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## **“Space of Experience” and “Horizon of Expectation”: Two Historical Categories**

### **Methodological Preamble**

“Since it is so common to argue against hypothesis, one should sometime try to approach history without the aid of hypothesis. It is not possible to state that something is, without saying what it is. By just thinking of them one relates facts to concepts, and it is by no means a matter of indifference which concepts these might be.”<sup>1</sup> In these few sentences Friedrich Schlegel summarized, on the basis of the past century’s theoretical reflections, the nature of history, how it was to be recognized, and how it should be written. At the termination of this historical process of enlightenment stands the discovery of “history in and for itself,” which is provoked by a history apprehended in terms of progress. Stated concisely, this discovery involves a transcendental category which joins the conditions of possible history with the conditions of its cognition.<sup>2</sup> Since Schlegel’s summary, it has not been thought proper, even if it is quite usual, to deal with history scientifically without clearly establishing the nature of the categories by means of which it is articulated.

The historian reaching into the past—beyond his own experiences and memories, guided by questions and desires, hopes and troubles—is initially confronted by so-called residues which are still available to some degree. If the historian transforms these residues into sources providing testimony on the history he seeks knowledge of, then he is operating on two levels. He either investigates circumstances that have at one time been articulated in language; or he reconstructs circum-

stances which were not previously articulated in language but which, with the assistance of hypotheses and methods, he is able to extract from the relics. In the first case, the concepts lending the source-language its shape serve as a means of heuristic entry into a comprehension of past reality. In the second case, the historian makes use of concepts constructed and defined *ex post*, scientific categories applied to the sources without being present within them.

We are therefore dealing, on the one hand, with concepts embodied in the sources and, on the other, with scientific cognitive categories. These must be distinguished, although they are sometimes, but not always, related. It is often possible to use the same word for past historical concept and historical category, in which case it is important to make the difference in their uses quite clear. The measurement and investigation of differences among or convergence of old concepts and modern cognitive categories is performed by *Begriffsgeschichte*. To this extent, *Begriffsgeschichte*—however varied its own methods and apart from its actual empirical yield—is a kind of propaedeutic for a historical epistemology: it leads to a theory of history.

While “space of experience” and “horizon of expectation” as historical categories will be discussed in the following, it must be made clear that both terms will not themselves be investigated as concepts embodied in the source-language. Indeed, no conscious attempt will be made to historically deduce the background of these terms, an approach different from what one might usually expect from a professional historian of concepts. But there are research situations in which disregard of historicogenetic questions can sharpen the view of history. In any case, the systematic claim raised by the following remains clearer as a result of doing away with an initial historicization of one’s own position.

It is apparent from everyday usage that, as expressions, “experience” and “expectation” do not initially convey any historical reality in the way that historical designations and appellations do. It is obvious that names such as “the Potsdam Agreement,” “the ancient slave economy,” or “the Reformation” indicate historical events, conditions, or processes. In this respect, “experience” and “expectation” are merely formal categories, for what is experienced and what is expected at any one time cannot be deduced from the categories themselves. The formal prospect of deciphering history in its generality by means of this polarity can only intend the outlining and establishment of the con-

ditions of possible histories, and not this history itself. This then is a matter of epistemological categories which assist in the foundation of the possibility of a history. Put differently, there is no history which could be constituted independently of the experiences and expectations of active human agents. With this, however, nothing is yet said about a given concrete past, present, or future history.

This formalistic property is shared by our concepts with numerous other terms in historical science. "Master and servant," "friend and foe," "war and peace," and "forces of production and relations of production" come to mind; one might also think of the categories of social labor, political generations, constitutional forms, social and political agencies, or of limit, of space and time.

This property always involves categories which tell us nothing of a particular limit, a particular constitution, and so on. But that this limit, this constitution, or this experience and that expectation are questioned and brought to our attention presupposes the categorical use of the expressions.

A characteristic of practically all of the formal categories named here is that they all are, or were, historical; that is, economic, political or social concepts that come from the lived world. Here they perhaps share the advantage of theoretical concepts which in Aristotle convey meaning even on the basis of the form of the word itself, the everyday world of politics being preserved in its reflection. But it becomes clear when we consider the prescientific world with its social and political concepts that the list of formal categories deducible from it can be differentiated and graded. Who would deny that terms like "democracy," "war or peace," or "domination and servitude" are richer, more concrete, more perceptible, and more visible than our two categories "experience" and "expectation"?

Evidently, the categories "experience" and "expectation" claim a higher, or perhaps the highest, degree of generality, but they also claim an indispensable application. Here they resemble, as historical categories, those of time and space.

This can be explained semantically: concepts drenched with reality (cited above) presuppose, as categories, alternatives; meanings that they exclude. They thereby constitute more closely defined and concrete semantic fields, even if these remain related to one another. The category of labor thus refers to necessity, war to peace and vice versa, a frontier to an interior and an exterior space, a political generation

to another or to its biological correlate, productive forces to production relations, democracy to monarchy, and so forth. The conceptual couple “experience” and “expectation” is clearly of a different nature. The couple is redoubled upon itself; it presupposes no alternatives; the one is not to be had without the other. No expectation without experience, no experience without expectation.

Without fruitlessly ranking them, it can be said that all of the conditional categories of possible histories named above are open to use in isolation, but none of them are conceivable without also being constituted in terms of experience and expectation. Accordingly, these two categories are indicative of a general human condition; one could say that they indicate an anthropological condition without which history is neither possible nor conceivable.

Novalis, another witness from the time when historical theory became fully fledged and before it was consolidated within idealistic systems, formulated this in *Heinrich von Ofterdingen*. The real sense of the histories of men developed quite late, he opined, alluding to the discovery of history in the eighteenth century. It was only when one was in a position to survey a long series and able to be discriminating, not maliciously confusing—only then did one “observe the covert interlinking of the before and after, and learn how to compose history from hope and memory.”<sup>3</sup>

*Geschichte* did not then primarily mean the past, as it did later; rather it indicated that covert connection of the bygone with the future whose relationship can only be perceived when one has learned to construct history from the modalities of memory and hope.

Notwithstanding the Christian background of this view, there is here an authentic case of that transcendental definition of history referred to at the beginning of this essay. The conditions of possibility of real history are, at the same time, conditions of its cognition. Hope and memory, or expressed more generally, expectation and experience—for expectation comprehends more than hope, and experience goes deeper than memory—simultaneously constitute history and its cognition. They do so by demonstrating and producing the inner relation between past and future earlier, today, or tomorrow.

This brings us to the thesis: experience and expectation are two categories appropriate for the treatment of historical time because of the way that they embody past and future. The categories are also suitable for detecting historical time in the domain of empirical research

since, when substantially augmented, they provide guidance to concrete agencies in the course of social or political movement.

Take as a simple example the experience of the execution of Charles I, which revealed, over a century later, the horizon of expectation of Turgot as he urged upon Louis XVI reforms which should preserve him from the same fate. Turgot's warnings were in vain. Nonetheless, between the past English and the approaching French Revolution, there was a temporal relation that was ascertainable and revealed a relation that went beyond mere chronology. Concrete history was produced within the medium of particular experiences and particular expectations.

But our two concepts are not only contained within the concrete process of history and help its forward movement. They belong at the same time to those categories which are the formal determinants required to disclose this process to add it to our historical knowledge. They are indicative of the mortality (*Zeitlichkeit*) of men and thus, metahistorically if you wish, of the mortality of history.

An attempt will be made to elaborate this thesis in two stages. First, we will outline the metahistorical dimension: the degree to which experience and expectation are, as anthropological givens, the condition of possible histories.

Second, we will try to historically demonstrate that the classification of experience and expectation has been displaced and changed during the course of history. If the proof is a success, it will have been shown that historical time is not simply an empty definition, but rather an entity which alters along with history and from whose changing structure it is possible to deduce the shifting classification of experience and expectation.

### **Space of Experience and Horizon of Expectation as Metahistorical Categories**

If we begin with an outline of the metahistorical and thus anthropological meanings of our categories, it is hoped that the reader will forgive the brevity of this sketch, dictated by a desire to maintain some proportion in the arrangement of the text. Without metahistorical definitions directed toward the temporality of history we would, in using our terms in the course of empirical research, get caught up by the vortex of its historicization.

For this reason, some definitions can be offered: experience is present past, whose events have been incorporated and can be remembered. Within experience a rational reworking is included, together with unconscious modes of conduct which do not have to be present in awareness. There is also an element of alien experience contained and preserved in experience conveyed by generations or institutions. It was in this sense that *Historie*, since time immemorial, was understood as knowledge of alien experience.

Similarly with expectation: at once person-specific and interpersonal, expectation also takes place in the today; it is the future made present; it directs itself to the not-yet, to the nonexperienced, to that which is to be revealed. Hope and fear, wishes and desires, cares and rational analysis, receptive display and curiosity: all enter into expectation and constitute it.

Despite their respective present-centeredness, these are not symmetrical complementary concepts which might, for instance, as in a mirror image, mutually relate past and future.<sup>4</sup> Experience and expectation, rather, are of different orders. This is illuminated by a remark of Graf Reinhard, who wrote to Goethe in 1820 after the surprising renewal of revolution in Spain: "You are quite right, my friend, in what you say about experience. For individuals it is always too late, while it is never available to governments and peoples." The French diplomat had seized upon an expression of Goethe's which had at that time become widely used (for instance in Hegel), an expression which testifies to the end of the direct applicability of historical teachings. To explain why, I would like to draw attention to the following passage, notwithstanding the historical situation within which this statement was first conceived:

This is because completed experience is united into a focus, while that which has yet to be made is spread over minutes, hours, days, years, and centuries; consequently, that which is similar never appears to be so, since in the one case one sees only the whole while in the other only the individual parts are visible.<sup>5</sup>

Past and future never coincide, or just as little as an expectation in its entirety can be deduced from experience. Experience once made is as complete as its occasions are past; that which is to be done in the future, which is anticipated in terms of an expectation, is scattered among an infinity of temporal extensions.

This condition, which was observed by Reinhard, corresponds to our metaphorical description. Time, as it is known, can only be expressed in spatial metaphors, but all the same, it is more illuminating to speak of "space of experience" and "horizon of expectation" than of "horizon of experience" and "space of expectation," although there is still some meaning in these expressions. What is at stake here is the demonstration that the presence of the past is distinct to the presence of the future.

It makes sense to say that experience based on the past is spatial since it is assembled into a totality, within which many layers of earlier times are simultaneously present, without, however, providing any indication of the before and after. There is no experience that might be chronologically calibrated—though datable by occasion, of course, since at any one time it is composed of what can be recalled by one's memory and by the knowledge of others' lives. Chronologically, all experience leaps over time; experience does not create continuity in the sense of an additive preparation of the past. To borrow an image from Christian Meier, it is like the glass front of a washing machine, behind which various bits of the wash appear now and then, but are all contained within the drum.

By contrast, it is more precise to make use of the metaphor of an expectational horizon instead of a space of expectation. The horizon is that line behind which a new space of experience will open, but which cannot yet be seen. The legibility of the future, despite possible prognoses, confronts an absolute limit, for it cannot be experienced.

A recent political joke throws light on this:

"Communism is already visible on the horizon," declared Khrushchev in a speech.

Question from the floor: "Comrade Khrushchev, what is a 'horizon'?"

"Look it up in a dictionary," replied Nikita Sergeevich.

At home the inquisitive questioner found the following explanation in a reference work: "Horizon, an apparent line separating the sky from the earth which moves away when one approaches it."<sup>6</sup>

Notwithstanding the political point, it is possible to see that what is expected of the future is evidently limited in a manner different from that which has been experienced in the past. Cultivated expectations can be revised; experiences one has had are collected.

Today it can be expected of experiences that they will repeat and confirm themselves in the future. On the other hand, one cannot

experience an expectation in the same way today. The prospect of the future, raising hopes or anxieties, making one precautionary or planful, is certainly reflected within consciousness. In this respect, even expectation can be experienced. But the intended conditions, situations, or consequences of expectation are not themselves experiential entities. Experience is specified by the fact that it has processed past occurrence, that it can make it present, that it is drenched with reality, and that it binds together fulfilled or missed possibilities within one's own behavior.

This, then, is a question not of simple counterconcepts; rather, it indicates dissimilar modes of existence, from whose tension something like historical time can be inferred.

This will be elaborated with a familiar example, the heterogeneity of ends: The unexpected undermines the expected (“erstens kommt es anders, zweitens als man denkt”—Wilhelm Büsch). This historical specification of temporal sequence is based upon the given difference of experience and expectation. The one cannot be transferred into the other without interruption. Even if one could formulate this as an irrefutable experiential statement, no precise expectations could be deduced from it.

Whoever believes himself capable of deducing his expectations in their entirety from his experience is in error. If something happens in a way different from what was expected, one learns from it. On the other hand, whoever fails to base his expectation on experience is likewise in error. He should have known better. There is clearly an aporia here that is resolved in the course of time. The difference indicated by both categories shows us a structured feature of history. In history, what happens is always more or less than what is contained by the given conditions.

This finding by itself is not really astonishing. Things can always turn out differently from what was expected: this is only a subjective formulation of an objective state of affairs in which the historical future is not the straightforward product of the historical past.

But, and this must be said, it could also have been different from what was experienced. An experience might contain faulty memories, or new experiences might open other perspectives. Time brings with it counsel; new experiences are collected. Thus, experiences had once in the past can change in the course of time. The events of 1933 have occurred once and for all, but the experiences which are based upon



them can change over time. Experiences overlap and mutually impregnate one another. In addition, new hopes or disappointments, or new expectations, enter them with retrospective effect. Thus, experiences alter themselves as well, despite, once having occurred, remaining the same. This is the temporal structure of experience and without retroactive expectation it cannot be accumulated.

It is different with the temporal structure of expectation which, in the absence of experience, is not to be had. When they are fulfilled, expectations that are founded upon experience may no longer involve any degree of surprise. Only the unexpected has the power to surprise, and this surprise involves a new experience. The penetration of the horizon of expectation, therefore, is creative of new experience. The gain in experience exceeds the limitation of the possible future presupposed by previous experience. The manner in which expectations are temporally exceeded thus reorders our two dimensions with respect to one another.

In brief: it is the tension between experience and expectation which, in ever-changing patterns, brings about new resolutions and through this generates historical time. To introduce a final example, this can be seen very clearly in the structure of a prognosis. The substantial probability of a prognosis is not initially founded in that which someone expects. One can also expect the improbable. The probability of a forecasted future is, to begin with, derived from the given conditions of the past, whether scientifically isolated or not. The diagnosis has precedence and is made on the basis of the data of experience. Seen in this way, the space of experience, open toward the future, draws the horizon of expectation out of itself. Experiences release and direct prognoses.

But prognoses are also defined by the requirement that they expect something. Concern related to the broader or narrower field of action produces expectations into which fear and hope also enter. Alternative conditions must be taken into consideration; possibilities come into play that always contain more than can be realized in the coming reality. In this way, the prognosis discloses expectations which are not solely deducible from experience. To set up a prognosis means to have already altered the situation from which it arises. Put another way, the previously existing space of experience is not sufficient for the determination of the horizon of expectation.

Thus, space of experience and horizon of expectation are not to be statically related to each other. They constitute a temporal difference in the today by redoubling past and future on one another in an unequal manner. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the connection they alternately renew has itself a prognostic structure. This means that we could have identified a characteristic feature of historical time which can at the same time make plain its capacity for alteration.

### **Historical Change in the Classification of Experience and Expectation**

I come now to the historical application of our two categories. My thesis is that during *Neuzeit* the difference between experience and expectation has increasingly expanded; more precisely, that *Neuzeit* is first understood as a *neue Zeit* from the time that expectations have distanced themselves evermore from all previous experience.

This does not settle the question of whether we are dealing with objective history or only with its subjective reflection. Past experiences always contain objective conditions which enter as such into their reworking. Quite naturally, this has effects on past expectations. Even as future-oriented dispositions, they might have possessed only a kind of psychic reality. The impulses which they emit are not thereby any less effective than the impact of worked-over experiences, since the expectations have themselves produced new possibilities at the cost of passing reality.

Thus, to begin with, a few “objective” data will be nominated. It is easy to assemble them in the terms of social history.<sup>7</sup> The peasant world, which two hundred years ago comprised up to 80 percent of all persons in many parts of Europe, lived within the cycle of nature. Disregarding the structure of social organization, fluctuations in market conditions (especially those in long-distance agricultural trade), and monetary fluctuations, the everyday world was marked by whatever nature brought. Good or bad harvest depended upon sun, wind, and weather, and whatever skills were needed were passed on from generation to generation. Technical innovations, which did exist, took a long time to become established and thus did not bring about any rupture in the pattern of life. It was possible to adapt to them without putting the previous store of experience in disarray. Even wars were treated as events sent by God. Similar things are true of the urban

life of the artisan whose guild regulations, however restrictive they might be individually, made sure that everything would remain the way it was. That they be felt restrictive already presupposes the new horizon of expectation of a freer economy.

This picture is oversimplified, of course, but it is clear enough for our problem: the expectations cultivated in this peasant-artisan world (and no other expectations could be cultivated) subsisted entirely on the experiences of their predecessors, experiences which in turn became those of their successors. If anything changed, then it changed so slowly and in such a long-term fashion that the rent between previous experience and an expectation to be newly disclosed did not undermine the traditional world.

This almost seamless transference of earlier experiences into coming expectations cannot be said to be true of all strata in exactly the same way. The world of politics, with its increasingly mobile instruments of power (two striking examples are the Crusades and later the annexation of distant lands); the intellectual world spawned by the Copernican revolution; and the sequence of technical inventions and discoveries in early modernity: in all these areas one must presuppose a consciousness of difference between traditional experience and coming expectation. "Quot enim fuerint errorum impedimenta in praeterito, tot sunt spei argumenta in futurum," as Bacon said.<sup>8</sup> Above all there, where an experiential space was broken up within a generation, all expectations were shaken and new ones promoted. Since the time of the Renaissance and the Reformation this vibrant tension affected ever more social strata.

As long as the Christian doctrine of the Final Days set an immovable limit to the horizon of expectation (roughly speaking, until the mid-seventeenth century), the future remained bound to the past. Biblical revelation and Church administration had limited the tension between experience and expectation in such a way that it was not possible for them to break apart. This will be briefly outlined here.

Expectations that went beyond all previous experience were not related to this world. They were directed to the so-called Hereafter, enhanced apocalyptically in terms of the general End of the World. None of the disappointments that arose when it once more became evident that a prophecy of the End of the World had failed could alter this basic structure of anticipation.

It was always possible to reproduce a prophecy that had not been fulfilled. Moreover, the error revealed by the nonfulfillment of such an expectation itself became proof that the next forecast of the End of the World would be even more probable. The iterative structure of apocalyptic expectation ensured that contrary experiences made at the level of this world would be disallowed. They testified *ex post* the opposite from what they had initially seemed to confirm. This then is a matter of expectations that no contrary experience can revise because they extend beyond this world into the next.

It is possible now to explain what today seems to be a state of affairs resistant to rational comprehension. Between one disappointed expectation of the End and the next passed several generations, so that the resumption of a prophecy concerning the End of the World was embedded in the natural generational cycle. To this extent, long-term, worldly, everyday experiences never collided with expectations that reached toward the End of the World. The contrary force of Christian expectation and worldly experience remained in relation without contradicting each other. Accordingly, the eschatology could be reproduced to the extent that and as long as the space of experience on this world did not itself change fundamentally.

The opening of a new horizon of expectation via the effects of what was later conceived as “progress” changed this situation.<sup>9</sup> Terminologically, the spiritual *profectus* was either displaced or dissolved by a worldly *progressus*. The objective of possible completeness, previously only attainable in the Hereafter, henceforth served the idea of improvement on earth and made it possible for the doctrine of the Final Days to be superseded by the hazards of an open future. Ultimately, the aim of completeness was temporalized (first by Leibniz) and brought into the process of worldly occurrences: *progressus est in infinitum perfectionis*.<sup>10</sup> As Lessing concluded, “I believe that the Creator had to make all that he created capable of becoming more complete, if it was to remain in the state of completeness which he had created.”<sup>11</sup> Corresponding to the doctrine of perfection, the form *perfectionnement*, to which Rousseau assigned the basic historical sense of the “perfectibilité” of men, was made in France. Henceforth history could be regarded as a long-term process of growing fulfillment which, despite setbacks and deviations, was ultimately planned and carried out by men themselves. The objectives were then transferred from one generation to the next, and the effects anticipated by plan or prognosis

became the titles of legitimation of political action. In sum, from that time on, the horizon of expectation was endowed with a coefficient of change that advanced in step with time.

It was not just the horizon of expectation that gained a historically new quality which was itself constantly subject to being overlaid with utopian conceptions. The space of experience also had increasingly altered its form. The concept "progress" was first minted toward the end of the eighteenth century at the time when a wide variety of experiences from the previous three centuries were being drawn together. The solitary and universal concept of progress drew on numerous individual experiences, which entered ever more deeply into everyday life, as well as on sectoral progress that had never before existed in this way. Examples are the Copernican revolution,<sup>12</sup> the slowly developing new technology, the discovery of the globe and its people living at various levels of advancement, and the dissolution of the society of orders through the impact of industry and capital. All such instances are indicative of the contemporaneity of the noncontemporaneous, or perhaps, rather, of the nonsimultaneous occurring simultaneously. In the words of Friedrich Schlegel, who sought to capture the *Neuzeitliche* in terms of history in the progressive mode:

The real problem of history is the inequality of progress in the various elements of human development [*Bildung*]; in particular, the great divergence in the degree of intellectual and ethical development.<sup>13</sup>

Progress thus combined experiences and expectations, both endowed with a temporal coefficient of change. As part of a group, a country, or finally, a class, one was conscious of being advanced in comparison with the others; or one sought to catch up with or overtake the others. One might be superior technically and look down on previous states of development enjoyed by other peoples, whose guidance was thus a justifiable task for their civilized superiors. One saw in the hierarchy of orders a static ranking which in the future would be superseded by the pressure of progressive classes. It is possible to extend these examples. What interests us here is that progress was directed toward an active transformation of this world, not the Hereafter, no matter how diverse the actual relationship between Christian expectation of the future and progress might be when registered by intellectual history. What was new was that the expectations that reached out for the future became detached from all that previous experience had to offer.

Even the new experience gained from the annexation of lands overseas and from the development of science and technology was still insufficient for the derivation of future expectations. From that time on, the space of experience was no longer limited by the horizon of expectations; rather, the limits of the space of experience and of the horizon of expectations diverged.

It became a rule that all previous experience might not count against the possible otherness of the future. The future would be different from the past, and better, to boot. All of Kant's efforts as a historical philosopher had as their aim the ordering of all objections based on experience, contradicting this axiom in such a way that they actually confirmed the expectation of progress. Kant strenuously opposed the thesis that, as he once summarized it, "things would always remain as they were" and that, consequently, one could not forecast anything which was historically new.<sup>14</sup>

This statement contains a reversal of all the usual forms of historical forecast customary until then. He who had previously become involved with prognosis instead of prophecy naturally drew upon the experiential space of the past, whose given entities were studied and then projected far into the future. Precisely because things would remain as they had always been, it was possible for someone to foretell the future. This was argued by Machiavelli: "He who wishes to foretell the future must look into the past, for all things on earth have at all times a similarity with those of the past."<sup>15</sup> Even David Hume argued in this way when he asked himself whether the British form of government tended more to absolute monarchy or to a republic.<sup>16</sup> He was still bound up in the network of Aristotelian constitutional forms which limited the number of possible variations. Above all, every politician dealt in these terms.

Kant, who may have been the originator of the term *Fortschritt* (progress), indicates the shift that concerns us here. A forecast which basically anticipated what had already occurred was for him no prognosis, for this contradicted his expectation that the future would be better because it should be better. Thus, experience of the past and expectation of the future were no longer in correspondence, but were progressively divided up. Pragmatic prognosis of a possible future became a long-term expectation of a new future. Kant conceded that "the task of progressive advance is not soluble directly on the basis of experience." But he added that new experiences, such as the French Revolution, could be accumulated in the future, in such a way that

the "instruction of frequent experience" might secure a sustained "advance to the better."<sup>17</sup> Such a statement could only be conceived after history in general was formulated and experienced as unique; as unique not merely in the individual case, but in its entirety, as a totality opened toward a progressive future.

If the whole of history is unique, then so must the future be: distinct, that is, from the past. This historicophilosophical axiom, a result of the Enlightenment and an echo from the French Revolution, provided the foundation for "history in general" as well as for "progress." Both are concepts which achieve their historicophilosophical plenitude only with their lexical formation; both indicate the same substantive content; that is, no longer can expectation be satisfactorily deduced from previous experience.

The emergence of the progressive future was also accompanied by a change in the historical valency of the past. Woltmann wrote in 1799:

The French Revolution was for the whole world a phenomenon that appeared to mock all historical wisdom, daily developing out of itself new phenomena which one knew less and less how to come to terms with.<sup>18</sup>

The rupture in continuity was one of the generalized topoi of the time; thus, as Creuzer concluded in 1803, "didactic purpose is incompatible with *Historie*."<sup>19</sup> History, processualized and temporalized to constant singularity, could no longer be taught in an exemplary fashion. Historical experience descending from the past could no longer be directly extended to the future. As Creuzer continued, history had to be "considered afresh, newly explained by each new generation of progressing mankind." Stated differently, the critical reworking of the past, the formation of the Historical school, was founded upon the same conditions that had set progress free into the future.

This finding cannot simply be dismissed as modern ideology, although ideology and ideology-critique have taken up various positions and perspectives, stemming from the difference between experience and expectation. Our initial systematic reflections, whose historical background has in the meantime become evident, referred us to the asymmetry between space of experience and horizon of expectation as an asymmetry which could be deduced anthropologically. The first attempt to grasp *neue Zeit* as *Neuzeit* involved the restriction of this

asymmetry to an irreversible progress and its one-sided construal as such. "Progress" is the first genuinely historical concept which reduced the temporal difference between experience and expectation to a single concept.

It was always a matter of assimilating experiences which could no longer be inferred from previous experience; and thus, accordingly, the formulation of expectations which could not have been nurtured previously. This challenge increased in scope during the whole of the period that is today called *frühe Neuzeit*. It sustained a potential utopian surplus, and it led to the cataract of events in the French Revolution. With this, the previous world of social and political experience, still bound up in the sequence of generations, was blown apart. "The more directly the history of succeeding occurrences is forced together, the more vehement and generalized will be dispute," as Friedrich Perthes, among many others, observed. Earlier epochs had only known changes of direction which took centuries:

Our time has, however, united in three contemporary, existing generations, the completely incommensurable. The monstrous contrasts of the years 1750, 1789, and 1815 dispense with all interim and appear in men now living not as a sequence but as coexistence, according to whether they are grandfather, father, or grandson.<sup>20</sup>

The one process of time became a dynamic of a coexisting plurality of times.

What progress had conceptualized—that, in brief, old and new collided, in science and in art, from country to country, from *Stand* to *Stand*, and from class to class—had, since the French Revolution, become the lived experience of the everyday. Generations did live in the same experiential space, but their perspective was interrupted according to political generation and social standpoint. Since then there has existed and does exist the consciousness of living in a transitional period that graduates the difference between experience and expectation in distinct temporal phases.

From the late eighteenth century, another finding joins the one we have just discussed: that of technoindustrial progress, which has an impact, albeit a varying impact, upon everyone. It became a general empirical principle of scientific invention and its industrial application that they gave rise to an expectation of progress that could not be calculated in advance. A future not inferable from experience released



all the same the certainty of an expectation that scientific inventions and discoveries would bring about a new world. Science and technology have stabilized progress as a temporally progressive difference between experience and expectation.

Finally, there is an unmistakable indicator of the way in which this difference persists only through its constant renewal: acceleration. Politicosocial and scientific-technical progress change by virtue of the acceleration of temporal rhythms and intervals in the environment. They gain a genuine historical quality which is distinct from natural time. Bacon had to forecast that invention would accelerate: "Itaque longe plura et meliora, atque per minora intervalla, a ratione et industria et directione et intentione hominum speranda sunt."<sup>21</sup> Leibniz was able to endow this statement with experience. Finally, Adam Smith showed that the "progress of society" arose from time saved resulting from the increasing division of labor in intellectual and material production, as well as from the invention of machines. Ludwig Büchner, for whom "regress is local and temporary, progress however perpetual and generalized," in 1884 found it no longer astonishing "if today the progress of a century approaches that of a thousand years in earlier times"; the present produced something new practically every day.<sup>22</sup>

While it was an experience of established progression in science and technology that moral-political progress lagged or limped along behind, the maxim of acceleration also spread to this sphere. The idea that the future would not only change society at an increasing rate, but also improve it, was characteristic of the horizon of expectation outlined in the later Enlightenment. If hope evades experience, then Kant used the topos to reassure himself of the approaching organization of world peace, "since the times within which similar progress is made will hopefully become ever shorter."<sup>23</sup> The changes in social and political organization since 1789 did in fact seem to break up all established experience. Lamartine wrote in 1851 that he had lived since 1790 under eight different systems of rule and under ten governments. "La rapidité du temps supplée à la distance"; new events constantly pushed themselves between observer and object. "Il n'y a plus d'histoire contemporaine. Les jours d'hier semblent déjà enfoncés bien loin dans l'ombre du passée,"<sup>24</sup> by which he described an experience that was for the most part shared in Germany. Or, to take a contemporary witness from England: "The world moves faster and faster, and the difference will probably be considerably greater. The temper of each

new generation is a continual surprise.”<sup>25</sup> Not only did the gap between past and future become greater, but also the difference between experience and expectation had to be constantly and ever more rapidly bridged to enable one to live and act.

Enough of the evidence. The concept of acceleration involves a category of historical cognition which is likely to supersede the idea of progress conceived simply in terms of an optimization (improvement, *perfectionnement*).

This will not be discussed further here. The burden of our historical thesis is that in *Neuzeit* the difference between experience and expectation is increasingly enlarged; more precisely, that *Neuzeit* is only conceived as *neue Zeit* from the point at which eager expectations diverge and remove themselves from all previous experience. This difference is, as we have shown, conceptualized as “history in general,” a concept whose specifically modern quality is first conceptualized by “progress.”

As a control on the fertility of our two cognitive categories, two further semantic fields will, in conclusion, be outlined; and these do not, like “progress” and “history,” have a direct relation to historical time. This will demonstrate that the graduation of social and political concepts according to the categories of “expectation” and “experience” offers a key to registering the shifts of historical time. The series of examples comes from the topology of constitutions.

First we will introduce the German linguistic usage associated with federal forms of organization and belonging to the necessary bases of human life and all of politics. The highly developed forms of association among the *Stände* in the Late Middle Ages led, but only after some delay, to the easily remembered expression *Bund*.<sup>26</sup> This expression was first formed (outside of Latin terminology) only when the shifting forms of association had found temporally limited but repeatable success. That which was at first only sworn verbally, that is, the individual agreements which for a specific period mutually bound, obliged, or associated the parties, was, as the outcome of its successful institutionalization, brought under the one concept, *Bund*. An individual *Bündnis* still had the sense of an active concept operating in the present. *Bund*, on the other hand, referred to an institutionalized condition. This is apparent, for example, in the displacement of the parties, when the “*Bund* of cities” became the “cities of the *Bund*.” The real agent is hidden in the genitive. While a “*Bund* of cities” still placed emphasis

on the individual partners, the "cities of the *Bund*" were ordered to an overall agency, the *Bund*.

In this way, the various activities of *Bündnisse* became retrospectively consolidated in a collective singular. *Der Bund* incorporated experience which had already been made and brought them under one concept. This is, therefore, what might be called a concept for the registration of experience. It is full of past reality which can, in the course of political action, be transferred into the future and projected onward.

It is possible to see similar developments in the expressions contained in the constitutional and legal language of the Late Middle Ages and early modernity. Without interpreting their meanings too systematically and thereby overlaying them theoretically, it can be said with respect to their temporal ranking that these are experiential concepts sustained by a contemporary past.

The temporal loading of three concepts of *Bund* that were first coined toward the end of the Holy Roman Empire—*Staatenbund*, *Bundesstaat*, *Bundesrepublik*—is quite different. These were minted around 1800 and were artificial words at first: *Bundesrepublik* was coined by Johannes von Müller, who almost certainly borrowed from Montesquieu's "république fédérative."<sup>27</sup> The three words are by no means based only on experience. Their purpose was to bring together in one concept specific federal organizational possibilities embodied in the declining *Reich* so that they could be used with benefit in the future. These concepts were not deducible in their entirety from the *Reich* constitution, but could nonetheless extract particular levels of experience that might be realized in the future as possible experience. Even if the Holy Roman Empire could no longer be conceived as a somewhat ill-defined imperium of Kaiser and Reichstag, at least the advantages of federal constitutional forms of semisovereign states could be saved for the new century: these advantages consisted in their intolerance of absolutist and revolutionary states. It is certain that this recourse to the experience of the old *Reich* anticipated the approaching constitution of the German *Bund*, even if the future constitutional reality could not yet be perceived. Within the *Reich* constitution longer-term structures were made visible and could already be sensed as coming possibilities. Because they concentrated obscure and hidden experiences, the concepts contained a prognostic potential which opened out a new horizon of expectation. This, then, no longer involves concepts that register experience, but rather, concepts that generate experience.

A third new term brings us fully into the future dimension: the concept *Völkerbund*, which Kant constructed so that he might transfer into a moral and political objective what had previously been expected on earth of the empire of God. More exactly, an anticipation (*Vorgriff*) was constructed out of a concept (*Begriff*). Kant hoped that the future would bring a republican *Bund* of self-organizing peoples at ever-shortening intervals, i.e., with increasing acceleration. Federative plans transcending individual states had been sketched before, but not a global scheme of organization whose fulfillment was a dictate of practical reason. The *Völkerbund* was a pure concept of expectation that had no correspondence with an empirical past.

The index of temporality contained within the anthropologically given tension between experience and expectation provides us with a standard, by means of which we are also able to register the emergence of *Neuzeit* in constitutional concepts. When considered with respect to their temporal extension, the manner in which these concepts are formed testifies to a conscious separation of space of experience and horizon of expectation, and it becomes the task of political action to bridge this difference.

This is even more evident in a second series of examples. The Aristotelian forms of rule—monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy—which had until now sufficed in their pure, mixed, or decadent forms for the processing of political experience, were around 1800 reformed, both historically and philosophically. The three constitutional types were changed into a compulsory alternative: “despotism or republicanism,” the alternative concepts gaining a temporal index in the process. The historical path led from despotism in the past to the republic of the future. The old political concept *res publica*, which until then had been able to cover all forms of rule, in this way assumed a restricted exclusiveness, which was, however, oriented to the future. While this process has been outlined only very briefly here, it had been developing for a long time. The result was perceptible at the time of the French Revolution. A concept of expectation developed out of a concept filled with experience that had been employed historically or theoretically. This perspectivistic shift can likewise be exemplified by Kant.<sup>28</sup> “Republic” was for him a defined objective, derivable from practical reason and constantly present for mankind. Kant called the path to it “republicanism,” a new expression at the time. Republicanism indicated the principle of historical movement,

and it was a moral dictate for political action to press it forward. Whatever constitution might be in force, it was necessary in the long run to displace the rule of men by men with the rule of men by law; i.e., to realize the republic.

Republicanism was therefore a concept of movement which did for political action what "progress" promised to do for the whole of history. The old concept of "republic," which had previously indicated a condition, became a telos, and was at the same time rendered into a concept of movement by means of the suffix "ism." It served the purpose of theoretically anticipating future historical movement and practically influencing it. The temporal difference between all previously experienced forms of rule and the constitution that was to be expected and toward which one should strive was in this way embodied in a concept which had a direct influence on political life.

This provides the outline of the temporal structure of a concept and which recurs in numerous concepts that followed it, whose designs for the future have since then sought to overtake and outbid. "Republicanism" was followed by "democracy," "liberalism," "socialism," "communism," and "fascism," to name only the most influential. All such expressions received in the course of their minting a modest amount (if any) of empirical substance, which in any case was not what was aimed at in the constitution of the concept. In the course of their terms' various constitutional realizations there naturally emerge numerous old experiences, elements that were already contained within the Aristotelian constitutional concepts. The purpose and function of concepts of movement distinguish them from the older topology. The Aristotelian usage placed the three constitutional forms, together with their mixed and decadent forms, in a cycle and rendered finite the possibilities of human organization, one form being deducible from the previous form. Concepts of movement by contrast open up a new future. Instead of analyzing a limited number of possible constitutional forms, these should promote the construction of new constitutional situations.

In terms of social history, these are expressions that react to the challenge of a society changing itself technologically and industrially. They served to reorganize under new slogans the masses, who have been stripped of *ständisch* structure; social interests and scientific and political diagnoses entered into them. In this respect they have the character of catchwords which promote the formation of parties. The

entire sociopolitical linguistic domain is generated by the progressively emerging tension between experience and expectation.

All concepts of movement share a compensatory effect, which they produce. The lesser the experiential substance, the greater the expectations joined to it. The lesser the experience, the greater the expectation: this is a formula for the temporal structure of the modern, to the degree that it is rendered a concept by "progress." This was plausible for as long as all previous experience was inadequate to the establishment of expectations derivable from the process of a world reforming itself technologically. If corresponding political designs were realized, then, once generated by a revolution, the old expectations worked themselves out on the basis of the new experiences. This is true for republicanism, democracy, and liberalism, to the extent that history permits us to judge. Presumably this will also be true for socialism and also for communism, if its arrival is ever announced.

Thus it could happen that an old relation once again came into force; the greater the experience, the more cautious one is, but also the more open is the future. If this were the case, then the end of *Neuzeit* as optimizing progress would have arrived.

The historical application of our two metahistorical categories provided us with a key by means of which we could recognize historical time; in particular, the emergence of the so-called *Neuzeit* as something distinct from earlier times. At the same time, it has become clear that our anthropological supposition, the asymmetry of experience and expectation, was itself a specific cognitive product of that time of upheaval during which this asymmetry was progressively exposed. Our categories certainly offer more than an explanatory model for the genesis of a history in forward motion, which was first conceptualized with the term *neue Zeit*.

The categories also indicate to us the one-sidedness of progressive interpretation. It is evident that experiences can only be accumulated because they are—as experiences—repeatable. There must then exist long-term formal structures in history which allow the repeated accumulation of experience. But for this, the difference between experience and expectation has to be bridged to such an extent that history might once again be regarded as exemplary. History is only able to recognize what continually changes, and what is new, if it has access to the conventions within which lasting structures are concealed. These too must be discovered and investigated if historical experience is to be transformed into historical science.

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## Notes

### Preface

1. J. G. Herder, *Metakritik zur Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (1799) (East Berlin, 1955) 68.
2. *Neuzeit*, literally, “new time.” Modernity is not an exact translation here, but is appropriate to the extent that Koselleck is concerned with the varying historical constructions of “modernism.” See also “Notes on Translation and Terminology.” (Trans.)
3. *Geschichte*. See “Notes on Translation and Terminology” for the manner in which *Geschichte* and *Historie* are dealt with in this translation. (Trans.)

### Modernity and the Planes of Historicity

Koselleck's inaugural lecture as professor of history in Heidelberg in 1965. First published as “Vergangene Zukunft der frühen Neuzeit,” in H. Barion, E.-W. Böckenförde, E. Forsthoff, W. Weber (eds.) *Epirrhosis. Festgabe für Carl Schmitt* (Berlin, 1968) Bd. 2, 549–66.

1. This is known in English as “The Battle of Issus.” Points raised in a discussion with Dr. Gerhard Hergt are taken up in this essay. On the term *vergangene Zukunft*, see the use made of it by R. Aron, *Introduction to the Philosophy of History* (London, 1961) 39 ff.; and R. Wittram, *Zukunft in der Geschichte* (Göttingen, 1966) 5. On the interweaving of the three temporal dimensions, see N. Luhmann, “Weltzeit und Systemgeschichte,” in P. Ludz (ed.) *Soziologie und Sozialgeschichte*, Sonderheft 16 of *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* (1972) 81–115.
2. Luther, *Tischreden* WA 678. On Altdorfer, see E. Buchner, *Albrecht Altdorfer und sein Kreis* (Munich, 1938); K. Oettinger, *Altdorfer-Studien* (Nuremberg, 1959); and A. Altdorfer, *Graphik*, ed. F. Winziger (Munich, 1963). For more recent work, see G. Goldberg, “Die ursprüngliche Schrifttafel der Alexanderschlacht Albrecht Altdorfers,” *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 3 Folge, Bd. 19 (1968) 121–26; F. Winziger, “Bemerkungen zur Alexanderschlacht Albrecht Altdorfers,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* Bd. 31 (1968) 233–37; and K. Martin, *Die Alexanderschlacht von Albrecht Altdorfer* (Munich, 1969); and finally, for other analyses of the painting, see J. Harnest, “Zur Perspektive in Albrecht Altdorfers Alexanderschlacht,” in *Anzeiger des Germanischen Nationalmuseums* (Nuremberg, 1977) 67–77.