' generations and their institutionalised way

of thinking. The number of programmes also multiplied and diversified radically. In the 1980s, party executives started emphasising the problem of an organisational democracy, especially from the viewpoint of the writing process of a manifesto. It was thought that an increasing participation in preparing a new manifesto for the party would also democratise the party or, at least, its image. However, it was laborious to inspire members to participate in the process. On the other hand, there also occurred a move towards a more innovative and open programmatic process because of the broader possibilities for politicisation due to increasing political contingency. It seems that in the 1990s increasing political contingency has become a new challenge for parties. One indication of this has been that parties are increasingly in a position in which they themselves have to decide what issues they should choose to emphasise in their programme. Choosing means reflecting on the future relevance of different issues, and in this, the party should at least demonstrate that it is up-to-date. The process of creating a party programme is also an essential arena for practising and maintaining politicians' own political thinking. Parties also must listen more sensitively to other political actors, and react more flexibly to their debate initiatives. This means that parties seem to be losing their independent role, which was so strong in Finland from the 1950s to the 1970s in particular. In the 1990s there are clear signs indicating that devising a party programme in the traditional sense, i.e., a 'big ideological narrative' covering several years, has become all the more difficult for parties.

This brief description of the changing conceptions concerning party programmes in Finland indicates that a party programme process, i.e., the whole process of discussing and writing a new programme, the decision-making process of a new programme, and the use of the approved programme, has many other 'functions' than being merely a promise for future policies. But before discussing this in detail we must start from the beginning by showing the layers and tensions between them in the current conceptions of a party programme. Historically the first layer is the idea that the 'parliament is sovereign', which is accompanied by the cadre-party model typical to it.

The Cadre-Party Model

The idea of 'parliament as sovereign' strives for the 'government by the best' which, again, results in the cadre-party model in the political arena.

Katz and Mair (1995, 9, 19-20) argue that, in the traditional cadre-party model, parties were more or less loose groups of intellectuals and political activists. Parties were basically committees of people who jointly constituted both the state and the civil society. While the elite were 'ordinary' members, there was little need for intermediaries, or in other words for a formal or highly structured organisation. In the period of dominance of the elite party, political goals and conflicts largely revolved around the distribution of privileges, and the parties competed on the basis of the ascribed status of their adherents. Among the elite parties, competition was effectively managed and controlled.

Even if we do not discuss here the history of the cadre-party model in Finland, there are good reasons to argue that parties favouring the tradition of the 'parliament as sovereign', and in which party programmes are seen as more or less tight plans to be carried out, have always been a problem. In the Finnish case, the tradition of the 'parliament as sovereign' has been strong among bourgeois parties and in the National Coalition Party in particular.

The Agrarian Party has also leaned on the non-socialist programme tradition: attitudes towards a programme were based on the idea that policies depend on intellectual consideration. A 'theory of society', i.e., the idea of 'scientific politics' and a scientific planning of society, has been unfamiliar to both of these parties. Nationwide/centralized policy programmes are unfamiliar to the National Coalition Party. The Agrarian Party has been closer to the socialist party programme tradition in this respect. Restricted, predestined doctrine has not, however, been included in their traditions. Instead, both parties have traditionally emphasised general principles, individually labelled goals towards a better society, and the educational aspects of a manifesto. Though systematic references to ideological and theoretical literature have been neglected, they still have had strong 'ideological' leaders. These leaders, especially in the Agrarian/

Centre Party, have advanced to become party executives, and thus gained high operational leadership. 'Foundation ideas' have historically been stressed in the Agrarian/Centre Party, but practicality of 'ideology' also has been given a high priority.

The first decades under examination (Aarnio 1998), the 1950s and the early 1960s, can be referred to as periods in which 'harmony' and 'solidarity' were emphasised in the forum of manifestos. Discordant notes were not allowed inside parties. Paradoxically, debates concerning principles – occurring during the writing process – were always reported to be vivid. This rhetorical move aimed at increasing the feeling of integrity. The undeniable task of writing a manifesto in nonsocialist parties was to make the principles of a party better known to voters. Thus, the election results and the programme were seen as closely related, but in a different manner than in a 'manifesto democracy'.

The National Coalition Party was the first nonsocialist party that invited rank-and-file members to participate in the writing process of the manifesto, thus following the tradition of a 'mass party' and acting contrary to the doctrine of 'parliamentary democracy'. It was not customary for the rank-and-file members to question the academic elitist way in which programme drafts were usually written. In spite of the opportunity to give feedback, the great majority of party members were excluded from the process until its completion, i.e., when final decisions were made in party congresses. Party members were, however, emphatically encouraged by the party executive to distribute the completed programme. It is evident that both the writing process and renewed manifesto had a strong symbolic impact in seeking and emphasising the unity of the party. Programmes were also used as means for reinforcing the confidence in electoral victory even if programmes were not seen as detailed plans for overcoming social and political problems. Programmes of the bourgeois parties were seen rather as a presentation of basic values adapted to the current society and situation. In that sense programmes had to be up-to-date.

The tradition of the 'parliament as sovereign' is not, however, only past history. On the contrary, we can see this tradition almost daily; debate concerning the free or bound mandate of the MPs is an illuminating example in this respect.

The "Mass-Party" Model

Where the traditional cadre party had relied on the quality of its leaders and supporters, the new "mass party" relied on its quantity of supporters. The ability to mobilise became the first criterion when the success and power of a party were assessed.

Organising political representation through a 'manifesto democracy' and the mass-party model are tightly connected. Katz and Mair (1995, 6-7) describe the mass-party model in the following way:

> In the archetypal mass-party model, the fundamental units of political life are pre-defined and well-defined social groups, membership in which is bound up in all aspects of the individual's life. Politics is primarily about the competition, conflict and cooperation of these groups, and political parties are the agencies through which these groups, and thus their members, participate in politics, make demands on the state, and ultimately attempt to capture control of the state by placing their own representative in key offices. Each of these groups has an interest, which is articulated in the programme of 'its' party. This programme is not just a bundle of policies, however, but a coherent and logically connected whole. (Katz and Mair 1995, 6-7)

Most important in a 'manifesto democracy', organised through mass parties, is that the voters are supporting one or the other party, and this support is expressed by voting in elections for a well-defined programme. A 'manifesto democracy' presupposes that the competition between parties means competition between programmes. Party programmes should be 'plans and promises for the future', i.e., they should be clear and transparent about what the party is going to do if it wins elections and gets governmental power. Programmes as plans and promises for future action would also allow voters to control their representatives and parties. Elections become choices of delegates rather than trustees, and delegates are more or less tightly bound to the party and fulfilling its programme.

At least after the 'turn to the Left' in the 1966 parliamentary election, the 1960s appeared in Finland to be a time for the hope of rational planning of the whole society and the widely shared belief in constant growth. Consequently, completed manifestos proved to

be equal to policy; i.e., they provided the instructions and means of achieving given targets. When manifestos were interpreted as answers, as building plans, or, for example, as solutions to the central problems of Finnish society, it was essential that there was a very strong belief in party ideologies. So, as late as the 1960s, memorisation of the texts in manifestos was strongly encouraged. For example, when parliamentary candidates gave speeches, they at least highlighted speeches by repeating ideological slogans and statements derived from the manifestos. The competence of candidates was also reinforced in that way.

At the time of centralized policy programmes, there were no major differences in the understanding of the character of party programmes. The general public was ready to give to parties the leading role in the presentation of 'answers' to political questions. Since this time, however, the consensus concerning the party programmes has disappeared.

A 'manifesto democracy', with its mass-party model, is usually seen as a model and challenge posed by the socialist parties. It was thought that other parties would be obliged to adopt the basic features and strategy of the socialist/mass-party model or they would otherwise perish. This seems also to have been the case in Finland in the late 1960s and at the beginning of the 1970s when conceptions of party programmes in the Conservative Party and in the Centre Party in particular changed radically in that direction. This is one sign of the hegemony of the Left in Finland since the 1966 parliamentary election.

The "Catch-All Party" Model

A third stage of evolution is the 'catch-all party', in which parties from both the traditional left and right are beginning to converge towards a 'catch-all party' model. The emergence of the 'catch-all party' challenged the notion of the party as representative of predefined sectors of society. One could say that contingency concerning the basis of a party's political arena began to increase. Katz and Mair (1995, 7-8) mention the beginnings of an erasion of traditional

social boundaries as one of the critical causes of political contingency. They also emphasise the role of the growth of the economy and the increased importance of the welfare state. According to Katz and Mair, these factors facilitated the elaboration of programmes that were no longer necessarily divisive nor partisan, but that could be claimed as serving the interests of all, or almost all. The development of the mass media is also very important because the media allowed party leaders an easy means of appealing to the electorate at large. Also, the electorate had changed. Katz and Mair argue that in the 'catch-all' situation an electorate is made up of voters who are learning to behave more like consumers than active participants. The overall result in respect to elections was: "elections were now seen to revolve around the choice of leaders rather than the choice of policies or programmes, while the formation of those policies or programmes became the prerogative of the party leadership rather than of the party membership". (Katz and Mair 1995, 8)

The 'catch-all party' poses new challenges to traditional concepts of party programmes. Katz and Mair claim (1995, 13) that "instead of emphasising social homogeneity, the party accepts members wherever it finds them, and moreover recruits members on the basis of policy agreement rather than social identity." This means putting problems of social and political identity more and more aside in writing programmes and emphasising policy formulations.

In the 'catch-all party' model, parties are brokers between civil society and the state. "On one hand, parties aggregate and present demands from civil society to the state bureaucracy, while on the other they are the agents of that bureaucracy in defending policies to the public" (Katz and Mair 1995, 13). This means also that the capacity of a party to perform the brokerage function depends not only on its ability to appeal to the electorate, but also on its ability to manipulate the state (ibid., 14). This kind of situation in Finland resulted in the explosive increase of special programmes in parties in the 1970s.

In the 1960s and 1970s, the framework of public administration and state budget were followed in writing special programmes. This explains the wide utilisation of civil servants' knowledge in the writing process of manifestos. Special programmes were initially prepared for helping to achieve supreme decision making in parties.

The ‘necessity’ of special programmes was motivated by the re-entrance of the Social Democratic Party to government in 1966. They quickly needed information concerning all administrative districts, i.e., all imaginable sectors of policy, such as social policy, agricultural policy, educational policy, as well as fishing policy, cultural policy, or even tourism policy. While party programmes were accepted after a long and hierarchical process, which normally took more than a year, special programmes were sometimes accepted without delay when party executives needed them.

The National Coalition Party and the Centre Party followed the example of the Social Democrats. In all parties working groups of experts were set up to write, revise and confirm special programmes. For example, in the Centre Party altogether 34 Special programmes were created between 1966 and 1979 (Blåfield & Vuoristo 1981). This trend estranged the rank-and-file members from the writing process of manifestos, resulting in programmes which were totally unknown to party members, and sometimes even the mutual logic of valid programmes limped. This, among other things, led in the 1980s to a situation in which the number of programmes were radically decreased. This emphasised again the value of a party programme, but at the same time it increased their diversity.

Parties and the electorate began to drift apart in Finland in the 1960s. Already in 1959, the Finnish political scientist, Jaakko Nousiainen (1959, 16-17), argued that wide ideological differences between parties had considerably blurred, and the differences had only a restricted effect on their relationships. However, the writing of manifestos was more active than before or ever since. The 1960s has frequently been remembered as a very ideological period. It is true that the status of parties was strengthened and party organisations were active. The question was not, however, about ideological originality but rather about the quantity of programmes. Parties competed more clearly for the same audiences.

The period between 1967-1975 was significant for the status of parties. Parliament passed the first legislative act pertaining to parties in 1969. The act was necessitated by the state subsidies paid to party organisations since 1967. “Party Law” also attempted to prevent the further splitting of parties. It ruled that, after the 1970 election, only registered political parties would be allowed to nominate

candidates in parliamentary elections. The monopoly granted to registered parties in 1969 met heavy criticism, and in 1975 it again became possible to nominate 'wild' candidates (Pesonen 1995, 14). However, "Party Law" can be seen as an important starting point and prerequisite for the development of the "cartel-party" model in Finland.

The "Cartel-Party" Model and the Problem of Increasing Political Contingency

Katz's and Mair's main argument (1995, 5) is that "the recent period has witnessed the emergence of a new model of party, the cartel party, in which colluding parties become agents of the state and employ the resources of the state (the party state) to ensure their own collective survival. ... Parties have now become semi-state agencies" (ibid., 16). The cartel party is characterised by the interpenetration of party and state, and also by a pattern of interparty collusion. Because all of the main parties can survive together, the conditions become ideal for the formation of a cartel.

The formation of a cartel-party situation also has its effects on elections. According to Katz and Mair (1995, 16), "winning or losing in elections may make less difference to a party's political objectives because of the absence of great policy battles, but could make a good deal of difference to its sheer survival, since the resources for its sustenance now come increasingly from the state."

The pattern of electoral competition in a cartel situation is contained and managed. "Certainly, the parties still compete, but they do so in the knowledge that they share with their competitors a mutual interest in collective organisational survival ... Stability becomes more important than triumph" (ibid., 19-20, 23). All this has its effects on democracy too.

> "The essence of democracy lies in the ability of voters to choose from a fixed menu of political parties. Parties are groups of leaders who compete for the opportunity to occupy government offices and to take responsibility at the next election for government performance" (ibid., 21).

What does the cartel-party model then mean to the idea of a party programme? Katz and Mair argue (1995, 22) that party programmes become more and more similar. It really seems that at least the cartel parties do not need a party programme in the traditional sense, i.e., an ideological narrative which gives the party and its supporters a common collective identity and clear tasks which the party strives to carry out if it gets government power.

A cartel situation also has its weaknesses. The cartel-party model aims for stability and a reasonable status quo. Depoliticised contested competition is the spontaneous way of attaining this aim. However, a cartel situation can – for many reasons – be only a transitory solution. A cartel always has enemies both within and outside the cartel. The most dangerous enemy is without a doubt the contingency that is always present in the structure and rules of a cartel situation.

One of the main feature of political parties in Western democracies has been that political parties are the only organisations which operate in the electoral arena and compete for votes (Panebianco 1988, 6). In principle, from the viewpoint of political parties, winning the elections appears as the central aim of politics. Elections are the paradigmatic action situation with which other politics are related. The party is the organisation which nominates its candidates in elections and which either wins or loses elections. The professional skill of a political leader and a politician means from this point of view an art of winning elections. Therefore, the 'work' of a politician is arranging potential electoral victory (Bryce 1886/1889; see also Palonen 1997).

It has, however, been argued that the main Finnish political parties have for decades been more or less 'reluctant' to win elections at all costs (see, for example, Pekonen 1997). This has been possible for many reasons. One reason has been that Finnish politics has experienced a relatively stable period, with more or less stable political alignments and without critical elections. (On the concepts of critical elections and a stable era, see Aldrich 1999). Candidate-centered elections have marked this stable era in Finland. (For more on the Finnish case, see, for example, Pekonen 1984, 1986, and 1995). It has also been argued that Finnish politics has not 'traditionally' been action-centered politics, but that rather con-

sensus has been emphasised. This can be seen in the hegemonic position the Finnish foreign-policy paradigm – the so-called Paasikivi – Kekkonen foreign policy and its demand on national consensus in foreign-policy opinions – had in domestic politics since World War II and up until 1991. Other examples are such metaphors as “consensus”, the “politics of low profile” and a “rhetoric of necessity” which were widely used in describing Finnish politics in the 1980s. When major political actors have been consensus-oriented, competition in elections has not meant a ‘whole-hearted’ struggle between main parties, but rather a contested competition inside a market situation of an oligopoly. A big problem of contested competition has been the underestimation of voters. Jaakko Nousiainen argued already at the end of the 1950s (1959, 103) that during the power of bureaucratic mass parties it may be that the party system would not accurately reflect the distribution of opinions among voters, but rather that the distribution was a reflection of the party system. However, this situation has slowly been changing in Finland too. The change of parties towards catch-all parties, election parties, and cartel parties have been changing the role of parties in the political system, their representative role in particular and, therefore, also the conceptions of party programmes. One overall result of these changes may be the intensification of the electoral struggle between parties.

The background for these changes can be found in the increasing political contingency. Many studies have shown that voter turnout has steadily decreased in Finland, the number of parties has increased, new small parties have steadily claimed an increasing proportion of votes cast, voters’ volatility has increased and the citizens’ indifference to parties and politicians has been increasing[6]. These and other new challenges have broadened the scope of political action and opened new chances for politicisation. The more things are in ‘turmoil’, the more the political situation gives a free hand – or at least new chances – for political actors to act. The important point here is that the question is no longer merely of endeavours to get rid of contingency or ‘tame’ it, but now also chances provided by the increasing political contingency are taken into consideration as realistic categories in reflecting action possibilities (see, for details, Palonen 1997). Freedom of action has grown, but what results from it will be

depend on the political actors themselves. Political leaders in particular will face new pressures in this respect.

One basic idea of the nationwide/centralized planning was to minimise contingency, by trying to deal beforehand with contingent events, by lessening the chance that they would happen. This kind of 'rational politics' neglected, among other things, the idea of politics as sort of a creative force: as an art to utilize possibilities which exceptional situations, and unexpected and unwanted consequences of action open up for the political actors.

As we already mentioned, we can see the effects of increasing contingency, especially in the electoral arena. But elections also clear room for contingency in other respects. Elections mean an opportunity to change government and, accordingly, also policy. However, in a cartel situation, changing policy is not in principle a primary aim, but it is most important to stay among those who have governmental power. Therefore, a cartel is usually based on status quo, which means that power relations inside a cartel result from previous power struggles. The main interest of the participants in a cartel is maintaining the status quo. The participants are not, on the first hand, interested in chances challenging the power relations between cartel parties. Accordingly, one can argue that politics in a cartel-party model easily takes on the struggle over power – the seats in government in particular.

This is exactly what has happened in Finland. Only the idea of a cartel-party model can 'explain' the exceptional party combination in the Finnish government – the "Rainbow Government" – which started in 1995 and is still continuing its work after the 1999 parliamentary election. The "Rainbow Government" consists of the Social Democratic Party, the National Coalition Party (the Conservatives), the Left-Wing Alliance (former Left-Socialists and Communists), the Swedish People's Party, and the Green League.

Politics understood as the art of winning elections temporalises politics in the sense that parliamentary politics can be separated from longstanding ideological goals. This can, however, have paradoxical results. On the one hand, this makes it possible to concentrate on short-term political objectives and make concrete promises to voters. On the other hand, abandoning great ideological narratives has left room for some very abstract apolitical slogans, such as "everyone

has a right to happiness"[7]; however, these contrasts both have their usefulness. Abstract apolitical slogans are used in election campaigns. But when the question is of writing a programme for government cooperation for the next four years, both abstract ideological and apolitical slogans are put aside as useless, and usually only more concrete objectives and promises are written down.

Because of their unideological and apolitical stance, and in order to contest competition, cartel parties seem to be ready to give away their strong position with respect to voters. This can be seen in the politicians' readiness to follow voters' opinions and, accordingly, in the importance of opinion surveys for politicians and parties. Cartel parties do not seem to be willing to take the risk of trying to change voters' opinions, but seem to be 'flattering' the existing opinions. This may mean a tendency to avoid issues of conflict or writing down only positive aims when drafting the party programmes.

Means of Politicisation or Means of Strengthening the Cartel-Party Model

The increasing political contingency also poses new challenges to the concept of a party programme. This can be seen in the Finnish case. In fact, we can see two current contradictory tendencies. In order to avoid risks, and since nobody can predict the future in turbulent circumstances, the big parties have 'invented' the idea of a cartel to minimise 'common' risks. On the other hand, increasing contingency puts the conceptions of a party programme in motion and, accordingly, provides new opportunities for political actors. There is no longer merely one 'question' that everybody should try to answer, but many 'questions' and thus many 'answers'.

Aarnio (1998) has proved that by the end of the 1960s and the beginning of the 1970s, the programmatic process was characterised by ideological debates in nonsocialist parties and by dispute about ideological differences in socialist parties. As a consequence, the writing of a party programme turned from a monologue to a dialogue. Younger party members especially wanted to revise existing ideological debate. In many parties the question of the basis

of support culminated in disputes between the young and the older 'conservative' generations in writing manifestos. In nonsocialist parties there were persons who realised that it was not possible to reach new supporters without breaking the harmony and consensus in the forum of manifestos. There were more debates than earlier, e.g., in newspapers, party conferences, and local meetings. In this period, taking initiative became habitual, inspiring new action and ideas. This increased the political character of the concept of a manifesto.

In the 1980s the churning out of special programmes settled and it became important to attain an active participation in the revision process. During the 1980s, there was a move towards a more innovative and open programme process. Party members were now encouraged to participate in the process and also the models and arenas of the process became diversified. Now party executives, instead of the rank-and-file members like in the 1960s and 1970s, emphasised the organisational democracy of parties during the programme process. This occurred simultaneously with decreasing party memberships. The milieu of parties had significantly changed. The range of questions experienced as political has been increased and the relation between the different questions has become more complex. This shift has created more opportunities for the politicisation of questions and institutionalised interpretations. However, institutionalised cartel parties have usually been unable or reluctant to utilise new chances for politicisation; rather they include in their agenda – as far as it is possible – new questions, themes and issues which are already manifested by their challengers and new social movements in particular. The Greens especially have successfully introduced these kind of questions.

In the 1980s, there can also be seen a shift in the conceptions of a party programme from a completed paper to an interactive process. The rhetorical dimension appears when an academic-elitist process becomes replaced with one that is more communicative. Participation, or at least a sense of participation, is integral to the interactive process in that it facilitates the familiarisation with ideas presented in the process of speaking and writing a programme, and above all with different ways of thinking. The integrative rhetoric often used by key participants of the process aims at increasing the feeling of

integrity and the continuity of an organisation, while the provocative rhetoric aims at rousing conversation and politicising questions.

It seems also evident that parties have become more dependent on 'external conversation'. It has become common for parties to utilise nonparty experts in the process of revising manifestos. They do not draw up manifestos, but stimulate debates on principles and alternative policies. Different parties listen to the same experts. This can be interpreted as an indication of the opening up of parties to outside influences and, thus, as a sign of parties losing their individual power and independent status. Their degree of institutionalisation is becoming weaker. On the other hand, the same features can also be seen indicating the transformation into cartel parties.

In the 1990s, taking part in speaking and writing party programmes also has other new 'functions'. It seems that even the writers of manifestos have to reflect on the future relevance of many topical themes and issues. They can not just give 'answers' satisfying the current situation. They must choose between various topical issues, questions and interpretations. In keeping up with the increasing number of political questions, the process of revising manifestos is an essential arena of practising and maintaining the participants' own political thinking. Everyday party life does not usually leave room for this kind of practice.

At the moment, many of those who profoundly participate in the process of writing party programmes are interested in continuous programmatic discussions, because the objectives of politics have changed and are in constant motion. The rhetorical aspects of manifestos have become crucial. Finally, the search for the legitimisation of any future action plays an important role in discussions between party members and leaders. These discussions are important because it is believed that they produce a wider range of commitments than appears in the accepted paper. The rhetorical aspects of manifestos also stress the necessity of preparing party members for the implementation of future decisions. The programme discussion also includes an explanation to party members and other audiences why it is no longer possible to simply introduce and begin to attain unambiguous targets. All things considered, discussions during the process of revising manifestos are related to the weakening ability of parties to control and to direct 'social discussions'. To put it briefly, par-

ties have to listen to other political actors more sensitively than before.

Conclusions

The present system of organising political representation via political parties is a hybrid system in many ways. It has elements from all the three main traditions of political representation: ‘the people as sovereign’, ‘parliament as sovereign’ and the ‘manifesto democracy’. This has resulted in conflicting conceptions of party programmes.

On the one hand, the established parties stress that their decisions should be derived from their programmes, confirmed together with the party organisation and in accordance with the ‘manifesto democracy’. However, the role of a party organisation often appears to be only ritual when party leaders are seeking a more stable status for themselves by repeating general issues which do not actually rouse conversation. Furthermore, Aarnio’s analysis (1998) revealed that there still are plenty of persons – among rank-and-file members and party supporters in particular – who are looking for clear ‘answers’, and who would like to base their vote on the plans of rivalling parties. On the other hand, it is no longer possible to present detailed plans in programmes because of the increasing political contingency. This directs attention to a political actor and his/her capability to make decisions and to evaluate political situations independently according to the circumstances.

The status of political parties has changed dramatically in Finland since the late 1960s and early 1970s. At that time one could speak about ‘party power’. Today parties and politicians have to compete for, or even struggle over, people’s attention. This not only creates new demands on party politics and the conceptions of a party programme, but also – taking into account how conceptions of a party programme are in a state of flux – provides new chances for utilising party programmes as a means of politicisation. It seems evident that using a party programme as a means of politicisation presupposes taking distance from the models of mass-party, catch-all party and cartel party, and the conceptions of the party programme typical to each.

Perhaps party programmes will increasingly initiate new debates. This was the way some Finnish programme writers of the 1990s described their conceptions of a party programme (for more of 'compete for symbolic power', see Aarnio 1998, 220-224). It was also interesting to see that those who emphasised the role of a party programme as an initiator of social and political debate also stressed the importance of the rhetoric of provocation more than the rhetoric of integration. The aim of a rhetoric of provocation is in utilising the increasing political contingency, and its starting point stems from the belief that nothing is certain. There are always chances for acting in another way. Thinking about the different political roles of a party, these new politicisers – i.e., 'political poets' – are more often than not accustomed socio-political debaters who usually come from outside the party bureaucracy. Party decision makers, bureaucrats, rank-and-file members and party supporters still adhere more to the traditional mass-party model and the conception of a party programme typical to it. Top party leaders seem to be an exception in this respect. In Finnish politics there are clear signs, at the end of the 1990s, that party leaders are not very interested in 'ideological' party programmes, but seem to be more interested in and ready to emphasise more topical political issues. This again means, in the short run, increasing leader-centered party politics.

When we come to the 1990s it seems evident that the main Finnish political parties are wavering between two challenges. The main temptation appears to be the 'fruits' which the cartel situation seems to offer to its participants. The stability of the whole political system and political order is one of the most desired goals. The other challenge seems to be more risky – at least for cartel parties. The question here is taking full advantage of the increasing contingency in the electoral arena in particular.

Challenges posed by dealignment processes are also known for the main parties. They are trying to answer the challenge by developing and taking care of the cartel. Their more or less spontaneous answer has – in Finland, as elsewhere – been a contested competition in the electoral arena. Competition cannot totally be avoided, however, the cartel parties are willing to restrict the competition by trying to depoliticise the electoral struggle. This means avoiding – if possible – seriously conflicting issues in party programmes and in

election competition. This is all the more important because big issues nowadays often divide parties from within. However, the writing process of a manifesto forms a profitable forum in which factions of a party can express their ideas and views. This debate does not usually appear as such in the programme, but it can serve as a medium in decreasing pressures inside a party.

Instead of trying consciously to politicise elections, cartel parties are competing with general and positive, but at the same time, vague themes which are often even common issues among the main parties. We can say 'common' in the sense that all main parties in the cartel are willing to discuss the same topic. This has resulted in video ads in elections, which today seem to have the role of an election programme, that increasingly resemble commercial advertisements, utilising more connotations and symbolism than traditional ideological narratives.

This inconvertible trend of general themes can easily be perceived when analysing the election manifestos for the 1999 parliamentary election. A party expressed a nonnegotiable goal extremely seldom. For example, the Greens would not participate in a government that engaged in the building of a fifth nuclear power plant.

Taking full advantage of increasing contingency might mean risking the whole cartel, or at least one's participation in the cartel. It is risky especially if a cartel party turns out to be unsuccessful in mobilising new voters to such a degree that it would impossible to ever think about a landslide victory. A big victory would, in principle, make it possible for a party either to enlarge its ability to politically manoeuvre within the cartel, or even to dissolve the cartel. So, the price of taking the risk and trying to fully utilise the increasing contingency and increased possibilities for political action can become high. Getting out of the cartel may mean being removed from the governing coalition and thereby losing the chances to deliver state funding to interest organizations and groups close to the party[8]. In 'normal circumstances', this is exactly the way cartel parties make themselves necessary and legitimate for party members, followers, and interest groups, by mediating between the state and civil society, i.e., how the cartel parties play their representative role.

Party programmes have at least three main functions or roles in the cartel model of today. For the cartel parties, the programme must

have at least the following functions: The party programme should show in a convincing way that the party is up-to-date – that they understand what is going on in the world, Europe and in the country. Knowing the *Zeitgeist* is not, however, enough. The party and its programme also have to be able to show that the party understands what *Zeitgeist* means for the country, its citizens and in particular for party sympathisers – that the party is interested in its constituents. In order to be successful, the party must show 'knowing', 'know-how', and empathetic understanding in the sense of 'I feel your pain'. All this is intended to help take the initiative in political discussion without, however, breaking up the cartel. Thirdly, it is significant to keep in mind that the drafting of a manifesto is an arena where the party's principles are chosen and legitimated. This means that, at the same time, the choices from a wide range of policies are made. The writing process provides an opportunity to discuss the possibilities and the bounds of action. This is particularly important when there are fractions within a party. It is important to prepare these fractions for future decision making.

Party programmes can have a very different role for parties outside the cartel. A programme can be a necessary tool in the endeavour of breaking up, or at least shaking up the cartel. Katz and Mair say this in the following way: "New parties seeking to break into the system may, of course, campaign for support on the basis of a wide variety of ideological appeals" (Katz and Mair, 24). This is, of course, possible for those main parties who wish to take the risk of challenging the cartel. Inside the cartel parties, the disintegration of one dominating conception of a party programme gives new room to those individuals and groups who are willing to use a programme process for politicising the struggle within a party.

Notes

[1] The empirical analysis of the changing conceptions of party programmes in Finland from the early 1950s to the 1990s is based on Eeva Aarnio's dissertation (Aarnio 1998). Her research material consisted of newspaper articles, materials from party congresses, archival records and interviews of both rank-and-file members and the key participants in party

programme revision processes. The primary parties of the analysis are the Agrarian/Centre Party/Finnish Centre (Maalaisliitto/Keskustapuolue/ Suomen Keskusta r.p.) and the National Coalition Party (Kansallinen Kokoomus r.p.). Six other parties were also taken into consideration as secondary parties: the Finnish Christian Union, the Finnish Rural Party, the Left Wing Alliance, the Liberal People's Party, the Finnish Social Democratic Party and the Young Finns.

[2] See, for instance, Katz and Mair (1995), table 1, p. 18. Katz's and Mair's article is otherwise important, and we follow their model of the stages of party development.

[3] Following this idea we use, in the article, such phrases as a 'programme forum' and a 'programme process'. Our intention in using these phrases is to emphasise that, in order to understand different conceptions of party programmes, we must take into account the whole process of a party programme starting from the need to reform an old programme and ending up with the use of a new programme for political action.

[4] Proportional representation, according to the d'Hondt allocation method, is used in Finland, and therefore election agreements are essential for smaller groups and parties.

[5] In Finland a party programme is given a priority in the hierarchy of programmes. Other manifestos, such as special and election programmes, are seen to derive from a party programme which is always confirmed by a party congress or another very authoritative body of a party. Wider party programmes and election programmes with short slogans and some essential themes have usually coexisted. Special programmes intended for special policy sectors, however, became common and popular only in the 1960s and 1970s.

[6] Note the new challenges to the so-called Scandinavian model, i.e., countries characterized as being exceptionally stable politically (Lane, Martikainen, Svensson, Vogt and Valen 1993). According to the authors, Scandinavian exceptionalism is now becoming history. "The major signs of instability showing up in Western Europe during the 1970s have finally reached highly stable Scandinavia. Volatility is up, the party system is changing and the welfare state has been reconsidered. The standard idioms about Nordic politics are no longer valid" (ibid., 196).

[7] The slogan of the Finnish Centre in the 1999 parliamentary election.

[8] "In particular, there is the danger that a party that is excluded from government will also be excluded from access to resources" (Katz and Mair 1995, 16).

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BOOK REVIEWS

Iisa Räsänen

CONCEPTS BETWEEN WORDS AND MEANINGS

Iain Hampsher-Monk, Karin Tilmans and Frank van Vree (eds.) (1998): History of Concepts. Comparative Perspectives. Amsterdam, University of Amsterdam Press. 293 pages.

In publishing a variety of articles on conceptual history in the same language within one book, the Dutch researchers of conceptual history have created a valuable work. The book presents a conceptual orientation for history, for texts and also for images. One of its main points is to highlight various ways of approaching historical texts in their own right, as opposed to reading on the conditions of the present and from the perspective of the interpreter. However, there are some major problems connected to this approach to history in its own right, which I will return to later in this review.

Iain Hampsher-Monk writes in his article that in the conceptual historical style of analysis, texts are not read in order to provide reasons for previously existing claims, theories or ways of writing history, but rather to create an interpretation of the past as represented in textual material and in relation to its own historical context.The aim is to attempt to detect intended meanings, or at least various meanings given to concepts in the context in which they were used, by taking into account both what was possible and what was impos-

sible to thematise during that particular time.This contextualisation differs from the unhistorical philosophical treatment of concepts. One of the main differences is the opposition to anachronism inherent in the orientation of conceptual history when it is described as Hampsher-Monk does do it.

Terence Ball formulates this a bit differently: "One of the tasks of the conceptual historian is to address this sense of strangeness, of difference, not to make it less strange or different, but to make it more comprehensible, to shed light on past practices and beliefs, and in so doing to stretch the linguistic limits of presentday political discourse...conceptual change gives us something to wonder about...." (p. 75) In other words, Ball appreciates the role of strangeness in difference. He stresses the importance of not attempting to rationalise the differences between human beings into any kind of standardised normalcy.

Nor does conceptual history style of reading aim at describing history as such, or articulating "what really happened". Rather, it focuses on the problematic relationship between events and history in the form of a tale being told about them. On a meta-level, the conceptual history approach takes seriously both the relationship between language and events and the analysis of existing debates.

In a way, this book makes conceptual history more easily accessible, in that until now major publications in the field have remained more or less scattered, or at least continental and Anglo-American variants of the tradition have been separate from one another. This book is a first attempt to compare these traditions and to try to provide a general overview of the field.

The book presents a summary of existing thought on conceptual history in a manner that is well suited to the subject matter itself. In the presentation of conceptual history by several authors and from various viewpoints, one acquires an understanding of it not as a unitary method, but rather as a collection of inter-related ways of approaching historical texts. These approaches may be understood more or less differently by different analysts, and they may also contradict each other.

The combination of theoretical perspectives and various concrete examples is well chosen in the book. According to this choice, the book is divided into three sections, which together provide a com-

prehensive view of the aspects of conceptual history. The first section is a theoretical introduction to the orientation of conceptual history. It provides a common fixed point about the subject matter for both the authors and readers. This is a good point of departure especially for those readers not yet familiar with the subject. It helps their becoming acquainted with the kinds of themes dealt with in conceptual history, as well as the various perspectives on these topics that are available. This provides a theoretical background for further studies; it is a metaphorical giant upon whose shoulders one can climb in order to see further, or in some cases also nearer.

For a more experienced researcher of conceptual history, the disposition of the book is also interesting. The articles contain details worth noticing, many well grounded and clever interpretations of the publications of "the great names" in the field, especially of the so-called Anglo-American variant of conceptual history. A number of quotations from original texts are analysed and allowed to speak on their own behalf. The theoretical section of the book also includes an article by Reinhart Koselleck (published in German in 1986). It is valuable in that it complements the book's otherwise overwhelmingly interpretative hold by providing a conceptualisation of how one of the "founding fathers" of the tradition himself understands conceptual history's points, aims and attitudes towards concepts, texts, history or events, the world and human beings.The republication of this article is a concrete example of the way in which the book leaves room for the texts themselves and for the readers' interpretation of them.

The second part of the book mainly concentrates on the question of how to go about reading from a conceptual history perspective in relation to concrete research problems. The contributors illustrate the way in which some historical texts are analysed through paying attention to the inherent conceptual variation within them. One can see how through this means of analysis it is possible to gain an understanding of the context, the language used, the events taking place and the concept(s) themselves. In the third part of the book, the significance of language and concepts in conceptual history is slightly relativised through widening the horizon of studies in conceptual history. This is accomplished through the incorporation of images as sources of this kind of reading.

The Book as a Textbook

The book may be regarded as a basic textbook of conceptual history, but a textbook in the positive sense of the word. It aims neither at providing a definition of conceptual history nor a single standardised manner of performing this kind of research. Instead, it offers the reader different explications and examples on the basis of which one can construct a specific means of reading texts in the style of conceptual history. This material can be interpreted and applied in different ways. It provides information regarding conceptual history from slightly different perspectives, to which a reader may connect his or her own studies in a personal manner.

This book succeeds in the difficult task of remaining perspectivistic by simultaneously conserving the plurality of the research field – regardless whether this figuration is a conscious or haphazard solution. Contributing to this is the presentation of several articles which illuminate various well-selected sides of conceptual history by different authors and from different perspectives in a single volume. Such a figuration is suitable for becoming familiar with the point of conceptual history; it does not attempt to sustain the illusion of an objective truth regarding conceptual history itself.

Some contributors, however, seem to try desperately to transcend conceptual history's perspectivism. Why not instead be openly perspectivistic by attempting to explicate one's own viewpoint as thoroughly and in as much detail as possible, in order, for example, to increase its consciousness?

The actual nature of a textbook also poses a risk to the book. Namely, the risk of a reader's viewing conceptual history as a readily existing method or collection of methodological instruments to be applied as such to any material, without carefully considering how it could be useful in the specific context of one's own study. The risk is to do research without problematising conceptual history as a method. It is both a strength and a weakness of the book that it makes conceptual history in a sense so easily accessible. The danger of people wanting to get off too easily is always lurking. However, this is not a shortcoming of the book itself, but rather is dependent on the attitude readers take towards the book, and how they read and apply it.

In fact, more or less for the same reasons that the book is a textbook, it is also something else. Namely, it is perhaps too laden to be a textbook. It contains such a broad range of details and more general views that it is impossible to absorb in a quick reading, as is typically the case with textbooks. However, perhaps this kind of figuration could become a new variant within the genre of textbooks. At least anthologies of this kind do not succeed in watering down most of the interesting details and aspects by telling overly abbreviated and generalised stories, which run the risk of saying nothing at all – or at least nothing new or interesting. As a wide ranging collection of multiple details and ideas, the book is not a textbook to be imitated, rather it is intended to be applied following one's own thinking and according to one's own research problems. If regarded as an effort in reforming the tradition of writing textbooks, the book is unconditionally valuable regardless of what the results of a future reformation might be. In a sense, the publication of this book can be seen as a catalyst of such a reformation.

Connected to the role of the book as a kind of a textbook, it is not surprising that its title is exceedingly flat and "realistic". It describes the theme of the book on a general level, although it fails to say anything special. There is no brilliant perception in it. In a way, however, the title is also well chosen for this particular book. The book itself is a bit flat, although it reveals quite a lot about conceptual history. However, the book primarily includes ideas that have already been presented elsewhere. It attempts to present conceptual history in a way which is overly un-anachronistic as such, and fails to think its problematics through in a personal manner. For example, it takes too seriously the thesis of opposing anachronism, which it propagates. On the level of substance, it fails to contribute much of anything new to conceptual history, although it does include plenty of material through which a sensitive reader can detect somewhat strange interpretations, or which is possible to use as a foundation for elaborating something personal.

There is a certain sense of "Dutchness" which is inwritten in the book. In the Introduction, the importance of the specific Dutch perspective of this kind of collective work on conceptual history is emphasised. The Dutch are said to have been able to participate in different European modes of thought as a result of the Netherlands'

location in the heart of Europe, directly in the cross-fire of the interaction between various ideas. This special opportunity that has been available to the Dutch is explained as their strength, it has made it possible for them to participate in and understand different modes of thought.In other words, they have been "natural" experts of conceptual history.

However, much the same could also be said about Finland, for example, or about any given country on its own special terms. Because of its being partly separated from but also near continental Europe, which is in a sense one of the centres of western culture, it is possible for Finns to see longer than others by utilising their specific position as both outsiders and insiders in a particular manner. In fact, an attempt at legitimising the special role of the Dutch in publishing such an anthology of conceptual history would be rather insignificant. Namely, the risk of overly self-contented naturalisation lurks near. As such, the book is valuable regardless of such things as the authors' national context and whether or not the context provides any specific or quasi-natural motivation for creating such a book.

Shortcomings and New Possibilities

The book leaves untouched a number of main problems that are currently connected to the conceptual history style of reading, such as the problem of anachronism, but also, for example, the relationship between concepts and events. This becomes especially problematic when related to the ways how main questions for studies of conceptual history are posed in this book. For example, Hans Erich Bödeker expresses the need of clarifying the relationship between a concept and its meaning and a word and a concept. According to Bödeker, "As long as the relationship between concept and meaning is not clarified, the historiographic *Begriffsgeschichte* – in the sense of a history of consciousness – is constantly in danger of remaining merely a history of ideas. Are concepts, as meanings of expressions, language-immanent phenomena? In other words, does a word refer to something extra-linguistic by the mere fact that it expresses a concept, or not until it becomes the term (*Bezeichnung*) for manifesta-

tions included within the concept? Do we assume concrete or abstract entities behind the meanings of an expression?...The methodology of *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* leaves the concept of meaning generally undefined." (p. 57) Bödeker concludes his article by stressing this worry: "A more detailed analysis of these relations, however, still needs to be conducted." (p. 64)

In a sense this relationship is problematic for conceptual history as long as conceptual historians regard it as such. But if the researchers could somehow bury the problem and give up on emphasising it, as opposed to further intensifying it by referring to these aspects as such central questions, the solution to which could somehow potentially solve the problems of the studies of conceptual history, these aspects might regain more realistic proportions and be simplified into a question of adopting a conceptual historian's attitude in relation to these matters as well.

In fact I do not understand why some conceptual historians so desperately want to solve these kinds of questions. Could it not simply be that there is no single relationship between a concept and its meaning or a concept and a word, but the two are intertwined so that they effect each other and are in this sense inseparable? The relationship may be different within different contexts and for different speakers – just as concepts themselves are ambiguous and change in the sense of being understood differently in different times, contexts and by different speakers. The relationship between concepts and meanings or words is not a unitary one that can be solved once and for all. Instead, it varies according to different situations. In fact, I regard these to a large extent rather as un-problems than problems.

A word is not always something unchangeable, something that has no history, but what a word is may also change from one context to another within certain, also changing limits. A word is not so different from and not only different from a concept, although it is still useful to have different concepts for a word and for a concept, and to make some distinctions between them. This helps to specify and situate some of their differences and similarities. However, what is important is the attitude of conceptual historians towards this classification or categorisation between words and concepts. If it is regarded as a 'black-and-white' one, so that things can be divided according to it exhaustibly and without exception, then it is a danger-

ous category. But if it is taken more as an instrument whose relationship to "reality" is relative and a bit indefinite, and with the help of which one is able to articulate something about something, then it is a useful tool which helps people to more consciously understand similarities and differences. If it is taken as a readily existing model or a grid, whose suitability to a given situation is not problematised, then it is unjust to the lively and changing character of reality that is to the very basic starting point of conceptual history. For these reasons, the attempt to clarify the relationship between a concept and a word should not be the task of a conceptual historian – at least not to any great degree.The danger of closed definitions is always lurking.

For example, both in his article here and in his other publications, Koselleck provides slightly different interpretations of concepts and words, such as concepts being words with specific historical meanings and also some others. This lack of a single definition is a wise strategy for approaching the "problem", in that it pushes it aside in order to be able to do substantive research.

Similarly, a concept and a meaning can simultaneously be separated and not separated. Neither of them is umambiguous – and this is exactly the subject matter of conceptual history research. For this reason, I do not understand the worry expressed, for example, by Bödeker about the clarification of the relationship between a concept and its meaning. Such a clarification could potentially destroy research in the conceptual history tradition as we know it. And as a tradition concentrating on the changing character of human reality, it still has a lot to give although it is unclear to which extent it is meaningful to aim at articulating what was intended by someone within a particular context. A better solution is to tell what is possible to interpret from a text in relation to its contextual background, what was possible to thematize in a specific situation, and in what sense that what was said can be regarded meaningful.

In fact, stories about peoples actions in relation to other people and events, and about their speaking in different contexts may be told indefinitely. People are quite good at connecting things and finding links between things which at a first glance may look incomprehensible in relation to one another. If a person succeeds in finding an explicatory factor which makes things that initially appeared im-

possible to unite coincide with one another, it is a typically human way of thinking to begin to believe that these things really belong together. And after making this one linkage, people easily begin to explain all or at least many events they encounter according to this great theoretical invention of theirs, however strange it may look to explain a single event according to this theory – and in fact in many cases, the more enthusiastic the explanation, the odder the linkage may seem.

Concepts and Events

A third "problem" of conceptual history, namely the relationship between concepts and events, is in many respects reminiscent of the two others.There may be no single relationship between concepts and events to be caught by a given clarification. Rather, they too are intertwined.

For example, some years ago people in Finland quite commonly referred to a banking crisis. However, in a metaphysical sense, a banking crisis did not exist as such. Instead, the concept of a banking crisis and the words chosen to characterise the events already shaped the understanding of the events that were taking place. To refer to these events as a crisis assigned a different tone to them than, for example, referring to the reorganisation of banks would have. Of course, major changes occurred within the Finnish banking system, some banks were forced to close, some merged with one another, and a number of people were fired from their jobs. However, the choice of crisis related terminology gave an alarming tone to these events. For example, the events were not regarded as presenting an opportunity for something new, or a promise of a better or at least different future, but rather as something to be feared and fiercely opposed. In fact, even the connection between these events was also to a certain degree produced by the terminology used, names given and so forth. The discourse about the crisis partially produced the understanding of the situation as a crisis, and other concepts would have provided different interpretations of the events, which in turn would have altered people's reactions to the events as well as the events themselves. Concepts and events are intertwined, as are con-

cepts, words and meanings; they are all entangled. Yet there are still points in making these distinctions, as long as one understands and keeps in mind their relative nature.

To a certain degree, conceptual historians admit and try to take seriously the thing that words and events intertwine inseparably. In conceptual history, stories about events as well as language or the terminology used have an effect on what human beings think about events, and furthermore, what these events "are" for them. In turn, these events affect the language used. When done insightfully, the conceptual history style of reading has succeeded in opening this mesh a bit. However, in the future this admission could be made more consciously among conceptual historians by abandoning the aim of over-clarifying this relationship.

It is difficult to comprehend why many conceptual historians go to such great lengths to try to solve the problematic relationship between these basic figures of conceptual history, or at least do not cease to stress the importance of this problem for conceptual history. A better solution would be to concentrate on doing specific studies in order to tell detailed stories about past events and their different significance for different people, and about conflicts that result from people's different understandings, and ways of evaluating and seeing things in relation to specific contexts. More "fundamental" questions could be left in peace more than nowadays. A much broader range of results could be acquired through this strategy than by obstinately attempting to solve something inherently unsolvable. Fighting against windmills is quite hopeless.

Instead of finishing telling stories about the past or different people, some elements in the orientation of conceptual history could be made more conscious and thus turned more as strengths than as weaknesses. Namely, conceptual history's orientation makes sensitive to different assumptions, tones, appreciations, condemnations and the like, which are typical of human language (p. 7).The conceptual history style of reading helps us to see a given situation from the viewpoint of differences. Thus, it helps us to thematise a most human way of being: that of personally interpreting whatever situation, whatever symbols. One never knows what another person is actually referring to when using a particular word, concept or other symbol.

What I have said points to an understanding of linguistic categories more as relative instruments than as a basis or foundation on which one can build, for example, values or a world view. Most things cannot be categorised as inherently true or false. Rather, what particular features are emphasised and the way in which these features are interpreted is dependent upon the viewer, viewpoint and context. Most things may be both true and false, because they have different sides, which people understand and stress differently. Thus, the categorisation of true and false may rather be used as an instrument, than as an Ockhamian razor which determines which things belong to what group. The groups are not all that separate from one another, although the division into parties may still be useful and interesting. It is not something that should be completely done away with, but is something which should be relativised from its currently over-emphasised position.The "model" sketched here is of course more an antimodel, than a model in the sense of a systematic world-explanation. Its aim is not to be taken too literally.

Rather than agreeing with the thesis that conceptual history would remain too close to the history of ideas as long as the relationship between a concept and its meanings were not somehow clarified, I claim quite the opposite: if the relationship were to be solved, in a sense conceptual history would begin to fall into the same category as, for example, the history of ideas. In any case, it would lose its particularity. This clarification would eliminate the tension of variation that is typical of conceptual history, that is somehow part of its originality. As long as conceptual history also in this respect succeeds in taking seriously its own thesis of not searching for clear-cut definitions or clarifications in order to highlight alterations, it may sustain itself as a perspectivistic research tradition that is concerned with the dimension of change in the human condition. If it were to fall into the trap of clarification, it may be lost or at least changed into something else.

The book does contain possibilities for slightly renewing current forms of conceptual history. This revision could occur by making conceptual history's operations and attitudes towards itself and its main questions more explicit. However, all in all, the book fails to do this. It does not take the opportunity that it opens, it does not utilise the resources at hand by regarding them from a slightly differ-

ent viewpoint than has been done so far. This problem becomes clear especially in the epilogue written by Martin van Gelderen. Van Gelderen speaks about "a labyrinth of questions about the relationship between language and material reality" (p. 228) and "about the interrelationship between concept and political language" (p. 228). He refers to these problematics as "at times verging on the chicken-egg banality"(p. 228), but then he continues by stating that this is "a recurrent theme"(p. 228) in conceptual history. The importance of these problematics currently holds true, although its problematic nature is derivative of precisely this kind of over-emphasis of problematics. Neither van Gelderen nor any of the other authors explicitly formulate the matter in a way in which, although the relationship is possibly quite simple, on a more detailed level these questions would be impossible to solve because of their multiple labyrinth like nature. The clue of this labyrinth could be that there is no clue.

After all, the book is a courageous attempt to present a wide research tradition by providing examples of it from an openly chosen and conscious perspective. This lively characteristic of the book is both its strength and its weakness. Its weakness in the sense that it also includes some shortcomings, and strength in the sense that it is a unique publication worth being noted and used by any scholar interested in history, political science, linguistics and other related fields. The illustration of conceptual history drawn in this book is a work of art in the sense that it includes edges that are not too rounded off. As such, the book offers a unique kaleidoscope, which has significant aesthetic value. It is beautiful as a piece of art, in spite of and because of its shortcomings, although not in the sense of faultless perfection. It leaves the field of conceptual history open to be analysed by others with and without the help of what has been said in this book and also by exceeding, passing or falling short of it.

Matti Hyvärinen

THE TROPES OF MR RHETORICAL TURN

John S. Nelson (1998): Tropes of Politics. Science, Theory, Rhetoric, Action. Madison and London. The University of Wisconsin Press. 291 pages.

John S. Nelson, more than anyone else, deserves the credit for launching and arguing for a "rhetorical turn" in political science. In addition to rhetoric, Nelson has been recognized in the wider field of political theory (see: *Tradition, Interpretation and Science, Political Theory in The American Academy*, 1986). These fields of rhetoric and theory meet elegantly in Nelson's extensive work on politics and films, politics and spy stories and so on. It has been characteristic of Nelson to have an impassioned interest, theoretically, politically and aesthetically, in widely consumed and influential products of (political) culture, instead of focusing on the highbrow, avant-garde side of the arts. However, you cannot see Clint Eastwood's *Unforgiven* solely as a "realist Western" (as critics in Finland typically put it) after reading Nelson's breath-taking analysis of the film. Nelson is probably one of the few academics who may warmly recommend John D. MacDonald as a good read.

As a veteran of the rhetorical turn, Nelson has not written an easy introduction to the rhetorics of politics. His new book, *Tropes of Poli-*

tics: Science, Theory, Rhetoric, Action, is both a thick intellectual summary of Nelson's work over the last decades, and a provocative new start for postmodernist and playful strategies of research and writing. Any solicitous reviewer will obviously be frustrated in the face of the richness of perspectives, ideas and themes of the book. To escape this dilemma, I choose to be selective and try to show how to use some ideas of the book in practice.

One of the key merits in Nelson's approach to the 'rhetoric of politics' is the great number of levels and links between political science and rhetoric. The book does not only proffer the pair of "rhetoric of inquiry" and "rhetorical study of politics" but unfolds to several other directions as well. In his discussion on the 'rhetoric of inquiry', Nelson challenges the strict disciplinary boundaries between political science and the other social sciences, and, in particular, the humanities. In this way, 'rhetoric' also appears in the role of a common disciplinary background of political and social sciences. This tribute to the joint background of humanities and social sciences also implies a conscious deviation from the Aristotelian (and Perelmanian) legacy: "Unfortunately Aristotle tended to sunder poetics from rhetorics, whereas (as Kenneth Burke has suggested) we need to meld them" (p. 137). Nelson's rhetoric includes then – in addition to ethos, pathos and logos – also the *mythos* and aesthetic rhetoric in general.

If constructivists generally recognize a certain *ontological* aspect of rhetoric (in the sense that social and political realities are rhetorically construed), Nelson insists on an *epistemological* role of rhetoric. The forms, figures and tropes of knowing and sharing the knowledge are themselves rhetorical, and sagacious scholars should therefore be more conscious of these aspects of knowing in order to better evaluate their argumentation. Finally, Nelson is not a new dreary accountant-cum-killer of rhetoric who tediously categorizes and analyzes the various sorts of rhetorics in political science without a genuine talent in using and playing with these faculties.

One of the themes Nelson discusses throughout the book is the role of method in political science. He is constantly worried about the way the elegance of method is substituted for richness of politics. The crudest misunderstanding of the book is to assume that Nelson argues for rhetoric as a new method for political science. The

point is not to replace all the old methods but the misguided expectations attached to these methods. "(R)ecent political sciences tend to substitute devices of assumption and method for adequate, persuasive argumentation. Thus they generate peculiar notions of theory, method, models, logic, testing, evidence, objectivity, and other supposed parts of scientific inquiry" (p. 73). The first thing to notice above is Nelson's notion of *several* political sciences, and the rejection of the strife between one or two political sciences. The rhetoric of inquiry helps to argue better with methods, it helps to focus on argumentation instead of pure and clean method.

If "substantive theories" do not inform the choice of research topics, methods and methodism can take their place. Nelson poignantly ridicules current practices by noting how in "political science, research topics come mostly from filling holes in the literature and addressing current issues in politics" (p. 79). In small countries, and 'marginal' political sciences, this "hole-filling" is a generally known and often very successful strategy in establishing international relevance. Within established methodologies, there is almost always a particular "Finnish hole" to be filled, making "X in Finland" a valid start for a practically unending series of mainstream studies.

However, there is no easy way to escape methods: "That methods are the subject of some of the loosest talk in the discipline should not obscure their pivotal role..." (p. 94). How can this pivotal role be properly understood? What political scientists need is "methods tailored specifically to its topics" (p. 95). Nelson's criticism here is directed to an independent 'science of method', methodology. If we now compare Nelson's discussion on method and his program of 'rhetoric of inquiry', we can find a clear parallelity and consequentiality of argument. The rhetoric of inquiry is of no virtual use if it be practiced by people *outside* the political research itself. Rhetorical sensitivities are beneficial only as far as they are included in the practical political research, and when they are not simply used to seize the old places of methodology or the philosophy of science. Nelson's summary of his discussion on method is worth remembering: "When we cannot rely uncritically on data or methods, we must rely – communally and critically – on ourselves" (p. 98).

The centrality of methods is, of course, institutionally secured in various degree requirements. Unfortunately, Nelson passes over this

institutional dilemma of doctoral students who mostly cannot help but continue the search for 'sure' methods.

In the beginning of the book, Nelson outlines an interesting program of research for a 'rhetoric of political inquiry'. Again, he emphasizes the embeddedness of his project in actual research by renaming this approach as the 'politics of political science'. One of his key proposals is to suggest that "the approved and quasi-official rhetorics of political research differ significantly from the informal and usually underground rhetorics of political inquiry" (p. 12). I find the rhetoric of "underground" here more confusing than clarifying, but the contrast between quasi-officially declared rhetorics and what is allowed to oneself in practice (privately or publicly) is certainly worth studying. According to Nelson, "approved" rhetorics is typically employed in methods textbooks, in book chapters and during underground courses, whereas "underground" rhetorics can be found in private conversations, field notes, in prefaces and acknowledgements as well as in research help for Ph.D. students (p. 55).

Nevertheless, these two sides of rhetorics can also be detected from the very same texts. An "approved" version is typically something that is demanded from others, whereas the "underground" version is more or less allowed for oneself. To illustrate this point I discuss a book review written by a Finnish professor of political science, Matti Wiberg. The review was published in the semi-academic journal *Kanava* (8/1998, pp. 511-513). The review clearly belongs to the category of popularized science, which, according to Nelson, has a strong tendency towards "underground" rhetorics. The book reviewed introduces and re-discusses current debates of "life politics" in Finnish. Wiberg's review is thoroughly critical, even outright negative. The title, *"The Rubbish of Today"*, promptly conveys the message. "The book does not report new results of research but is an incoherent, incontinuous and poorly edited collection of articles based on lectures introducing some fashionable thoughts". This contrast between real research and nonsensical discussion is then radicalized: "Why don't sociologists research the Finnish reality instead of introducing other people's abstract thoughts about how to study societies and social changes?" So, there is an unproblematic "Finnish reality" waiting for research instead of futile theorizing. Wiberg further criticizes this category of theorists: "Their own arguments are seldom

supported by systematic evidence" and "the terms of falsfication for their own arguments are not specified, and their thoughts stretch to every direction". Instead of all this rubbish, Wiberg gives his "approved" solution: "Why not study the tested empirical methods of research instead and train oneself to apply them?"

I have no arguments about how apposite Wiberg's criticism may be. It is enough just to note the systematic usage of the approved rhetorics of the 'empirical political science' against the mere discussion on fashionable and useless theories. We can detect "empirical methods", "terms/conditions of falsification", "systematic evidence", "new results of research" and so on. The paradoxical thing in Wiberg's rhetoric, however, is that he himself does not employ the approved methods he suggests to the theorists. The criticized book is not analyzed "empirically", there are no text examples, no attempt at all to show the "terms of falsification" for Wiberg's own theses, no systematic evidence, not a word about the "Finnish reality" constructed in the book. Instead, there are much funnier devices of argument. The review begins with a long quotation from a Finnish historian, who had in 1907 criticized the changing intellectual fashions in Finland. Wiberg frames his story by saying: "These words by Gunnar Suolahti came to my mind when I read the (...) book *Life Politics*".

"Came to my mind"? What should a professional historian of political thought say about picking up colourful past statements with an introduction of "this came to my mind", before using them as *evidence* in current debates? Funny things do not stop here. Wiberg uses a forceful anecdote to clarify his point:

"I well recall how a few years ago Professor Risto Eräsaari, glowing with excitement, introduced new ideas by certain theoreticians during the Annual Conference of Political Science. No one could make head or tail of the lecture. The audience could not conceive of how the concepts introduced would have increased our knowledge about society, nor how they might be applied in concrete social science.

The only question that rose to my mind during the lecture was this: Have you wasted working hours by reading these books? Common decency only stopped me from posing this question. However, afterwards I have regretted this, since there were students present who in their gullibility may have taken the lecture seriously."

Wiberg, who demands strict methodological purism from his opponents, again frames his own argument by a biographical and totally subjective anecdote. The reader should assume the argument by "the only question that rose to my mind" as "systematic evidence"? How could any critic or commentator "falsify" these kinds of private musings? As a matter of fact, what comes to Matti Wiberg's mind in various situations is the final empirical criterion of truth. The general formula, "I don't understand", is a very typical trope of scientific argumentation. The speaker seemingly shows modesty but indicates that because of his/her non-understanding there is nothing worth understanding because 'everybody already knows how knowledgeable and understanding I am'.

However, Nelson's point is not exactly to reveal and ridicule incongruences between these two sorts of rhetorics. He suggests that the "underground" side of rhetorics should be studied and elaborated more thoroughly than the strictly-approved-texts would allow. For instance, the terms and conditions of using personal anecdotes as evidence should be discussed instead of being disguised. We should know, for instance, that in strictly personal anecdotes we cannot reliably claim to know what an "audience" felt and understood. And if the audience above had such unitary thoughts Wiberg claims, we can just wonder why Wiberg still was so worried for "gullible students". Anecdotes can teach a lot but not when used in unreflected ways.

Nelson outlines two basic ways that political science can surrender its relevance. In its search for clarity and method, it seems to have an inbuilt tendency to reduce action to behaviour, to cut the argument out. On the opposite side, the assignments of public debates are too easily assumed to be objectives of research. If "growth of government" is publicly discussed, there are number of political scientists who are instantly eager to study this pointed phenomenon. Proper political relevance is not, however, achieved by adopting rhetorically ready-made 'problems' and 'issues' from public debates. The debates cannot be reduced nor accepted as topic-givers, they must be studied themselves.

In his discussion and re-writing of classical rhetoric, Nelson offers a number of fresh perspectives. He wants to re-arrange, in a number of ways, the Aristotelian evaluation of rhetoric, poetics, and dialecti-

cal logic. "Precisely because of their analytical rigour, logic and dialectic are elliptical, whereas rhetorics and poetics are capable of completion precisely because of their practicality" (p. 137). A rhetorical analysis, says Nelson, "is a practical reality in its own right". This turning of tables is persuasive, still I am dubious whether even a rhetorical analysis could escape radical selectivity. Be that as it may, Nelson's argumentation against the Aristotelian dogma is admirable.

The major move, though, is to suggest *'mythos'* as the fourth basic 'mode' of argumentation besides ethos, logos, and pathos. The study of mythos is currently needed "in order to appreciate mass persuasion" (p. 137). Nelson suggests that a mythical analysis would include the same operations as Aristotle's study of *topoi*. The current usage of topics as synonym for issues is badly misleading because the Aristotelian topoi referred to permanent *tropes* of argument. For instance, "dividing activists into moderates and extremists is a commonplace of liberals" (p. 144). Besides topics, tropes, stories, and styles are relevant in the analysis of myths. The late-modern arrogance of eradicating past myths looks fairly naive after Nelson's discussion. The myths he discusses are not quite marginal. In contrast, he suggests the necessity to understand "how media aren't media, how representatives don't and can't represent, and how government doesn't govern" (p. 168).

One of his proposals is to articulate myths by studying rituals. His example, the US Senate debates on the Gulf War, gives insights on the rituality of the debates as well as the myths sustained. I have suggested a study on the Finnish academic rituals of dissertation. Even if dissertations are de facto accepted in the faculty meeting after the statements by two referees, a public, formal and festive debate is arranged. At the end of the public defence of the thesis, an opportunity to intervene is allowed to the audience but only with the clear implication that no-one should actually step forward. To my reading, the contradictory myths of "science is public", "science is tested knowledge" and "science is a sign of social rise" are supported by these rituals.

They are other elements in Nelson's book – say the "imaginative etymologies" – which did not thoroughly impress me. An admirer of Nelson's film analysis must still wait for his *Cowboy Politics*. However, his insistence on imagination and poetic play with the domi-

nant political imagery seems to me to be both a refreshing and relevant way to invent new political thinking. "Modern ideologies – liberalism, socialism, and even some species of conservatism – all imagine a state or government as a human machine for powering and regulating the (other) humans... What if the government was never a machine or a man?" (pp. 155-156). This certainly is a book of questions, and can therefore be recommended everywhere where questions and challenges are honoured in curriculum.

Suvi Soininen and Leena Subra

ANTHONY FARR ON OAKESHOTT AND SARTRE

Anthony Farr (1998): Sartre's Radicalism and Oakeshott's Conservatism. The Duplicity of Freedom. London, Macmillan Press Ltd.; New York, St. Martin's Press. 266 pages.

Anthony Farr has taken quite a challenge when starting to com pare two as interesting but also as notoriously difficult writers as Jean-Paul Sartre and Michael Oakeshott. It has certainly not been easy to find a way through the vast amount of original texts and commentary literature into an interpretation which would bring out the ideas the writer wishes to highlight and leave aside the more irrelevant discussions. It hasn't been easy to find the thematic and conceptual constructions where the ideas of the two writers encounter and where focussing on points of interest for political theory becomes both possible and fruitful.

This may be one of the reasons why, when reading the book, we find that it is somewhat difficult to see for which kind of audience this book is written. The text varies from a strong generalization to interpretations which call for a specific knowledge of the texts of the thinker in question. Farr offers us an overview of the history of philosophy which aims at construing clearly detectable traditions behind the conceptual divisions he employs as conceptual devices. However, his text tends to require such familiarity with reading philo-

sophical texts that the discussions he construes seem often both too long and superficial.

This, in its turn, may be the reason why it seems that the questions Farr uses to frame his discussion arise from here and there, without any specific order, continuity or even relation to the rest of the text. This almost gives an impression that the text has remained partly unthematized. It also seems that it is not yet finished in the sense that the writer could have said a lot more on the main issue had he reduced the extensive discussion on some of the major figures of Western thought – such as Descartes, Kant, Hegel, Husserl and Kierkegaard. We could perhaps even say that these thinkers in this text can be seen as figures whose notions seem to have been included for the sole purpose of construing a set of dichotomies though which Farr then advances – dichotomies which make it difficult to approach thinkers such as Oakeshott and Sartre.

The central ideas Farr brings forth in relation to these general questions could perhaps have been presented in a form of a thesis and used in a more hypothetical manner than is the case. Now this discussion has the undertone of an "obligatory" academic discussion which does not, in fact, much further his argument but, on the contrary, sounds like a language he was "forced to employ" (p. 252).

Therefore we feel that the text would have profited had Farr concentrated on his main theme, the construing of a relation between Sartre and Oakeshott. This relation, and the discussion it can generate, is a very interesting and promising setting for the questions Farr wishes to discuss. However, in the present form of the text the specific questions and profiling which might legitimate the reading of these two thinkers within the same framing remain all too vague.

In his book Farr aims at using Sartre's and Oakeshott's texts as examples through which he could construe a discussion of the notions of freedom, radicalism and conservatism and come to a better understanding of the disputes of the Left and the Right. In Farr's own words we could say that he opens a discussion where he wishes to "seek an academic understanding of the term" (of freedom) and of its use by the "political Left and Right" (p. 1).

In order to offer a view into the discussion of the book, let us forward an example. If the above formulates Farr's starting point, in his concluding remarks he formulates his thoughts by saying that

"for the Left, freedom and order are real, man creates disorder and discomfort which is his bondage whereas the Right views both order and freedom to be artifice, made by man in the face of natural, real and pervasive chaos." (p. 249, see also p. 245) Farr searches the division between what he names Left and Right from the divisions he construes on the basis of notions such as "real", "natural", "order" and "chaos" which we, as already pointed out, do not see as a fruitful way of approaching either Sartre's or Oakeshott's thoughts.

For an attentive reader it soon becomes obvious that Farr operates throughout his text with a strong set of dichotomies, such as the Kantian realm of action vs. reason (p. 23), causality vs. freedom (p. 24-25), Hegelian mind vs. being (p. 31-32), etc. This seems to limit his possibilities of engaging into the kind of play with notions that one would expect a writer to intend to construe in a context of thinkers so clearly without any common measure as Sartre and Oakeshott are. Farr's discussion, which could be an interesting venture into two largely neglected political theorists, seems to be limited from the very beginning by the definitions and dichotomies which exclude the very possibility of a conceptual play and which turn the discussion into an either/ or situation, or, at the most, into a confrontation on a ground where the conceptual premises which could be questioned in this setting, remain intact.

This is perhaps the most striking feature of Farr's text. It is a text which operates with expressions, notions and ideas presented as political and yet it turns out to be a text where the political is lost in the process of defining notions through these divisory conceptual devices. This can be seen both in the part of the text devoted to Sartre and in the one discussing Oakeshott. In the following Suvi Soininen will discuss Farr's views on Oakeshott and Leena Subra his views on Sartre.

Farr's Oakeshott and the Mimetic Thesis

Farr's manner of approaching Oakeshott seems to me somewhat indecisive. For one thing, he chronologically charts Oakeshott's major production from the *Experience and Its Modes* (1933), through

the postwar essays to the major work *On Human Conduct* (1975). By this 'close reading' he seeks to *understand* the development and shifts of Oakeshott's thinking in relation to the concept of freedom. This effort gains strength of a few contextual remarks that, so to say, add the meat around the bones of Farr's interpretation.

From the viewpoint of politics the obvious gain in this approach is noting the texts that usually do not get the attention deserved. Farr's stressing of the *The Claims of Politics* (1939) as a "brilliant insight into Oakeshott's attitude to politics" is a representative example (p. 178). This particular text seems to support Farr's earlier reflections on Oakeshott's (Bradleyan or British) idealism, because here the meaning of political system ('politics') is derived from the 'social whole'. Also, it is fair to remind of the expressions like 'mental vulgarity' that Oakeshott attaches to political action at the time.

However, Farr's analysis of the text paradoxically also reveals the main weakness of his total view on Oakeshott, i.e. the lack of consistent choice of viewpoint. For example, although he mentions the piece was a contribution to the *Scrutiny* symposium, he does not take the contextualization further. Here the operation would have been especially important, since Oakeshott's view on politics having far more significance at the crisis than 'normally', is certainly in junction with the public discussions of the specific year. Even a simple report of other contributions would have been helpful.

Instead, Farr immediately starts to follow a different route and reads the Hobbes article *Collective Dream of Civilization* (1947) as a further 'evidence' of what he calls a 'mimetic thesis' of Oakeshott's thinking. This thesis is actually what Farr seeks to defend in his *earlier* production, i.e. 'Hegelianism' understood as the primacy of a larger 'order' and 'inheritance' of which the structure of an individual mind is a (sort of) reflection. Again, the train of thought could have been potentially interesting *if* the claimed main theme were something other than the *political thought* of Oakeshott and Sartre. In the present form, even from a somewhat 'purely' philosophical point of view, Farr's persistent neglect of Aristotle and Hobbes in Oakeshott's thought seems odd, especially as the latter was the actual subject of the essay in question. And especially the discussion on scepticism and artificiality of human associations would have required more detailed accounts on Oakeshott's various writings on Hobbes. Yet,

Farr is content with the passing mentions of "the eloquent earthiness characteristic of their work" which shows itself in Oakeshott's work. Then, the fact remains that a reader familiar with Oakeshott's political philosophy and its previous reception does not gain notable benefit from reading this book.

Contrariwise, it is almost too easy to observe how following the changes of Oakeshott's work is, to use Farr's favourite terminology, only 'appearance' compared to the 'reality' of *judging* and *freezing* them in the book. As the fatal factor to Farr's view on politics seems to be that politics is a derivative and subordinate to philosophy it is quite easy to understand why Oakeshott's late production is not of much interest for him. In my mind [SS], the most revealing sentence is: "the question of freedom becomes philosophical in the fullest sense of the term" when one examines "the source of our power of understanding" or if "we have real command over the condition of psyche?" (p. 248) From this starting-point it is quite impossible to gain a deep understanding to Oakeshott's thought which – especially in *On Human Conduct* (1975) and *On History* (1983) – emphasizes the importance of historical understanding on political philosophy. One representative misconception is Farr's argument that in *On Human Conduct* Oakeshott turns away from the *mimetic* thesis of the self to the *pathetic* one. By this he means that "Oakeshott's self is the 'real' ground of individual character, it is a soul, a demiurge which uses practices to give itself expression." (p. 240) This kind of understanding would bring Oakeshott closer to the traditional Left view of freedom as "the liberation of an 'inner nature of man" which appears to be a sort of enemy to Farr (p. 248).

So, Farr ends up in 'defending' Oakeshott's 1940s and 50s essays as "one of the clearest doctrines of the Right view that there is no order beyond the structures which we inherit." (p. 249) Additionally he defines "the general theme of Oakeshott's output" as having a "dual purpose; specifying a narrow remit for government and circumscribing the authority of the intellectual." (p. 183) The latter 'conclusion' may of course be reasonably argued, but unfortunately in light of the whole book it seems more a repetition of conventional Oakeshott reception than a result of a research process. At least Farr's speaking of "the axiom of Oakeshott's thought" implies in this direction (p. 183). In relation to a thinker for whom philosophy showed

itself as an adventure and *en voyage* the statement simply is not appropriate.

To my view, then, Farr's book does injustice to Oakeshott's thinking – still an original one in the Anglophone political theory and rich in nuances – in two serious respects. First, the changes appearing in *On Human Conduct* certainly do not centre on the agent that could be named a "demiurge" entertaining some kind of inner freedom. The agent Oakeshott describes in *On Human Conduct* is an actor in *contingent situations* that require 'responses', i.e. different kind of choices between various possibilities. The agent and situation (or 'practices') simply cannot be separated from each other in a way that the agent's 'essence' or 'will' would precede the situation. Thus, I find it difficult to connect Farr's interpretation of an agent's reflective consciousness and freedom as a part of "our nature" (p. 229) with the very words by Oakeshott himself: "In short, conduct postulates what I shall call a 'free agent'. And I use the word 'free' because I am concerned here with the formal detachment from certain conditions which is intrinsic to agency, and not with the quality of being substantively 'self-directed' which an agent may or may not achieve.." (*OHC* 1996, 36.) And further, "freedom inherent in agency" means for Oakeshott a capability to understand and thus act in a situation – not in Farr's 'natural way' – but "as a 'historic' self-enacted reflective consciousness." (ibid., 37.) Farr neglects the interesting implications of Oakeshott's view on agency and action to political theory and their profound comparison with Sartre's comprehension on freedom and responsibility, i.e. the way of proceeding which the title of the book implies. Second, reinforcing the legend of Oakeshott's conservatism and naming his essays 'a doctrine' could be called rather high-handed. For those acquainted with Oakeshott's own texts and his 'definition' for a conservative *disposition* as "the inclination to enjoy what is present and available is the opposite of ignorance" this only sounds strange, but in those for whom Farr's book is the first encounter with Oakeshott this may hinder further interest in the subject (*On being Conservative*, 1956). Since Oakeshott has occasionally been treated even as a 'pre-Thatcherian' ideologist, it would be much more useful and important to stress his strong critique of rationalist style of

politics that equally has infected the politics of 'the Right' and 'the Left', in case one still wishes to use this dichotomizing grouping.

In short, if one wishes to point out one central deficiency in Farr's reading of Oakeshott, the lack of analysing the writings of 1960s and early 1970s serves as a good candidate. Although these texts are not numerous, they promote the understanding how Oakeshott's 'esteem' of political activity can be interpreted to have 'grown' or obtaining more space in his thinking. In particular, when keeping Farr's emphasis of reading in mind, I find Oakeshott's 'educational' essays highly illuminating, as they deal with the questions of agency from a viewpoint of *how* we *become* agents capable of responsibility. The texts make it clear that for Oakeshott freedom is no question of 'inner' or 'outer structures' but a 'feature' in a *contingent, historical* situation. Naturally, he himself values, e.g. many of the political practices in England, but more like a Rortyan 'conscious ethnocentrist' than merely wishing to maintain the status quo. I hope that in this light Oakeshott's reputation as a doctrinaire conservative could finally be buried and fresh interpretations would acquire more space.

Farr, Sartre, Political Freedom and Authenticity

Farr's central concern in his book is freedom which he defines in terms of the political: "[t]he freedom dealt with in this work is political freedom" (p. 1). For him freedom "is a concept which crosses the boundary of academic and everyday politics and gives ordinary discourse a resonance of importance" and also, "[f]reedom is the state of being free" (p. 1) Moreover, for Farr freedom is "both descriptive and normative" (p. 2) and, in his words, "[f]reedom, then, denotes our place in the order of things" (p. 2).

Starting from what he considers a political view of freedom, Farr then wants to present us an implicit "criticism of the ordinary, 'liberal', notion of freedom" (p. 3) as liberalism, in Farr's view, does not "pass beyond articulating the currently fashionable notion of the proper expressive sphere of the agent" (p. 3) and it has failed to

"acknowledge the 'artificiality' of human order and of our intellect" (p. 3).

After commenting on thinkers such as Descartes and Kant, Farr sets the basic dichotomy concerning the notion of freedom which guides his views. In his view we can split the field into two, the Hegelians and the Kierkegaardians, or describe it in the dividing terms of "freedom as our immediate possession, as something we must find beyond the appearance of the world" vs. [freedom] "as our mediated possession, as something only enjoyed insofar as we master this world of appearances." (p. 48). After establishing the dividing fence he chooses his side by writing: "[t]he phenomenal idea of freedom, that is, the image of freedom as the skill of our attaining what we set ourselves to achieve is, then, a very radical critique of the tradition we have inherited..." (p. 48).

In his text Farr wishes to use Jean-Paul Sartre for promoting this radical critique. In my view [LS] this as such is a quite legitimate goal, but the way Farr proposes to do it brings forth a set of serious problems with regard Sartre interpretation. First of all, Farr's views on freedom are construed in a conceptual frame which adapts with difficulties, if at all, to reading Sartre. Sartre's notion of freedom cannot, in my view, be understood or used in the kind of conceptual environment that follows from Farr's repeated use of dichotomies. Moreover, it cannot be placed on this kind of conceptual map without depriving it the very thing Farr evokes in his title: its radicality. For Sartre freedom is not "the state of being free", but very much on the contrary the act(ion) of being free. "A state" is a term altogether alien to Sartre's thought which is headed toward a description of action and movement. This is present already in *L'être et le néant* (Being and Nothingness), and more explicitly in his later work *Critique de la raison dialectique* (Critique of Dialectical Reason) which Farr analyses more as a description of social emancipation than a description of action and political freedom (p. 116-121). Also, it seems evident that the use of the much criticized and misleading translation of *L'être et le néant* has also in Farr's case created additional difficulty in reaching Sartre's complex ideas.

In Sartre the question of freedom is not a question of having or not having access to freedom, of possessing or not possessing a (positive) value called freedom, but of being a free agent, an actor for

whom there is no escape from her freedom. This could be formulated in Sartrean terminology by saying that the agent is condemned to freedom. In other words for Sartre the notion of freedom is one of the notions he uses when construing the political aspect into his discussion.

Moreover, freedom, in the Sartrean sense, does not lean on the idea of the human being as (a) fully capacitated (member of community), or of not having "our capacities taken away" (p. 1). On the contrary, it means acting in freedom even in a situation where "our capacities" have been taken away. The Sartrean agent is always a free, political actor as she is the player of the (political) condition of being thrown in the world (see Subra 1997). It is in this perspective that I would understand Farr's own statement which says that for Sartre "freedom is not an aspect of the world but the frame in which the world is set" (p. 87). If freedom is the frame in which the world is set, and the agent acts in freedom, the use of a conceptual apparatus which dichotomizes its conceptual devices seems very inadequate indeed for discussing the questions that raise from this setting.

With Farr's use of dichotomies the play with notions, everpresent in Sartre, the play which indicates the presence of the political, is a perspective regrettably lost. It is lost also in the interpretation of Sartre's other notions. His complex and often misunderstood notion of authenticity becomes in Farr's interpretation – as in many others – a synonym for "proper life" (p. 73) as he seeks a "rescue from the inauthenticity" (p. 75). Besides the dichotomization, this also results from reading Sartre in a symmetrical conceptual setting where notions are discussed in a harmonious relation of two opposing terms, such as "authenticity – inauthenticity" or "bad faith – good faith". This is a setting which in my view hides the possibility of reading Sartre's texts through more complex and politically oriented perspectives offered by the interpreting of his notions in an asymmetric setting such as authentic – conversion – bad faith. Here each notion offers a different perspective to action, they do not describe different or opposed "ways" of being, nor a change in action in such temporal terms as "before" and "after". Here bad faith is not a counterpart for good faith but a way of playing this inescapable political condition of freedom. Furthermore, authenticity and bad faith form an asymmetrical relation where conversion to authenticity does not eradi-

cate bad faith leaving only authenticity on the scene but forms a setting for politically understood action (see Sartre's *Cahiers pour une morale* p. 42 and Subra 1997 esp. p. 218-220).

In Farr's interpretation his use of conceptual devices leads to a rationalized reading of Sartre which undermines the complexity, controversiality and ambiguity of Sartre's thought. It sees Sartre as the promoter of ideas such as "the ultimate equality of mankind" and "the radical commonality of mankind" (p. 61, 62) where it, in my view, should consider Sartre as a wild card in a game which is never over. Reading Sartre's notion of freedom requires the provocative combination of that which Farr calls "Romanticism" and of that which he calls "Scientific", namely the adventurer and the stranger. The reader who ventures into Sartre's texts must be prepared to face this impossible combination of being and of not-being at the same time, of playing in the field where different traditions and interpretations do not form conventional systems.

* * *

In all, we could say that the words radicalism, conservatism and freedom used in the title of the book imply the political. However, the question one would like to ask in relation to Farr's book is not one opening a view on the presence of the political in the text, but on its absence. Both Oakeshott and Sartre are discussed in a manner which does not bring forth their originality and value for political theory. On the contrary, it seems that an important opportunity of presenting a fresh view on a challenging subject has been lost.

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