

Discussion

Rebecca Spang: The floor is open.

Jonathan Sachs: Can I just quickly take some of the bait you've thrown out—

Spang: Yes!

Sachs: —and I want to make some qualifications. In a sense, to think about the figures that you mentioned (like Habermas, Said, Foucault, and Koselleck) alongside each other seems to me completely fair, but one of the things that I think is missing from that is—and it plays into your other comments—is this idea of the relationship between process and rupture, right? You quite rightly emphasize that Koselleck is about process, and the “Which one of these is not like the other?” is Foucault, right? It's Foucault's account that has—that's completely grounded in this idea of rupture and break, and you get that echo in the interview with him (with Citton and Revault d'Allonnes) and I think that's one of the things we want to think about. To shift emphasis away from the French Revolution as a rupture or break is not necessarily to de-emphasize or dismiss the French Revolution as unimportant. Not at all. Rather, it's to ask about: “Can there be a relationship between revolution and process, or does revolution always have to be a rupture?” That's the first thing that I think we may well want to talk about, but the second one has to do with this idea of leapfrogging and the idea that if we can locate something that is contemporary in the eighteenth century, then, you know, “There you go. Great.” I guess when I do that I—and I think a lot of us do it, right?—my instinct—my implication is not “therefore the nineteenth century is irrelevant”; it's that there's a story to be told here, and it's a story that goes back... and if somebody else wants to write a different version of that story that goes back further, that's okay. If somebody else wants to write a different version of that story that doesn't start so early, that's okay too—but there are ways to connect up these accounts, especially if you want to make an argument for process. If you want to make an argument for rupture, they're fundamentally contradictory: they can't align, right? The break has to come somewhere and you have to locate it in time. But if you want to make an argument for process, you can connect up these [multiple] stories in a very particular way. And then the third thing I'll say—and this is also something that comes up in the interview with Citton and Revault—is about this idea of layered temporality. I mean, and that is essentially—and this, I think, came up yesterday—I think we really need to have it on the table today, and that's Harmut Rosa. And he—what he does is he takes Koselleck's argument about acceleration, and he talks precisely about that—about rates of change happening at different paces and different speeds of activity. And the whole argument that Rosa is making is that the problem with contemporary life is that there once was a point where we felt that the speed with which we could make political changes could match the speed at which we could live them, right? Or could even be ahead of them, right? The whole idea of the French Revolution is to accelerate political change. His—Rosa's—argument is that by now other processes of quick decision-making have outstripped the political process and other spheres, like the sphere of economics and especially the sphere of transnational business, can make decisions and take action so much more quickly than any political process, and that the imbalance in speed between those two processes—not to mention the process that they relate—gives the advantage to neo-liberal, accelerated business cycles (if you want to call it that). So all those things I think are in your comments, and I just want to kind of emphasize them as talking points.

Spang: Helge?

Helge Jordheim: It goes to—or continues—what Jonathan was saying, in a sense. I think there are two Kosellecks: there's one that's all about rupture and modernity, and then there's another one who's about multiple times. That...the argument that he's making several times in several articles that we can't do without the theory of multiple times. We have to think about history in terms of multiple times. And he ends up, in this latter work, talking about layers. I'm not as happy as Jonathan with the idea of layers; I think it does something to how we think about multiplicity (this is where I have problems): the slow at the bottom and the quick at the top. I don't believe in that. We can discuss that. But I think it's just important to see that yes, there is this theory in Koselleck about the *Sattelzeit* but to me that's just a small part of a bigger theory about multiplicity of times that I think is much more important, much more useful to us. I totally agree with Jonathan there in that, I mean, to get stuck in a sort of rupture-continuity debate—it's sort of, I don't know how far we can get in that (in sort of just doing that) if we don't add the idea that... Well, that there are multiple times going on at the same time, and there are what I like to call processes of synchronization. And that's interesting to think about the crisis interview, that they talk about this. So we have this multiplicity of time, but for political change to happen we need to synchronize them. How do we do that? And that—what they call *soulèvement*—is what you need to synchronize—you have to do something to synchronize—the masses to act coherently (and at the same time in this chaos of multiple times) as a political move... and that is a really interesting way to put it, I think, and make it relevant for political life today.

Spang: Daniel.

Daniel Fulda: One could add to this point that Koselleck emphasizes the specialty of “several times” in his Foreword. There was this quotation by Herder: “In reality, every mutable thing has within itself the measure of its time.” A second point: the article which we read was his inaugural lecture in Heidelberg in the mid-1960s. It's contemporary with Habermas and with Foucault. And we should not forget that Koselleck's theory of history is born out of a political critique against the Enlightenment. He came from Carl Schmitt, and he makes the objection against *les philosophes* that they conceived social and political activity as a moral trial against people (against the reigning people). And this... for Koselleck, this is an attempt to get power *for* the intellectuals themselves and to delegitimize political action [as a] trial [in the] moral sense perhaps. And it's not easy to... I think, we—I guess *you*—did not want to adopt this attitude for Eighteenth-Century Studies.

Spang: It would be a very curious attitude to adopt for Eighteenth-Century Studies given that Eighteenth-Century Studies in this country and Britain is often so closely tied to “studies in Voltaire and the eighteenth century.” *Les philosophes* are quite central to at least a traditional—a tradition—of eighteenth-century studies. Oz?

Oscar Kenshur: I just want to make a small—this is a small meta-observation, actually—at a different plane. When you talk about when certain German works of theory or scholarship are published in German but then when they were translated, and the same thing is true—you know, this is very conspicuous in the case of Habermas, and then when we talk about the citations—the

rise of citations—it's also very conspicuous in the philosophy of science; Popper—there was a twenty-five-year gap between the German publication of *Logik der Forschung* and its English translation and if you looked up the citations, you know, the difference would be... What is interesting is that almost the same issues arise with what we're talking about with regard to process (about, you know, "when did something happens")... It's almost the same with scholarship in this regard.

Spang: Right, right: So a very interesting and important question here as part of sort of reception history but also the transnational movements of concepts, ideas, vocabularies and what it means to move them and how they change in different contexts. Helge?

Jordheim: Just a point on translation: that if you look at the title of this piece, it's completely impossible to recognize for someone that's read it in German. So the German title is *Futures Past in Early Modernity* (more or less). So the "planes of historicity" that are introduced here I have no idea where it comes from, and it goes to the fact that theorizing multiple times is a hard thing. So "planes" is here introduced (from somewhere) as a way in the English language to theorize something that is under-theorized in Koselleck's piece—in this specific piece—but obviously the translator wanted to think about it in terms of time.

I'll just give you one more example because it's quite interesting. There's a place where Koselleck says, "Historical studies needs a theory of multiple times" and in the English translation—not in this book, but in another book that came out five years ago or something—it says, "Historical studies needs a theory of periodization." So "a theory of multiple times" becomes "a theory of periodization." So it just goes to the question that theorizing (thinking about) multiple times as planes, as layers, as regimes, or as periodization is hard. It's just a hard... you can see it in the translation, that you're struggling to find the words to help you think about this.

Sachs: Was it... Oz used the metaphor of "planes and layers" to introduce your point.

Spang: Did he?

Sachs: Yeah.

Jordheim: He used "planes," yeah.

Kenshur: Oh, in terms of our—the discourse and the meta-discourse, yeah, exactly.

Spang: Yes, yes, that's right. Johannes?

Johannes Türk: I think where it comes from is there's a second volume of essays by Koselleck under the title *Zeitschichten*—so "time layers."

Jordheim: Yeah, but that didn't exist at the point when this was translated.

Türk: Really?

Jordheim: Nope.

Türk: I don't know; I—

Jordheim: It was translated in '95 and *Zeitschichten* came out in 2000.

Spang: Ah, but this is a revised translation...

Jordheim: Ah, it might...that would be interesting, if it's been revised. I don't think so. I think this is the original—

Spang: Ah. It's in the original too?

Sachs: No, this is the original; I can look up differences if you want.

Spang: So it is “Planes of Historicity”? That is the title?

Sachs: Yeah, it's “Modernity and the Planes of Historicity.”

Spang: Okay. Point taken.

Türk: Okay. But you know, the conversation that you (Rebecca) reconstructed, you know, by saying Said is published a year before—that really assumes that there is some kind of transparency, both interdisciplinary transparency or that, you know, processes and stuff is transparent between disciplines as well as between national traditions. And especially in relation to the French, but also to the American, I think German academia was for a long time very resistant, right? So for example, translating *Les Mythologies* [Roland Barthes, 1957] only in the 1980s, right? Derrida, right? At the same time there were all these discussions between [Hans-Georg] Gadamer and the French deconstructive school where they just upset each other, didn't want to understand each other, you know... So there's a whole history to this that is to our eyes almost ridiculous. At the same time, you know, deconstruction and Deleuze and so on, they really only begun to be *read* in the mid-80s in Germany. Said is really only read in the late '80s, actually, you know, that it becomes a commonplace reference.

It also goes the other way, however, right? I mean, in the U.S. there are a couple people like Derrida or Foucault that are—who become—very important, completely overshadowing a lot of other things that happen in Europe such as Blumenbach or Koselleck and the German tradition. So there's a certain way in which there's an—these different temporalities of discourse actually lead to (are almost conditioning) a certain way of thinking and conceiving of problems, and then it requires a lot of work to bring them together because they're really heterogeneous; they don't inhabit the same space of thinking. And I think... That bring me back to (I think) what Helge said, because it teaches something about the way we formulate the problem, right? Because synchronization is one thing, right, but I think even the entities to synchronize are not—they're not constant. In other words, it's not that we have politics, the social, individuals, and so on: that these are entities and then they are more or less synchronized. It's rather that what entities exist—how intensely they participate or offer themselves or demand synchronization—is different, right? So you can say, “In the nineteenth-century through general schooling

requirements certain academic visions of history really permeate a large portion of the population. If you have a conscript army (which is for the first time the case under Napoleon), you have a different relationship to the nation because everyone—or every family—is implied somehow in the process, whereas before that...you know, it's maybe not relevant to many people that a war is happening unless they starve, there's a famine, or they are mercenaries in an army, right? So in other words... You know, the constellations and the players and the pressures and the agents are different at every point, and that makes it interesting. So maybe at some times... you know, there are times where it doesn't matter that the large part of the population is not implied, right? So there is nothing to synchronize, right, because it doesn't matter. And so then maybe, you know, the sovereign and his historian that teaches him are really the center of at least certain global decision-making, right? And then you can describe the rest in a way as detached or as a loose assemblage, right, where actually not all assembled elements exert any pressure to be included in the synchronization, right? So there's a loose coupling. But at other times it becomes a problem if even one element is not synchronized, right, and so therefore the binding force of certain historic entities is really not the same at each time, right? So it's actually a huge problem, but I'm not sure if you can deal with it without somehow relating it to agency or something like that, right? Even if—if not in the traditional sense...

Spang: I see this risks turning into a simple three-person discussion, so I'm going to use chair's prerogative to briefly say that I'm very appreciative of Johannes's pointing out that I had assumed the Archimedian vantage point of the American academic, saying, "This is when these things became available to *me*." I had a graduate student who once wrote a paper called "Has Anybody Heard of Michel Foucault?" [laughter] that was about the repeated discovery in the 1970s among Anglophone academics of, "Oh! There's this guy, Michel Foucault! He's doing very interesting work" and that each sort of article about this was like, "Nobody else has noticed this"...it was a pretty great graduate student paper. So thank you, Johannes, for that.

Johannes's comments also make me think there's another name that ought to be on the table here for thinking about modernity and different ways of conceptualizing time and agency, but I don't know if he's been translated into German: Bruno Latour. Right? Because both the argument that "we have never been modern" (but what is important is that there was a point at which we started saying we were modern) and also the argument in the Pasteur book that there are more of us than we thought, that history—changes in history are about the identification of different agents. So Daniel had a point, and Helge, but are there other—yes, Christina?

Christina Lupton: Do I get to—

Spang: Yeah.

Lupton: —I get to jump?

Spang: You do, because we haven't heard from you yet.

Lupton: Because I'm a woman, or—? [Laughter]

Spang: Because we haven't heard from you yet. I am going on Roberts' Rules...

Lupton: All right. I'm going to jump in on the Latour thing because I had a question that goes back to Jonathan's invocation of multiple times. So I guess that we're interested in what it would mean to think multiple times, but if that's going to be a thing that we're interested in, there's a few things I want to get clear about what this means. Because what I understood by your paper, Jonathan, yesterday, was that that had to do sort of with multiple speeds, not with multiple times *per se*. What I understand from Koselleck is something different that has to do with different sort of layers of historical development, not so much with multiple speeds. And if we're going to try and work this out I was thinking also of Latour, but also to some extent of Luhmann, I guess. Because I'm thinking here that these other models which introduce differentiation—so I'm thinking of Latour's modes of existence, which in some sense *is* a response to a longer sort of history about how to introduce time into his model, right? So he's responding to a long history of conversations with [Michel] Serres and thinking about Luhmann, how do we make these temporally responsive sort of models of physical interaction? So for him “modes” is the answer to that: We live in terms of different modes; modes are to some extent about negotiation of continuity through time (without that ever becoming totalizing), so if we're in one mode of academic discourse we're operating in a way that we'll pick up again in the morning, but we drop in the evening and which, you know, has a different time—a different speed, if you like, it goes to the speed thing...As does of course Luhmann's systems, which are also about speed in some way. You know, the art system is about a certain kind of slowing down of attention; the love system about a certain kind of timing that we give in a certain sort of focus. So systems also exist as differently calibrated forms of speed. So I would say “systems” and “modes” and maybe “spheres” too, if you want? I mean, there are a lot of people who've worked on ways to explain modernity as a story of differentiation (I would say here), but I'm not sure that they're all the same as thinking about different historical times, which is I think where Koselleck maybe has a specificity here. So I'm just hoping for some help in sorting this out. If we really want a big intellectual map for thinking about this, it seems to me that we have a lot of people who can help with the sort of differentiation discussion—but maybe not all in the same way and maybe not all with the same kind of eye to the question of history.

Spang: So I have Daniel and Helge; is there anybody who hasn't spoken yet who wants to come in at this point? [Pause] Daniel?

Fulda: I wanted to come back to Johannes's point, [which] I think I can link with your intervention. What you and what we try to identify: a tendency between the eighteenth and the nineteenth century concerning the multitude of historical times. Is there an amount—increase, yeah—is there [an] increase of multiplicity that did take place? A synchronization of more, different historical times, and I would guess that early modern times are less synchronized in their different social spheres or...for example, the sphere of the politicians and the sphere of the Church and the sphere of academics: they seem to me less synchronized than historical consciousness and visions of the future in the nineteenth century. Koselleck says something about (a little bit about) this and he tends not to emphasize the multiplicity of historical consciousness in early modern times. He argues in his first chapter that there is no important difference between the view of the politicians and sacred history. I'm not sure if this is correct. Do we have an idea if there is an increase or not?

Spang: Okay. So: Sam and Nush.

Samuel Baker: I just—I have a genuine question for this discussion, which is the idea of a name—oh, yeah, another name on the table, but I’m curious about how [Friedrich] Kittler in particular figures into the evolution of—development of—models for thinking about this historiographical (this historical and historiographical problematic) because I know he’s important for the reception of poststructuralism in Germany but also because it seems to me that the move that I associate with Kittler—to relocate the problem on the level of not just systems but also the level of like material media practices—potentially opens up the possibility for the sort of globalization of a history or the process of modernity that we see being followed up on in a totally different sphere recently by like Christopher Bayly, right, for example, like in his—and other people trying to do global histories of modernity, which, yeah, have been very interesting for these problems. So that’s just—just curious in this conversation we can figure out.

Spang: I want—again, abusing chair’s prerogative—I find the move from Kittler to Chris Bayly shocking, but I’m wondering if something like Kittler to Joe Roach...

Baker: Why do you find it shocking?

Spang: Because Bayly it seems to me is doing something more sort of synthetic and Hobsbawmian. I mean, yes he’s saying different things are going on in different places, but it is really a very totalizing—

Baker: He’s really not reading Kittler.

Spang: Right.

Baker: Right, it’s not at all...I’m not at all sketching a history of influence, right? I’m not saying like, “Bayly, having read Kittler”...Just that it seems to me Bayly is a historian who is interested in an exemplary way in working—or maybe more often failing—information systems and how they’ve added to global history.

Sachs: Is this C. A. Bayly, the guy who just died...

Spang: Yes. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Nush?

Manushag Powell: I hope this isn’t off-topic, since I sort of had this thought four people ago, but to go back to the question about synchronicity and/or versus multiple times, I—there’s a concrete example that I—my brain keeps drifting back to and I wonder that it hasn’t come up... I wonder if it’s a reflection of how many kind of later versus early eighteenth-century people are in the room, but the British (or English) calendar shift in 1753 seems to like...should we not be talking about that? I mostly work kind of pre-1760 and just trying to explain to my grad students May Day dating and they’re like, “Why?”—I mean, just a rejection of that idea that they’re basically using our calendar but new year’s at a different time, but then they decided to fix it but... I mean, there’s a great deal of, you know, popular wrestling at that moment about what that means, and—but—very like basic stuff: you know, I’m renting my house and I pay my landlord, and suddenly three days are gone. Do I get a rebate for those? Or, like, I mean, do I

have to pay for days that didn't exist but, you know, according to the landlord's calendar they... So like, it's this moment of very widespread, popular, concrete debate over the difference between, you know, sort of theoretical or marked time versus actual lived time. And I've been working on this for years because unfortunately in my first book I had a bunch of (kind of) examples that I needed to use that all happened right when this was going on and so just trying to figure out who was actually responding to whom because you couldn't go by the publication date was such a pain in the butt! And so, like, I've never really come to grips exactly with how to think or talk about that calendar shift, but it does seem to me that it's a more kind of eighteenth-century-grounded version of what we're talking about and might be worth coming forward with.

Spang: John?

John Han: I was kind of interested—curious about—what everyone thought about warfare and how that changes... how that created different modes of time. Because one way warfare is—can be viewed affectively as lost time, right? It's gen—people die, there's [*sic*] generations lost, and the way that warfare then becomes reclaimed as contested time that leads to progress. So there's this kind of like dialectic between loss, regression, and progression (and revolution in some sense). I'm just wondering how warfare compresses, slows down, or creates different modes of temporality. Especially with, you know, the way we, you know, date epochs, right? That's predicated on warfare—so that's, right?

Spang: And I'm pretty sure they didn't call it the Seven Years War when it was going on. [Laughter]

Han: Yeah.

Powell: And in America they never do. [Laughter]

Jordheim: Do I get?...

Spang: Yeah.

Jordheim: Yeah? This, maybe this goes back—I don't know. It goes to what you were saying (I think) and to what Johannes was saying, and I think my argument would be that there are turtles all the way down: there's synchronization all the way down. So, I mean, political agents—social agents—they don't exist. They come into being. They make themselves by practicing synchronization. I mean: you can't do anything as a political agent, as more than one people, if you don't synchronize your moves, your interventions, right? There's a wonderful book by Bill Warner on the American Revolution that does this. It tells, "How could this rattle-taggle hunters [*sic*] synchronize themselves into becoming the political agent that takes on the British empire?" That's a process of synchronization. You use newspapers and letters, and you synchronize your... what you do. So I mean there's—I agree with you that those actors are not there, but they're products of synchronizing processes also (would be my argument). So going back to what you were saying, so the layer model in Koselleck would be, "Okay, when you use a concept—revolution—you invoke a bottom layer that goes back to Aristotle. That's really stable, hasn't changed much, it's still there, has to do with things that come back. And then you evoke

another layer that might go back to the French Revolution that is about rupture, and then you work [in] a third layer that's about your own political conflicts, maybe. So if using [a] concept would be evoking different temporal layers. I mean, the problem with that is thinking that there's—that this is both about space (about *pace*, sorry) and about duration. So these layers: the bottom layers are long and they're slow, right? The top layers are short and they're fast. That would be sort of... the kind of easy, trivial way of putting it in a certain sense.

Powell: So it's rabbits at the top and turtles at the bottom?

Jordheim: Yeah, more or less; good point. Long turtles at the bottom, short rabbits at the top.

Lupton: I'm already lost in terms of... I mean, the way you described it suggests that there's a "you" in there, that. ...I mean—that you as an actor or an organization have access to these different temporal layers, which would be a very different description of differentiation from one that ascribed our differences to the fact that... I mean, there's different ways of doing this, right? But one...I mean, I think Jonathan was suggesting one in which, you know, we have access to different kinds of speeds that maybe we occupy in different parts of our day but never at the same time. Or the other one that would be, "Well, people are just kind of encapsulated in these different speeds"—this would be like Bloch or Raymond Williams or whatever, right, where you have different descriptions of different class experiences based on different locations within sort of the historical pockets of experience, and so what you've just described suggests that there's some kind of version of political action where I deploy—

Jordheim: Not really. That was not—just...

Lupton: Yeah, I know, so can you say it again in ways that—

Jordheim: That's why—I mean, it's easy to theorize this in conceptual-history terms because the argument would be that you use a concept, that concept has aggregated meaning in it that you don't control, so when it is used and heard and the way it affects other people has to do with these temporal layers, that you're not deploying or using that just—

Lupton: You're just kind of triggering what exists.

Jordheim: It's a surface of meaning in the recurring sense.

Lupton: Yes. Yes, okay.

Jordheim: The surface of meaning is the surface of time in that sort of would-be cause—I mean, I'm not saying this is what—something I would necessarily agree with. That's sort of the Koselleckian version—short version—of—

Sachs: Can I just dive in here?

Spang: Jonathan.

Sachs: I think that the confusion that we're having—the confusion that's going on right now in our conversation—is reflective and illustrative of one of the potential biggest problems in Koselleck's work, and I want to think about that briefly. And this is the idea that his work is very deceptive in the sense that it is rooted in a kind of historical sociology that invokes historical particulars, but not through archival sources, right? And so it's not as if it's devoid of examples, yet it's working on a very high plane of abstraction. So there's a constant toggling between the particular example[s] which are gleaned from secondary historical sources and the kinds of arguments and concepts that Koselleck wants to put into play. That's one of the problems. The second problem though is that if you want to think about—you know, again—the examples you've invoked (Habermas, Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, Said's *Orientalism*)—these are books. Koselleck does not write books; these are articles that are collected, and if you read across them—if you read across *Futures Past*; if you read across the other, the second translation, which is *On The Practice of Conceptual Histories, Spacing...*—I can't remember the full title—those are also essays. And one of the things that happens is that he's continuously repeating himself, and repeating himself with change. And it's very hard, I think, to pin it down and get a sense of what the full inflection and the full implications of his argument are. And I've tried to do this, and it's hard. But one of the things that—I think Helge might want to jump in on this—but one of the issues here is that Koselleck is not saying that any of these processes that we're talking about is necessarily new in the eighteenth century. What he's saying is that there are a whole series of processes that characterize modernity that are coordinated in themselves for the first time in the eighteenth century. I could read you the quote that—in which he identifies those processes, and I think that would make my point because it doesn't clarify...

Spang: I'm not quite sure, Jonathan, to be honest, why you think we have a confusion right now. I think we have a conversation, but I'm not sure I think it's a confusion.

Sachs: I say it's a confusion not because we're confused, but because there seems to be a difficulty in identifying precisely what it is that Koselleck is arguing and the point that he's making, right? And because that is in play, right, then you can't—we can't position him in relationship to a series of other thinkers and try to clarify how it is that we're reading the problem of the future in the eighteenth century.

Michael Cooperson: Can I call for the quote?

Sachs: Yeah, sure. So here it. This is from *Conceptual History*, and the suggestion is that there's a whole series of related processes that Koselleck argues are coordinating with themselves for the first time in the eighteenth century, and here it is: “The dynamitization and temporalization of the experiential world”—this is translation—“the task of... to plan for the open future without being able to foresee the paths of history; the simultaneity of the nonsimultaneous, which pluralistically differentiates events in our world; arising out of it, the perspectival diversity within which historical knowledge must be gained and evaluated; furthermore, the knowledge that one is living in a period of transition in which it becomes harder and harder to reconcile established traditions with necessary innovations; and, finally, the feeling of acceleration by which processes of economic or political change appear to be taking place.”

Powell: Could you read that again? I missed— [Laughter]

Sachs: Happily! Yeah.

[Murmurs]

Türk: Did it really say what is unclear?

Sachs: It's not that it's unclear; it's that it's so heavily abstracted—

Spang: Right. It's so abstracted.

Sachs: —that when you try to parse the abstractions it's very difficult to do.

Jordheim: And it becomes even more abstract in English.

Sachs: Yeah.

Jordheim: I mean, in German “synchronicity” is “gleichzeitigkeit”—“the same time”—whereas [with] “synchronicity” you have to go back to Latin and think about “syn-” and “chronos” and simultaneous. So there's something about the vocabulary of time in German that seems to be better to deal with than what you end up with really [in English]. I mean...

Kenshur: It's a better vocabulary for everything because you see the elements much more readily.

Jordheim: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. That might be. [Laughter]

Powell: That's the solution.

Jordheim: Can we change language?

Spang: Christine, did you want to say something?

Christine Zabel: Yeah, just a little hook. I think he's more clear in his introduction to the *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* where he explains the four processes that happen in the saddle time. “Saddle time” is not even his wording; he always talked about “Schwellenzeit.”

Fulda: No, no: he began with saddle time.

Zabel: The original was “schwellenzeit”; saddle time did only emerge in the discussion with Koselleck, and he first said “threshold time” for the “saddle time.” That [saddle time] only emerged in discussions with him when he talked about acceleration.

Fulda: No.

Zabel: And I wanted to add one thing: I think what Jonathan just called the “confusion” is that the abstraction of Koselleck is that he only studies verbalized or expressed visions of the future that we can study in a concept or in words or in notions or in... But what is right now happening in Germany, for example, is—when people engage with Koselleck—is that they want to try to bring Koselleck together with a kind of praxeology. So that is not only the study of practices, but of a set of practices that get inhabited and embodied: institutionalized practices where people don’t express at all time issues and that, I think, might be helpful in order to really study the extent of synchronizations, the extent of the multiplicity of time layers in different fields of society—where time is not expressed at all. It’s just, when there are practices, for example, of foresight, of life annuities or of life insurance—that is, practices towards the future and that inhabit a kind of concept of time. And I think that is a very fruitful approach in order to extend a conceptual history into—or to bring it together with... Yeah, a more practical approach to study different layers.

Spang: I have Sam.

Baker: I just wanted to ask to hear a bit more about that; that’s very interesting.

Zabel: Praxeology?

Baker: Yeah, praxeology. Is it—is the methodology then that’s being fused or layered or put into relation to Koselleck’s project—is it anthropologically derived, and who are the practitioners of this and so forth?

Zabel: I mean, theoretically it is based upon...It goes back to [Pierre] Bourdieu, I would say—

Baker: Yeah, that’s what I was imagining.

Zabel: —also to... There are a couple of...German sociology has really picked up on that right now and has come up with not only the *habitus* concept of Bourdieu, but more a sort of praxeology that is about inhabited practices or incorporated practices—but that is more than *habitus*. And Egon Flaig would be a name, or [unintelligible]—and they don’t necessarily engage with Koselleck. They just come up with a sociology of practices, and historians are now trying to bring these two fields together and say: “We want to study practices of engagement with the time and the future.”

Spang: So. I see two things that are happening in the conversation... One is that some people in this room (maybe all people?)... but some *verbal* people in this room are invested in the question of what to do with Koselleck and where to put his writing and thought in relation to that of other writers and thinkers. And other people, I think, are more interested in taking a sentence or two and thinking, “Oh! Well, but how does this relate to things I’m interested in right now?” So one is about sort of historicizing—positioning—Koselleck and one is about thinking about the future of eighteenth-century studies and our own work, and those don’t necessarily—those two conversations don’t necessarily go...—they don’t synchronize. So I have Richard and Joanna next.

Richard Nash: Okay, I'm going to be asking the people who are not confused by Koselleck to help me think about the future of eighteenth-century studies. So I'm thinking of two passages in particular (I will be an exemplary model of what Rebecca was just describing). At the bottom of his page twenty-two, he quotes Lessing as a representative figure of a form of desire, that "The bearer of the modern philosophy of historical process was the citizen emancipated from absolutist subjection" and then goes on to quote [Gotthold Ephraim] Lessing: "Lessing has described this type for us: he often 'takes well-judged prospects of the future,' but he nonetheless resembles the visionary, 'for he cannot wait for the future. He wants this future to come more quickly, and he himself wants to accelerate it . . . for what has he to gain if that which he recognizes as the better is actually not to be realized as the better within his lifetime?'" So that's: I think that's an expression of desire for the future, one that is it seems to me particularly secularized here, as rather . . . as substituting for what was a Christian futurity where one also desires a future, but a future where you would be happy after your misery was ended. Thinking of that, I want to go back to the end of the first section of his paper. . . . The paragraph at the bottom of seventeen: "Here we touch on a fifth point. It was now possible to look back on the past as 'medieval' The triad of Antiquity, Middle Ages, and Modernity had been available since the advent of Humanism. But these concepts became established for the entirety of historical time in a gradual manner from the second half of the seventeenth century. . . ."—more or less that disruptive change that bubbles up at this moment in doing intellectual history—"Since then, one has lived in Modernity and been conscious of so doing." The question that I'm thinking about as I read Koselleck and think about this is, "Is that a statement about periodization that was true for this man who is no longer present because he's dead?" and that the "Modernity" that he's describing as beginning in the late seventeenth century is now ended and we're sitting here deliberating what comes next and, "What will be the future after modernity?" I'm still. . . . Because confusion for me is much more real than it is for Jonathan, and I'm struggling with this. Any help would be appreciated.

Spang: Helge?

Jordheim: Yeah, I'd just point to a couple of books that François Hartog, the French philosopher who's written very explicitly continuing Koselleck's work, has made this argument that yes, we've exited the modern regime of temporality and have entered something else that he calls "presentism" and for him, it is an incredibly dystopian situation where we're unable to relate our own pasts and futures.

Nash: So it—just to follow up on it—that takes me back to: so is he saying the period we are now entering is one in which we don't have this desire for the future?

Jordheim: Exactly. Exactly. Exactly. We not only don't have the desire; we're unable to think about the future in terms of planning, prognosis, progress, and we're really also unable to think about the past except in terms of memories—fragmented memories. That would be. . . . and he's explicitly doing this in reference to Koselleck's theories. That would be one example of someone thinking along those lines.

Sachs: And that comes out very explicitly also in the interview that we read.

Jordheim, Spang, etc.: Yeah, yeah.

Sachs: He's got the same idea. And I'm very sensitive about speaking with—in front of Helge, but—

Jordheim: What?

Sachs: —just to follow up on that; you can qualify this if you want. I mean, my sense in Koselleck's work is that there are actually two senses of acceleration that are recurrent, and that one has to do with a kind of phenomenological sense of acceleration where individual historical actors (men and women living through the eighteenth century) feel things—feel change—happening more quickly. But then there's also—and that's closely related to the problem of periodization—and part of what Koselleck is arguing is that the identification of certain historical moments as “periods” comes into more widespread practice during the eighteenth century. It doesn't start in the eighteenth century—it's important to make that quite clear—but it comes into more widespread practice, and what also happens as it comes into more widespread practice is the term that we associate with each period becomes ever and ever briefer. So you move from “Antiquity” to “Middle Ages” to “Reformation,” then into kind of this modernity concept, but there are also then further subtemporal categories that [we] can identify within that. Each one becomes shorter and shorter is his point: and that itself is an illustration of a kind of historical acceleration.

Spang: Tracey and then Joanna.

Tracey Hutchings-Goetz: I just wanted to add, so then the kind of final version of that acceleration would be the crisis, right? The idea of the per...—like, the crisis as the period that is the shortest possible period. That kind of like what we've accelerated into is just crisis after crisis, right? (Just to connect it up to the interview.)

Spang: Joanna?

Joanna Stalnaker: Okay, I'm not sure how relevant this is at this point, but I just wanted to come back to the question of these metaphors of layers and planes. So, granted, you know, the problems of translation with the title, but the term “planes” is used also a lot in the chapter itself, so I'd be interested to know what that term is in the original? But it seems to me that the way that we've been talking about these ideas of layers, bottom and top, and planes—all of those metaphors don't really allow one to talk about conflict between different temporalities and sort of how they come into...So the geometrical metaphor is—I don't think planes sort of disturb each other as they come into contact—and layers certainly implies that they are co-existing peacefully in a certain sense.

The second thing I wanted to say is somewhat more specific—which is just a more specific example—getting back to the question of continuity and rupture. For me, you know, I'm interested in certain works of the late eighteenth century—I am thinking of the *Encyclopédie* but also of Mercier's descriptive works—that (as I was saying a little bit yesterday) sort of seek to contribute to change and (possibly even) rupture and bring about certain ruptures even as they're trying to sort of preserve and bridge the gaps. So we have something like the encyclopedic

project of Diderot and d'Alembert, which is sort of engaging in a fantasy of the destruction of all books and replacement of all books with a single book and at the same time is—it has a sense of itself as a project, as sort of bridging a revolutionary gap. If there was going to be a complete destruction of knowledge, it would be the bulwark that would allow us to sort of bridge that gap. So I think that with reference to examples like that, we don't want to think about continuity and rupture necessarily in opposition to each other.

Spang: So picking up on what you just said about layers: I'm very sorry Jesse [Molesworth] isn't here, because I think what's interesting about the study of geological time is it's not just one layer calmly on another but the places where you can see that layers have gotten turned up on their edges, all right? And that's how you would end up with older time on top of newer time, so to think about what those sorts of processes are like. But I very much would like to echo Joanna's appeal for us to think about conflicts between regimes of time, regimes of futurity because I think that's very real. You have a different idea about what the future is going to be: you're not going to sit peacefully with somebody whose time horizon is quite different. This... one final point and then I'll get to Tina and back to Helge. Helge talked about how political actors have to synchronize, but I wonder if our current presentist—dystopian presentist mode (and this would go to Richard)—isn't perhaps because we're so aware of actors who aren't political. Right? We don't think of the forces that are at work in the Anthropocene as a political problem; it's an environmental problem. And if you think about some of the new actors that Latour talks about in the Pasteur book, it's not as if the viruses ever get together and synchronize behaviors, right? They just get recognized, and their being recognized may synchronize them, but do you think the viruses get together and...

Türk: coordinate.

Spang: Coordinate?

Jordheim: We need to keep that open, I think at this point.

Spang: Okay. All right, let us think about that. All right, so who did I have? I have Tina—oh, but no, Dave you're next.

David Alff: I just want to go to Joanna's point—this is on page seventeen—"The course of the seventeenth century is characterized by the destruction of interpretations of the future, however motivated." So there is an interest in shutting down certain forms of futurism, but—to echo the earlier conversation about confusion—I'm not sure how much I take this as an historical claim versus a postulate? To be able to make a model of metaphors out of historical material because he cites three examples and I don't ever know what to do with statements that begin, like, "In the seventeenth century this happened." So... but it does seem there's some recognition of conflict between, you know, contending futurities he's trying to get in.

Spang: Tina?

Lupton: Well I'm happy to think about conflict, but again I just would appeal to sort of everybody for some clarification because in order to think about conflict between different kinds

of temporality we have to, I think, decide who the actors are. So—I mean, again, I would just—I mean, what I’m getting from this is that we’re as a group willing to think about there being sort of perspectival diversity in Koselleck’s terms that would mean (for our purposes) that we had the future as a form of temporal thinking that wasn’t uniform but was accessed differently for different people in different ways in any given period of the eighteenth century... So that we’re going to try and sort of tease that out from other ways of thinking about the past or from not thinking about the future or from being in the present. But then the question is, “So, you know, does this mean—when we talk about conflict, does this mean that I’m in conflict because at some points of my day I’m thinking about the future and in other modes of my day I’m completely embedded in something more presentist or am working in older modes that are traditional and therefore not...?” That would be one version of this, right? That the conflict is simply mediated by my own daily practice as a modern being who is called upon to occupy these different spheres or planes or modes or whatever-we’re-calling-them in any given day of my existence, so that the conflict is then in the sort of fact that my life doesn’t add up, you know, that the future cannot—I can’t just be future-looking because I’m also asked to be sort of retrograde at other moments in my existence. Then the other one would be that, you know, different people: So there are people who are thinking futuristically, but there are other groups of people who have no access to the future because they’re totally locked into the present or the past. That would be... and then the conflict would be more like class conflict or more like consciousness conflict between different groups of people who can’t speak to each other because they have these different temporal existences. Or, to go to the “trigger” thing, we could say, “Well, they’re all there all the time. The future is always accessible as something that we trigger in some version of our discourse or our practice, but our doing so might bring us into conflict with some of the other versions of things that we’re also triggering.” That would be the sort of the trigger version where...which I think you were trying to move towards. But I really do think they’re different, and I think they have different... They account for the very particular and relative presence of future-oriented thinking in ways that would imply it’s conflictual status very differently.

Spang: Helge again.

Jordheim: Just—I’m not going to monopolize this...yeah.

Spang: Oh, okay. Tracey, go.

Hutchings-Goetz: I just had a really little hook that I think is illustrative here: which is that if you look at our current political moment in the U.S., the Bernie Sanders slogan is “A Future We Can Believe in” and Donald Trump is “Make America Great Again,” right? Which—so those are two very different temporalities.

Jordheim: And Hillary’s got the arrow of time, right?

Hutchings-Goetz: And Hillary has an arrow of time to the...right? Yeah, it’s to the right. And it’s— isn’t it “Hillary Progress” or something? I can’t remember what hers is; it’s obviously not as catchy, right? But those two temporalities are very—even though they’re both future-looking, right, they’re also very, very different, right? And one is, you know, Trump’s is even cyclical,

right? Not only in its evocation of Reagan's, you know, slogan, right, it's repetition of that, but also in the idea of kind of recovering or repetition of a past greatness, right?

Lupton: Yeah. But then Latour, for instance, would relativize that further by saying that (you know) to the extent that you're conforming to any one of those visions of the future you're only doing so for a couple of hours of your week, and the rest of the time you're engaged in a totally different kind of temporal orientation where it doesn't matter actually whether you're voting for.... you know, any three of those people, you know. It—so—

Spang: Right. If the question is buying groceries for dinner on Friday: that's future-oriented but in a very, very different way. [Laughter] Sam, you had a little point.

Baker: Yeah, I just wanted to add to Tracey's list the old Bill Clinton slogan that drove me nuts in 1996, which was... He kept on saying, "We're going to build a bridge to the twenty-first century." And I hated this slogan because I thought it was this egregious mixed metaphor, right, of—

Alff: Bridge over what? [Laughter]

Baker: Bridge over what; how do you have a bridge in abstract, you know, empty, homogenous space/time, right? Then I realized, I learned to love Big Brother, and I realized that no, it's a great slogan because it was about this idea that a concrete social practice of infrastructure investment, right, was actually the way that we would get to a twenty-first century that we wanted. And that's putting—obviously putting—a positive spin on it, in order to think of it as effective rhetoric, and I do think that the... What's fascinating about politics is the relationship between the lived practices of everyday life and ideas/hopes/fantasies/affective cathections on dreams of the future, right? And those dreams of the future will often be recognizable in, you know, at least moments of people's lives, right? You know, the moments where they try to connect with that possible future ...be it by how they buy groceries or what they pray for.

Spang: But I'm now thinking that perhaps there are historical eras in which the political as the domain in which you think about the future is more or less important. ... So if the domain in which you think about the future is, "What am I going to wear next Wednesday?" that isn't necessarily a political question, though it is a question that could keep you very busy until Wednesday. Fritz?

Fritz Breithaupt: I want to add on Tina's comment here about the different kinds of conflict. Now I don't think conflict is necessarily the key term for Koselleck (even though it comes up a lot). But I think there's a third possibility here and I'll try to be very brief here. I mean, I see basic[ally] Koselleck's point as saying that in the modern age there is a prognosis bias—same thing, just in different words—and what you said now: you distinguished several layers of possible conflict here. It could be for an actor, "Do I do x or z?" or something like that. I mean, "Do I think about my present, or do I do the laundry list?" Now of course unless this is the first auto-observer—you mentioned Luhmann—then there can of course be a conflict for second auto-observers to your different versions of the trigger model. You have different models of futures that could come about from different standpoints. But I think that the real conflict—or at

least another one that I think he really does stress here—in a way those two proposed are still somewhat pragmatic—but there’s also a structural conflict, and that is a structural conflict that is a presence that is stopping the future to come. So this prognosis bias (this futurity that he sees emerging in the late eighteenth century, and before of course) is exactly that the present itself is a conflict; that is actually what you want to get rid of. This is the quote that Oz, that Richard recalled for us here with this visionary [who] wants to come to the future faster. So in that sense I think conflict is not so much between different versions, but the conflict is that the future—no, that the *present*—is the problem. You can have: you want to have it as a crisis in order to get rid of it. So that’s what...how to kind of sum it up here? is this bias that he proposes. And of course there’s also this negativity that Rebecca’s pointed to that doesn’t like this presentist that’s what he is getting at.

Spang: Christine.

Zabel: I do think too what Koselleck doesn’t offer is the kind of individualistic view on the multiplicity of times within one actor. And again, that would be what praxeology could do, because actors can be actors in different settings and act with artifacts of practices, but...And I’m thinking of Koselleck’s article in response to Cambridge school intellectual history. Although there was not a lot of interaction between the two traditions, he has this article of social history and conceptual history and for him conceptual history *was* social history. So what he’s thinking of...He is citing Herder here, but he doesn’t take him seriously because what Herder says here is that “every mutable thing has within itself the measure of its time,” and that could be very individualistic (there could be very different layers), but Koselleck actually doesn’t engage with this kind of futurity or temporality. It is the temporality of social classes that he can—or that he wants—to show and that is what he does. In his introduction he says the main thing that is happening in the saddle time is the democratization, the pluralization, the politicization, and synchronization [of the future]. And so it is not the study of multilayered, individualistic views or engagements with the future. It is also striking how he treats the *philosophes* as just the class of the *philosophes* or the group of the *philosophes*. So he’s studying the multiplicity of times, only of groups, and I think that is what Koselleck offers, but it’s also his limits of his concept.

Spang: Strangely enough we are now out of time for this discussion, which seems very odd to me. I almost didn’t feel time passing.