Conceptual History, Translation, and Intercultural Conceptual Transfers

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I.

What happens when the basic political concepts of one society, phrased in its natural language, are transferred to another possessing an altogether different history, set of institutions and religions, political culture, and language? Such dissimilarities constitute formidable barriers to consideration, much less even partial acceptance, of unfamiliar modes of thought by a potential new audience. The first prerequisite to such communication might seem to be a comprehensible translation. But what does this entail? Can it be assumed that intercommunication is always possible by the use of texts written in any two natural languages, even those that differ greatly in their structures, conventions, and vocabularies? Clearly more is involved than the characteristics of the respective languages. Those experiences and expectations which have shaped the basic political concepts being translated from the source polity may create little or no resonance among the inhabitants of its potential recipient.

This paper seeks to identify the key problems involved in the processes of translation, modification, and selective appropriation of what Reinhart Koselleck has called basic political concepts(Grundbegriffe). Many, perhaps most, studies of the circulation of concepts between the west(meaning Europe and those societies founded by it) and the rest of the world have focused on one side of the exchange, emphasizing western perceptions and conceptualizations of all those other peoples and cultures first encountered in the course of early modern exploration, trade, proselytizing, and conquest. One criticism of this approach is that it denies a voice to those perceived and evaluated by westerners. Can this be remedied? Presumably this might and, in some cases, has been done by studies, both of the variety of ways that non-western societies have understood themselves, and of their views of Europeans at home and abroad. These images of the west can be reconstructed from Individual diaries, travel books and literary accounts, as well as from reports of governmental commissions such as those sent to Europe and North America by China and Japan in the nineteenth century. By using such sources, it becomes possible to chart the circulation of concepts in terms of a two-rather than a one-way traffic. But is this enough?

The circulation of concepts between cultures is often assessed in terms of the degree of accuracy attained by the translator in transferring a western text to another language. This assumption has been disputed by two recent reformulations which stress the linguistic adaptations typical in cultural exchanges. Both authors provide alternative theories of how the meanings of concepts may be modified or transformed when translated.[1]

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1) See also the brief but penetrating statements on translation and communication by Kari Palonen in *Die Entzauberung der Begriffe* (Hamburg, 2004).

Douglas Howland, who has studied conceptual transfers from English into Japanese, emphasizes recent changes in the theory of cross-cultural translation, which, he believes, cannot any longer be treated as a simple transfer of words or texts from one language to another on the model of the bilingual dictionary. Instead, it is now best understood as a complex act of translingual communication.[2] Another valuable redescription of cross-cultural translation as a "multilayered process of translation and appropriation" been provided by Joachim Kurtz, who has pointed out that in modern Chinese, many terms originally introduced as translations of foreign concepts have subsequently developed a life of their own, adding new meanings that creatively alter, extend, or even undermine their western originals.[3] Case studies, in which Howland and Kurtz apply their theories of translation will be discussed below.

Both place their accounts of conceptual transfers and alterations within the context of intercultural communication under the conditions of radical inequality in the power of participants. In nineteenth-century China and Korea, such translation and adaptation of political concepts took place amidst unprecedented rapid and violent change, much of it produced by foreign aggression, western, Russian, and Japanese. The failure to recognize the significance of such political circumstances has often distorted the discussion of translation in general, and of intercultural conceptual transfers in particular.

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2) Howland, Douglas(2003), "The Predicament of Ideas in Culture: Translation and Historiography," *History and Theory* 42, pp.45~60.

3) Lackner, Michael & Iwo Amelung & Joachim Kurtz(2001), *New Terms for New Ideas. Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China*, Leiden: Brill, p.147.

II.

It will be argued that the "multilayered process of translation and appropriation" can be best understood when combined with what Reinhart Koselleck has called basic political concepts(Grundbegriffe):

As distinguished from concepts in general, a basic concept···is an inescapable, irreplaceable part of the political and social vocabulary. Only after a concept has attained this status does it become crystallized in a single word or term such as "revolution," "state," "civil society," or "democracy." Basic concepts combine manifold experiences and expectations in such a way that they become indispensable to any formulation of the most urgent issues of a given time. They are always both controversial and contested.[4]

As a method, this calls attention not only to major theorists, but also to the other sites and media where political controversies are and have been conducted. This includes even those sources sometimes considered to be neutral such as dictionaries, lexicons, and treatises on language and correct usage. What this means is that political concepts such as "liberty," and "democracy," which were introduced into Asian political discourse in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries from western sources should be treated: 1) as basic in Koselleck's sense; 2) as always contested; 3) as possessing a long history, including the changing boundaries separating them from near synonyms in both the source and target languages; 4) as often

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4) Koselleck, Reinhart(1996), "Response to Comments," in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts. New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, eds. Hartmut Lehmann and Melvin Richter, Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, p.64.

producing political consequences unanticipated and undesired by those coining or introducing the term; 5) as deployed not only by major theorists and political leaders, but also by pamphleteers, journalists, and other publicists and propagandists in and out of government.

First to be treated will be those innovative German works which have established Begriffsgeschichte(the history of concepts, conceptual history) as a method. Then I proceed to discuss in greater detail what makes conceptual history valuable to analysts and historians of these processes. Finally, I offer some suggestions about how the methods used in conceptual history can be incorporated into existing narratives about past transfers of political and social thought, as well as adding to the techniques now available for analyzing texts, placing them in their contexts, and translating them into other languages.

My purpose is not to argue that conceptual history ought to supersede all other methods, but rather how to show how it complements many of them. The interest and significance of cross-cultural transfers are heightened when considered from different angles of vision, and studied through more than one mode of analysis. My case for conceptual history is that it is an unique form of knowledge, providing detailed accounts and explanations of both continuities and key shifts in the conceptual vocabularies, normative and descriptive, of politics, government and society. Just how this is done will emerge, I hope, from the more detailed account provided below.

This genre was created by German scholars after the Second World War. I shall treat it primarily in terms of two versions, each exemplified in a huge multi-authored reference work: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur Politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland(Basic*

Concepts in History: A Dictionary of Political and Social Language in Germany) or GG; the other is the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie(A Dictionary of Philosophy on Historical Principles)*, or HWP. There is a third collective work at the same high level of achievement, the *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich, 1680~1820(A Handbook of Basic Political and Social Concepts in France, 1680~1820)*. Its focus is on concepts and themes related to the striking changes in the French political and social vocabularies prior to and just after the Revolution.[5] Although the Handbuch is treated in other chapters of this volume, it deserves mention here because of its many contributions to the metatheory and methodology of conceptual history. A major contribution to the history of mentalities in France, it has also added to the diversity of approaches to the history of concepts.

Each of these three works has its own mode of writing that history; each has a distinctive theoretical focus; and covers a different time span. What is common to these alternative forms is their analysis of political and social

thought in the past by tracing the history of concepts rather than by alternative units of analysis (individual authors or texts, schools, traditions, forms of argument, unit ideas, styles of thought, modes of discourse). Other works which apply conceptual history to such varied subjects as rhetoric and aesthetics include: *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik and Ästhetische Grundbegriffe.*[6]

While the HWP is non-contextual in its treatment of philosophical terms, the GG and Handbuch seek to connect conceptual to social history. The GG does so by relating shifts in the meanings and functions of concepts to changes in the structures of governments, societies, and economies; the Handbuch, by charting continuities and alterations in the mentalités of France during a delimited period. Both the GG and Handbuch seek to determine which concepts were used by competing parties, groups, strata, orders, or classes, particularly during periods of acute crisis and revolution. The theorists of both works insist that key political and social concepts are and have always been contested. It will be argued that this position has significant implications for the analysis of intercultural transfers.

Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie (HWP)

The GG and Handbuch deal exclusively with the history of political and social concepts; the HWP, with the history of philosophical concepts

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5) *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur Politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*, eds. Otto Brunner, Werner Conze, Reinhart Koselleck (7 vols of text; 2 vols of a multi-lingual index; Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1972~1990), hereafter cited as the GG.
Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, eds. Joachim Ritter, Karlfried Gründer, and Gottfried Gabriel (13 vols; Basel/Stuttgart: Schwabe & Co., 1971~2005), hereafter cited as HWP.
Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich, 1680~1820, eds. Rolf Reichardt, Hans-Jürgen Lüsebrink, Eberhard Schmitt, in collaboration with Gerd van den Heuvel and Annette Hofer (20 vols to date; München: Oldenbourg Verlag, 1985~), hereafter cited as Handbuch.
For detailed analyses of these works, see my book, *The History of Political and Social Concepts, A Critical Introduction* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995); *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Iain Hampshire-Monk, Karin Tilmans, and Frank van Vree (Amsterdam, 1998); and *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, ed. Hans Erich Bödeker (Göttingen, 2003).

6) *Historisches Wörterbuch der Rhetorik (Historical Lexicon of Rhetoric)*, ed. Gerd Üding (8 vols. to date; Tuebingen; Max Niemeyr Verlag, 1987~); *Ästhetische Grundbegriffe (Basic Aesthetic Concepts)* (7 vols; Stuttgart-Weimar: J. B. Metzlar, 2000). For overviews and critiques of these and other projects using the history of concepts, see *Die Interdisziplinarität der Begriffsgeschichte*, ed. Gunter Scholtz (Hamburg, 2000).

considered as part of the internal history of philosophy and related disciplines, that is, their terminology and persisting problems. When political and social thought are considered in the HWP, it is usually without reference to the political or social affiliations of either philosophers and their audiences, or to structural changes in the polities, societies, or economies in which they lived. Like the GG and Handbuch, the HWP contains no articles on individual thinkers, or on competing interpretations of them and their theories.

Although all three works make use of conceptual history, each of them does so in ways that differ because of their respective programs and methods. The HWP is primarily concerned with the histories of the problems, arguments, and technical terms of philosophy. Differing in this regard from the GG and Handbuch, the HWP does not attempt to specify the contexts for past uses of philosophical concepts. In the HWP, a limited number of concepts are treated historically: those that have changed relatively little over time; and others which have undergone so many alterations that they benefit from being viewed against contrasting horizons in the history of philosophy. While the HWP's version of conceptual history is not concerned with philosophers' political and social contexts, it does provide significant information about how different thinkers and schools of thought have used concepts. Articles often list the varied senses a concept has carried in the course of its career. Such findings about the range of past philosophical meanings carried by a concept add much to its history. At the very least, the HWP's articles identify the most significant authors who have discussed a concept or term. It summarizes the uses made of concepts in philosophical argument, provides guidance to the best editions of texts, and cites the secondary literature on them in a

variety of languages. It is indeed a great service that the HWP renders by providing such full information about almost every conceivable abstract concept and philosophical term from metaphysics to political and ethical philosophy to formal logic.

Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe. Historisches Lexikon zur Politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland (GG)

The GG charts the concepts constituting the specialized vocabularies, the semantic fields or linguistic domains, of the political and social languages used in German-speaking Europe, with particular reference to what Koselleck first called the Sattelzeit(transitional period), and then the Schwellenzeit(threshold period) from approximately 1750 to 1850. This is treated as the decisive period of transition in German-speaking Europe to modern political and social thought. Concepts were transformed at an accelerated speed, and acquired a set of new characteristics at approximately the time that the structures of government, society, and the economy were undergoing unprecedented changes. The GG studies the concepts used to describe, appraise, and direct these transformations. Included in the analyses of such concepts are identifications of those political and social formations using or contesting them.

The GG's program directed contributors (occasionally individuals, more often teams) to look back as far as classical antiquity and forward to the conceptual usages of our own time. Such analyses were meant to identify three types of political and social concepts, each defined in relation to present-day German usage: 1) concepts long in use, such as "democracy," the meaning of which can still be understood by a speaker of the language

today; 2) concepts such as "civil society," the earlier meanings of which have been so effaced that they can now be understood only after scholarly reconstruction of their prior meanings; 3) neologisms such as "Caesarism," "Fascism," or "Marxism-Leninism," coined in the course of revolutionary changes they helped shape or interpret.

The GG has provided for the first time reliable information about past uses in German of political and social concepts. In this way, it has made clear how language both shaped and registered the processes of change which transformed every area of German political and social life from approximately the middle of the eighteenth-century through the twentieth.

Which features of Begriffsgeschichte make it valuable for the analysis of cross-cultural translation and appropriation? These have been specified by Reinhart Koselleck, the principal theorist of the GG: "The task of conceptual history is to ask which strands of meaning persist, are translatable, and which new strands have been added."[7] Three points about this and related statements are worth noting: 1) the definition in historical terms of what is a basic political concept; 2) the implications of identifying contestation as characteristic of basic political concepts, and the consequent advantages for research into cross-cultural transfer of basic concepts; 3) the contributions of conceptual history to a problematic, which is only now beginning to be identified and systematically addressed: how concepts function in the translations and reception of texts originating

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7) Koselleck, Reinhart(1996), "A Response to Comments on the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," in *The Meaning of Historical Terms and Concepts. New Studies on Begriffsgeschichte*, eds. Hartmut Lehmann and Melvin Richter, Washington, D.C.: German Historical Institute, p.68. Much of Koselleck's work on Begriffsgeschichte is cited and discussed critically in two contributions by Hans Erich Bödeker, *Begriffsgeschichte, Diskursgeschichte, Metapherngeschichte*, pp.7~28, pp.73~122.

in another language.

1) What is a basic political concept? In replying to a critique of conceptual history by John Pocock, Koselleck once again defined the units of analysis and the overall project of the GG. Pocock had made two assertions: first, that the history of concepts is dependent upon and ancillary to the history of discourses; second, that diachronic analysis must be subordinated to synchronic treatment. While conceding that concepts always function within a discourse, Koselleck did not concede that the history of concepts and the history of discourse are incompatible and opposite. Each depends on the other. A discourse requires basic concepts in order to express what it is talking about. And analysis of concepts requires command of both linguistic and extra-linguistic contexts.

Although concepts always function within a discourse, they are pivots around which all arguments turn. Hence Koselleck's definition, as in the passage previously cited: "basic concepts(Grundbegriffe)" are inescapable, irreplaceable parts of the political and social vocabulary."[8] That is, they must be dealt with, positively or negatively, by whomever wishes to convince the audience or public being addressed. Only after concepts have attained this status do they become crystallized in a single word or term such as "revolution," "state," "civil society," or "democracy." Thus basic concepts are highly complex; they are always ambiguous, controversial and contested. It is these characteristics which makes them historically significant and sets them off from purely technical or professional terms.[9]

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8) Koselleck(1996), "A Response to Comments on the Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe," Ibid, p.64.

9) Koselleck(1996), Ibid., p.64.

As for the relationship between diachronic and synchronic analyses of political and social language, Koselleck argues that both types are indispensable, and that the synchronic cannot be privileged. In any synchronic exegesis of a text, the analyst must keep in mind those criteria of selection which lead a writer to use concepts in one way and not otherwise, and to do so through a new rather than an older formulation. Every innovating author must confront the relationship between the former meanings of a word or term and the author's own intended purposes. No writer can create something new without reaching back to the established corpus of the language, to those linguistic resources created diachronically in the near or more remote past, and shared by all speakers and listeners. Understanding or being understood presupposes such prior knowledge of how the language has been used. Every word, term, and concept thus has a diachronic thrust, against which anyone seeking to add a new meaning must work.[10]

Here Koselleck has provided a pragmatic formulation of "basic concepts." This enables researchers to decide empirically, that is, by historical research into actual usage, just which concepts at any given time became unavoidable for those participating in political and social arguments. The basic concepts of a political or social vocabulary are those that have become indispensable as slogan or target to those who compete for political power or intellectual preponderance.

Such concepts frame and restrict, augment and limit the vocabulary available to their own and later generations Because they can be recycled, basic concepts carry long-term meanings applicable to novel

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10) Koselleck(1996), Ibid., p.63.

circumstances and structures, which they may affect in crucial ways. The history of the translation and reception of concepts also shows the difficulties confronted by those authors, who like Plato, Hobbes, or Bentham, have sought to coin a new language to express what they regarded as their novel ideas. Theorists cannot disregard the established corpus of their language, the linguistic resources created in the past and shared by all who use it. Thus every basic concept carries a diachronic thrust. Anyone seeking to create a new set of concepts or to transform the meanings of those already in use, must construct a strategy for overcoming the pressure exerted by past usage.

2) What is implied when the basic concepts subject to cross-cultural translation, modification, and appropriation are treated as "complex, ambiguous, controversial and contested?" This is to contend that an adequate history of a concept must include both what was said in opposition to its use and the arguments of its proponents. Just because basic political and social concepts are contestable and ambiguous, disagreements about their meaning and validity constitute an indispensable part of their history. Often the way concepts are presented by those using them is determined by the need to answer or refute the criticisms made by contemporary opponents or rivals. Anyone failing to realize that fact does not understand how the term is or was being used. This would be true of anyone holding that the meaning of "freedom" is so clear, that it is difficult to understand why so many people and governments use it wrongly. "Freedom" is not the type of concept which carries one incontrovertible meaning.

Koselleck's thesis that basic political and social concepts are contestable is based on historical evidence that confirms previous argument, which

was exclusively in philosophical terms, such as that of Hobbes.[11] Why are political and social concepts contestable? A memorable answer was given by Hobbes in terms of interests, individual or group. Because of such interests, political concepts must be distinguished from purely logical, mathematical, or philosophical concepts. Hobbes argued that concepts are treated very differently in the presence or absence of passions such as ambition, lust, and the pursuit of power, domination, and wealth:

> Which is the cause, that the doctrine of Right and Wrong, is perpetually disputed, both by the Pen and the Sword. Whereas the doctrine of Lines, and Figures, is not so; because men care not, in that subject what be truth, as a thing that crosses no man's ambition, profit, or lust. For I doubt not, but if it had been a thing contrary to any mans right of dominion, or to the interest of men that have dominion, That the three Angles of a Triangle should be equal to two angles of a Square; that doctrine should have been, if not disputed, yet by the burning of all books of Geometry, suppressed, as farre as he whom it concerned was able.[12]

Koselleck argues that contestation about political and social concepts most often arises from conflicting interests and competition for power in

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11) My summary of this thesis follows Jeremy Waldron(1994), "Vagueness in Law and Language: Some Philosophical Issues," *California Law Review* 82, pp.509~540. See also Jeremy Waldron(1999), *Law and Disagreement* (Oxford). The original statement of the position was made by W. B. Gallie(n.s. 1955~1956), in "Essentially Contested Concepts," *56 Proceedings Aristotelian Society*, p.167. The account of contestability given above is abbreviated from my "Conceptualizing the Contestable: Begriffsgeschichte and Political Concepts," *Die Interdisziplinarität der Begriffsgeschichte*, pp.135~143.

12) Hobbes Thomas(1651), *Leviathan*, ch. XI, cited by Waldron(1994), "Vagueness in Law and Language: Some Philosophical Issues," Ibid., p.514.

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times of crisis, a basic concept treated at length in the GG.[13] In such periods, certain groups, strata and classes may perceive themselves as vitally affected by fundamental alterations, proposed or implemented, in the languages of politics and political philosophy, law, bureaucracy, or constitutions. Under such conditions the members of groups can become highly sensitive to the consequences that follow either from using the vocabulary and other linguistic practices of the existing order, or else from redefining deliberately its terms and the rules governing their use. Just as any use of empirical evidence in political argument is apt to be disputed by political antagonists, so too are arguments for revisions of linguistic usages and conventions. Koselleck's most convincing historical demonstration of how basic political and social concepts were perceived and argued as contestable in a given case was his classic *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution(Prussia between Reform and Revolution).*[14] Koselleck devotes more than 700 pages to the analysis of how and why the Prussian General Code was reformed in the eighteenth century. This was the work of modernizing bureaucrats, who redefined such political, social, and legal concepts as "class," "citizen," "inhabitant," "owner," and "property." Thereby the power formerly wielded by the aristocratic land-owning Junkers was diminished considerably, preparing the way for the class creating the new economic order that was emerging.

Such conceptual innovations did not go unnoticed by those losing their

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13) For a discussion of the concept of crisis and an English translation of Koselleck's GG article on 'Krise,' see Melvin Richter and Michaela W. Richter(2006), "Introduction to Reinhart Koselleck's 'Krise' in *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*," in *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 47, pp.343~356 and "Crisis" tr. Michaela W. Richter, ibid., pp.357~400.

14) Koselleck, Reinhart(1975), *Preussen zwischen Reform und Revolution: Allgemeines Landrecht, Verwaltung und Soziale Bewegung von 1791~1848*, 2nd ed., Stuttgart.

once privileged positions. Their leader asserted that the reforms had been achieved through the abuse of political and legal language. "By confusing the names, the concepts also fall into disorder, and as a result the Old Brandenburg (Prussian) constitution is placed in mortal disorder."[15] From such historical analysis of a bitter conflict about political, social, and legal language, Koselleck, once again emphasizing the concept of crisis, concluded:

> The semantic struggle for the definition of political or social position, and defending or occupying those positions by such a definition, is conflict which belongs quite certainly to all times of crisis that we can register in written sources.[16]

To designate political and social concepts as contestable is also to call into question the frequently made assumption that they are no different from any others because all concepts derive from the same Zeitgeist, climate of opinion, or political culture, from those presuppositions alleged to underpin all thought within the same historical period. This is to assume that in every era, the characteristics of political and social concepts do not

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15) Cited in, "Begriffsgeschichte und Sozialgeschichte," in Koselleck's collection of essays, *Vergangene Zukunft. Zur Semantik geschichtlicher Zeiten* (Frankfurt, 1979), pp.107~129. This has been translated from *Begriffsgeschichte in Deutschland*, eds. Wolfgang Schieder and Volker Sellin (2 vols; Göttingen, 1987), I, pp.89~109 as "Social History and Begriffsgeschichte," in Koselleck, *Futures Past*, tr. Keith Tribe (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), pp.73~91. A more recent paper by Koselleck is "Sozialgeschichte und Begriffsgeschichte" in *Sozialgeschichte in Deutschland*, eds. Wolfgang Schieder and Volker Sellin (2 vols; Göttingen, 1987), I, pp.89~109, tr. as "Social History and Begriffsgeschichte," in *History of Concepts: Comparative Perspectives*, eds. Iain Hampshire-Monk, Karin Tilmans, and Frank van Vree (Amsterdam, 1998), pp.23~35.

16) Koselleck(1979), *Futures Past*, p.78.

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differ from all other concepts. Such a priori assumptions about the unity of a period or culture usually lead to reductionist and unhistorical procedures. One example are unproven blanket assertions about the political philosophy of the Enlightenment, or "the Enlightenment project."[17]

The GG charts the concepts constituting the specialized vocabularies, the semantic fields or linguistic domains, of the political and social language used in German-speaking Europe, with particular reference to the period between approximately 1750 and 1850, the Sattelzeit, or Schwellenzeit, which it treats as the decisive period of transition to modern political and social thought. The GG proposes a set of hypotheses about how, during this time, German political and social vocabularies were transformed at an accelerated speed, and in certain specified directions at approximately the time that the structures of government, society, and the economy were undergoing unprecedented changes. The study of the language used to describe, appraise, and direct these transformations is combined with identifications of the affiliations of those using or contesting such concepts

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17) Such reductive generalizations about eighteenth-century thought are dubious in the light of unresolved present-day disputes about its historiography. Specialists increasingly question whether the thought of Europe and its satellites was in fact dominated by belief in les lumiéres, Aufklärung, "Enlightenment." After two hundred years, this homogenizing image of eighteenth-century thought has become increasingly controversial. Some scholars emphasize currents of thought and feeling such as Mesmerism, thus calling into question identifications of this period as the "Age of Reason." Others, while continuing to employ the term "Enlightenment," wish to use it only in the plural, because of the diversity of its intellectual components, and disparate political functions from one setting to another. Few would now deny striking differences in its respective national forms (Scottish, French, German, Italian, Hungarian, Russian). John Pocock has questioned whether such a movement existed in England. Radical, reforming, Roman Catholic, and conservative Enlightenments now figure in book titles. See my "Europe and the Other in Eighteenth-Century Thought." *Politisches Denken Jahrbuch* 3, eds. Volker Gerhardt, Henning Ottmann, Martyn Thompson (Stuttgart, 1997), pp.25~47.

The GG's program further required contributors (occasionally individuals, more often teams) to look back as far as classical antiquity and forward to the conceptual usages of our own time. Such analyses were meant to identify three types of political and social concepts, each defined in terms of present-day German usage: 1) concepts long in use, such as "democracy," the meaning of which can still be understood by a speaker of the language today; 2) concepts such as "civil society," the earlier meanings of which have been so effaced that they can now be understood only after scholarly reconstruction of their prior meanings; 3) neologisms such as "Caesarism," "Fascism," or "Marxism," coined in the course of revolutionary changes they helped shape or interpret.

The project encompasses about 120 concepts covered in some 7,000 pages. Articles average over fifty pages; the most important contributions are monographs exceeding a hundred pages. Its index volumes are multilingual (German, French, Latin, English), and run to more than 2,000 pages. They now provide an invaluable resource for researchers treating the history of concepts in and beyond Europe.

Yet it is not the GG's size but its program that makes it a potential model for other lexicons of political and legal concepts. What are the GG's stated purposes? 1) By printing extensive citations systematically assembled from original, often inaccessible sources, to provide for the first time reliable information about past uses in German of political and social concepts; 2) to characterize the ways in which language both shaped and registered the processes of change which transformed every area of German political and social life from approximately the middle of the eighteenth-century through the nineteenth—and twentieth—; 3) to sharpen our awareness at the present time of just how we use political and social language, and

what alternatives to our present usages have existed in the past. By understanding the history of the concepts available to us, we may better perceive how they push us to think along certain lines, thus enabling us to conceive of how to act on less constraining definitions of our situation.

The GG goes beyond political, social, and economic history. Because those who lived through the unprecedented rapid changes of the modern age did not all experience, understand, and conceptualize its structural transformations in the same way, their diagnoses differed sharply, as did their actions qua members of different social formations and political groups. The lexicon's theory hypothesizes that the range of alternatives for action in the past was in large part determined by the concepts available. What these concepts were, how they were contested, and the extent to which they remained constant, were altered, or created de novo are the integrating themes of the GG's project. In order to treat them, the GG has utilized both the history of concepts (Begriffsgeschichte) and structural social history.[18] Its program is anti-reductionist, positing the mutual interdependence of both types of history, which it sees as in a condition of fruitful tension. Thus, as formulated by Professor Koselleck, the Begriffsgeschichte of the GG refuses to regard concept-formation and language as epiphenomenal, that is, as determined by the external forces of "real history." At the same time, it rejects the theory that political and social languages are autonomous "discourses" unaffected by anything extra-linguistic.

Now that the GG is completed, what is it that we know about political and social language that we did not know before? And what difference does it make to possess such knowledge? Perhaps the single most

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18) Koselleck(1979), "Begriffsgeschichte and Social History," in *Futures Past*, pp.73~91.

important objective of the original editors was to contrast the political and social concepts created by the advent of modernity to those which preceded it. But a work of this scope is directed to more than one audience, and hence has more than one justification. Let me list some of its more obvious contributions.

For those concerned with politics and the history of political thought, the GG provides situated, that is, contextual accounts of how key concepts came into existence, were modified, or became transformed, always understanding that these concepts were fiercely contested. Its founding editors were convinced that Geistesgeschichte and Ideengeschichte, both older German styles of writing such histories, were seriously inadequate because they did not treat thought within its context, because they did not address the question of what historical actors thought was at stake when they disputed the meanings and uses of abstract terms in use, or else proposed new language. While not every article in the GG successfully addresses such issues, many of them do so, and thus set a new standard for providing indispensable information about the language used in political and social argument, about the audiences to which it was addressed, and its actual reception and practical use.

Let me turn now to the problem raised by the format of the GG is that of a lexicon, a set of entries, (in this case concepts) ordered alphabetically. How should researchers proceed from a history of individual concepts to the reconstruction of integrated political and social vocabularies as they once constituted a sector of a language. At given times, certain concepts were grouped together as synonyms, near synonyms, contraries, or opposites. Thus they constituted a semantic or linguistic field, a special language or sub-language, which must be treated synchronically. In a later

period, the same concepts may neither cohere in the same pattern, nor carry the same senses as before.

These issues were not directly addressed prior to the publication of the GG, which was first conceived as a single volume. Thereafter the publisher and editors could not alter the alphabetical format. This was a pragmatic decision. It was not made on the basis of any methodological principle. But is it impossible a priori to treat individual concepts within larger linguistic units? Actually, some of the best articles in the GG treated two or more concepts, related explicitly or implicitly. The entry on Macht(power), and Gewalt(force, violence) emphasizes the need to survey the semantic fields that have existed in synchronic states of the same language, as well as to chart diachronic shifts in meaning of their constituent concepts. Their authors hold that it is impossible to understand the meanings of such concepts as Macht (power) and Gewalt without (force, violence) analyzing their relationship to other closely related concepts such as Herrschaft (dominion, domination, lordship, rule, command), Autorität(authority), Staat(state), and Gewaltenteilung(division of powers). The implications of recognizing just such a semantic field is developed at length in my discussion of the GG's entry on Herrschaft.[19] In order to provide specific examples of the GG's method at work on a scale beyond that of single concepts, I treat Herrschaft together with the related concepts of Macht(power) and Gewalt(violence).

These examples ought to clarify a number of issues: When may a concept be said to have been formulated and to be held and used in actual political discourse? To what extent does knowing the history of a

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19) Richter(1995), *The History of Political and Social Concepts*, pp.58~78.

concept in one language affect its translation into another? A satisfactory answer could be provided only by investigating analogous semantic fields in the target language. The two languages may differ profoundly in the synonyms and antonyms of the concept being translated, or else there may not be any developed set of distinctions in the political and social vocabulary of the target language at a given time .

In the middle ages, according to the GG, German uses of Herr(master, lord, God) occurs in a series of concrete and particularized uses. The GG's team begins to treat Herrschaft as a concept only after it began to be identified with late medieval usages taken from Roman and canon law. In his introduction to this entry, Koselleck insists that it would be a mistake to identify early medieval senses of Herrschaft with either the classical Greek concept of arche, or Roman senses of dominium, imperium, or auctoritas. Yet there is no classical section in this GG entry. Why is this so? Here the reasons are provided by the entries on Macht and Gewalt. These articles, taken together, indicate how onomasiology is practiced in the GG, that is, how boundaries are drawn between concepts which are near synonyms within the same semantic field. These procedures and findings also indicate how the GG responds to questions about the conceptual resources provided by the political and social vocabulary at a specified time

In the GG's articles on Macht and Gewalt, Christian Meier analyses their use within the semantic fields of political discourse in four synchronic states of various languages: classical Greek, the Latin of the Roman Republic, that of the Principate, and modern German. Meier concludes that in classical Greek there were many terms used to designate power and violence. During this period, there was a number of expressions, which the Greeks used in a loose, descriptive way, rather as strict definitions of terms.

But in modern German, such terms are conceptualized and distinguished from one another. These classical Greek terms included: arche, kratos, kyros, exousia, dynamis, ischys, and bia. The first three could mean Herrschaft just as well as Macht(power). Uses of these terms overlapped to an extent that makes it impossible to assign precise meaning to any one of them as a discrete concept distinguishable from all the others. In short, to the extent that distinctions were made at all, this semantic field of the political vocabulary was relatively undifferentiated in classical Greek.

The GG in its treatments of Herrschaft in relation to Macht and Gewalt, produced an account of the relevant semantic fields not only in classical antiquity, but also in early modern vernacular languages. In the articles treating these domains, their authors did not hesitate to conclude that there were no precise analogues during these periods to those highly differentiated usages at certain other times. Thus a description of political language can report informatively that in given times and places, there were only imprecisely differentiated concepts available to those writing or speaking about politics and society.

Such findings may suggest that when comparing the political concepts used at approximately the same time in different European countries and natural languages, it will often be the case that there are no precise matchings of senses and functions. Pointing up differences and incompatibilities in terms will be no less valuable than in finding similarities. Some such incommensurable relationships are well known: the fact that the French term politique and the German equivalent, Politik, may be translated into English as either "politics" or "policy."

To sum up, the GG seeks to combine diachronic and synchronic analyses of political and social language at a given time with a treatment of

its context. To do so, it identifies the users of and the target audiences for the main concepts of specific, often contested idioms, old and new. In this way, the GG calls into question the putative unity of historical periods. It seeks to discover the identity and interests of both those who proposed and the others who opposed the introduction of new concepts. Once this has been done, it becomes possible to ask what is the historical evidence that could explain why they took their respective positions.

III.

Such questions may be pursued either on the abstract level of metatheory or by case studies which apply the categories of conceptual history to specific instances of cross-cultural transfers in and through translation. This is what was done in several chapters by Peter Burke, Douglas Howland, and Joachim Kurtz in a book that considers how conceptual history may be applied to translation; how basic concepts are involved in the transposition of texts and untranslatable terms from one culture with its own history and natural language to another.[20] Burke treats what he calls the "cultural translation" of the Ottoman Empire by Europeans in early modern Europe; Howland analyzes the nineteenth-century Meiji translation of John Stuart Mill's *Essay on Liberty* into Japanese by Nakamuru Keiu; Kurtz, that of Fichte's The Vocation of Man into Chinese by Liang Quichao during the First World War (using Japanese

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20) An entire reference work devoted to untranslatable, principally philosophical terms, is *Vocabulaire Européen des Philosophies: Dictionnaire des intraduisibles*, ed. Barbara Cassin (Paris, 2004).

translations of the German texts). All three chapters focus primarily on the intercultural circulation and reception of concepts and categories; secondarily, on the terms of the vocabulary used to designate them. Burke is concerned with translations from Turkish into western languages; Howland and Kurtz, with translations in the opposite direction, from English and German to Japanese and Chinese.

Burke's chapter forms part of his larger project examining early modern European translations of foreign languages in terms of the extended metaphor used by anthropologists such as Evans-Pritchard when they refer to "cultural translation."[21] By this they mean "what happens in cultural encounters when each side tries to make sense of the actions of the other." In "Translating the Turks," Burke considers two related issues: first, what he denominates as the "cultural translation" of the Ottoman Empire and its Turkish inhabitants by early modern westerners writing in their own languages; second, the translation of these western accounts into other languages: Latin, Italian, French, English, German, and Dutch.

Burke classifies "cultural translations" of the Ottoman Empire under three rubrics: 1) conflations with persisting medieval stereotypes of Muslims; 2) fresh perceptions based on direct observation of the Ottoman Empire; and 3) more rarely, views combining old images with new information. The principal novelty of all three, Burke asserts, came in their emphases on the distinctive nature of the Ottomans' political regime. Five terms, or regime types, were used to classify how the Ottomans were themselves ruled, and how they treated those they conquered: tyranny, despotism, absolutism, slavery, and lordship. Burke's discussions of these

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21) Burke, Peter and R. Po-Chia Hsia(2007), *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, Cambridge, p.8.

regime types is restricted to providing one example of each usage. Perhaps because Burke is concerned primarily with "cultural translation," he does not treat the histories of these regime classifications, or the extent to which, in early modern Europe they were regarded as wholly or partially synonymous, Nor does he attempt to present the spectrum of political positions advocated by the writers using each of these terms, the different audiences they addressed, or the political conjunctures that led them to favor the choice of one regime type and to disregard the others.

Burke does show how changes in the nature of sources can affect translation strategies.[22] When first-hand observation of the Ottoman Empire replaced medieval stereotypes of the Muslim world, unique Turkish offices, or institutions were revealed for the first time. This raised the question of whether these differences might be legitimate because of the different imperatives confronted by the Ottoman Empire and European governments respectively. If indeed these practices, offices, or institutions differed radically from those of the West, then it seemed plausible that this uniqueness should be underlined for the reading public by the translator retaining such Turkish words as "spahi," "pasha," "bey" or "janissary."

Burke assesses the consequences produced by adopting one or another of the two competing translation strategies of "classicizing" or "foreignizing." Translation into Latin imposed certain imperatives such as following Ciceronian and humanist stylistics and rhetoric, as well as finding classical analogues. Translation into a European vernacular language encouraged use of Turkish terms, and the recognition by writers, such as Rycaut, of legitimate differences between Ottoman modes of rule and

those of European governments. On balance, Burke concludes, the refusal to translate culturally specific terms both promoted European understanding of Ottoman culture, and enriched the western political vocabulary. Another, if rare, outcome was the increased ability to view European culture from the perspective of an observer from a culture once thought alien, as in Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes*.

Burke's analysis of translation, cultural and linguistic, is from the Turkish into the languages and cultures of Europe. This direction is reversed by Howland and Kurtz, both of whom examine transpositions of works written in western languages into the very different linguistic, political, and cultural systems of Japan and China. In an illuminating passage, which has already been cited in part, Joachim Kurtz wrote:

Modern Chinese discourses, no matter whether on social or ideological questions⋯are articulated to a large extent in terms that were coined and normalized as translations of Western or Western-derived notions. Yet far from serving as simple equivalents of imported ways of understanding, many terms of foreign origin have unfolded a life of their own in modern Chinese contexts. More often than not, they have acquired new meanings that creatively alter, extend, or even undermine established European conceptions. In order to comprehend the resulting semantic and conceptual differences, historians of thought must pay close attention to the multilayered process of translation and appropriation from which these terms have emerged.[23]

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22) "Translation strategies" is an important technical term in translation studies. See the article by Venuti in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, pp.240~244.

23) Lackner, Michael & Iwo Amelung & Joachim Kurtz, eds.(2001), *New Terms for New Ideas. Western Knowledge and Lexical Change in Late Imperial China*, Leiden: Brill, p.147. See also Michael Lackner and Natascha Vittinghoff, eds.(2004), *Mapping Meanings: the Field of New Knowledge in Late Qing China*, Leiden: Brill.

Analysis of conceptual transfers and changes in Asian thought must be placed within the context of radical inequality in the power of participants. Often, as in nineteenth-century China, such translation and appropriation of political concepts took place amidst unprecedented rapid and violent change, much of it produced by foreign aggression, western, Russian, and Japanese. It seemed clear to some Chinese intellectuals that acquiring modern western knowledge and technology was prerequisite to China remaining an independent state capable of fending off its aggressors. Yet there was no consensus on whether learning and adapting new political arrangements were on the same level of importance as acquiring the physical sciences and technology of the foreign powers threatening to partition China.

One school of theorists and translators such as Yan Fu, were convinced that if their country were to survive, it had to adopt western political ideas. In the late 1890s, he began translating a series of works, which although they may seem disparate to us, he thought to form an unified and politically indispensable body of doctrine: T. H. Huxley's Evolution and Ethics; Herbert Spencer's The Study of Sociology; Adam Smith's The Wealth of Nations; J.S. Mill's On Liberty and System of Logic; and Montesquieu's The Spirit of Laws. For all of these books, Yan Fu had to create a political vocabulary by neologisms and by assigning new meanings to the Chinese characters used to designate existing abstract words and terms. And to gain and hold his audience, this had to be done in a style at once comprehensible and acceptable to the literati.[24]

In an important essay-review, Douglas Howland has surveyed the most

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24) Wright, David(2001), "Yan Fu and the Tasks of the Translator," in Amelung Lackner & Kurtz, eds., *New Terms for New Ideas*, pp.235~255.

important differences in recent work on translation and conceptual transfers from the West to China and Japan. Much as does Kurtz in the passage previously cited, Howland begins with a statement of the adaptations required in intercultural exchanges: translation is "a translingual act of transcoding cultural material? a complex act of communication.[25] Thus discussions of cultural conceptual transfers necessarily involve differences among natural languages, forms of writing and argument, rhetorics, and structures of authority, as well as the media through which texts are transmitted in the source and target societies respectively.

Howland, in this essay-review, further distinguishes two groups of historians treating the effects of western colonialism and imperialism on the peoples of Asia. One group treats states once strong and centralized, such as China and Japan which were never completely subjugated, colonized and ruled by an alien bureaucracy and army. Historians of such states tend to focus less on colonial and post-colonial causes than on the role played by translation in bridging differences between languages, social practices, religions, and political cultures. The paradigm situation for them is when indigenous agents wish to overcome obstacles blocking access for their peoples to western ideas, institutions, science, and technology.

Another group of Asian historians has studied forced subordination and domination when suffered either by peoples such as those of the Indian subcontinent with established cultural traditions, or by those of the Philippines whose traditions were largely oral. Both types have for the most part been studied from the perspective of colonial and imperial

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25) Howland, Douglas(2003), "The Predicament of Ideas in Culture: Translation and Historiography," in *History and Theory* 42, p.45.

powers, whose practices have successfully dominated those they ruled. The descriptive and explanatory theories used by their historians concur in the view that these colonial and imperial powers have forced their subjects to translate their native languages, concepts, and culture into the language of those dominating them. Thus because subject peoples are forced to use alien language and representations, they are coerced into perceiving themselves as inferiors, subordinate to their conquerors, and owing allegiance to them. This school tends to use the concept of translation metaphorically, as the total process of domination.

On which points do these two interpretations differ? One school sees colonialism and empire as always producing a conceptual monopoly, with two and only two possible outcomes: either the victims' identification withn their masters' language, concepts, and representations; or else resistance entailing completely rejecting of them. This view has been criticized because some native agents may move beyond resistance to creating new usages of once foreign terms by reinventing them in the form of neologisms or previously unknown linguistic practices. Creative reinterpretations can and do appear in the course of translation. How the history of concepts can help identify such developments in the language of intercultural translation and transfers is illustrated by the contributions of Kurtz and Howland to a forthcoming volume, *Why Concepts Matter*.[26]

Kurtz provides a brief account of how political and social concepts in modern Chinese came into existence through the translation, appropriation, and creative transformation of their occidental originals from

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26) Richter, Melvin and Martin J. Burke eds.(2010), *Why Concepts Matter: Translating Political and Social Thought*, Leiden: Brill.

either European languages, or from Japanese renditions of European texts. It was easier for for Chinese scholars to learn Japanese than western languages, and Japanese texts were more easily transferable into the Chinese writing system. Always ambiguous, contested, and contestable, western political and social concepts became even more so in China at the stage when there were not as yet any consensus about which Chinese terms and characters should designate these transfers from western conceptual vocabularies. After the fall of the Qing Empire in 1911, Kurtz tells us, Chinese scholars took increasingly great liberties as they adapted to indigenous contexts the concepts appropriated from occidental and Japanese sources, Liang Quichao seems to have attained an even higher level of emancipation from his source when he used one title to present his Chinese version of three unconnected minor works by Fichte. Because Liang did not read German, he had worked from Japanese translations, which he did not identify

Yet Kurtz offers a convincing explanation of how Liang was able to produce a text that reproduced successfully "the spirit" of Fichte's works written for a popular audience at the time of Napoleon Bonaparte's invasion of German states a century earlier. How was Liang able to create the fascination Fichte subsequently held for Chinese writers? Kurtz compares the situation of Prussia in the early nineteenth century to that of China when the new republic seemed impotent to fend off Japanese territorial demands during the First World War. Liang represented Fichte as a thinker who had linked national revival and individual self-assertion. By creating a new sense of citizenship and its obligations, Fichte had shown how to rescue first, Prussia, and then, Liang suggested, republican China, from the external dangers that threatened their national independence. By

following Fichte's precepts, the Chinese "body politic" could be revitalized. However far Liang's text diverged from Fichte's German refracted through Japanese translation, Liang captured "Fichte's pathos of immediacy and rhetoric of total identification." By comparing the contexts of Fichte and Liang, Kurtz shows how conceptual appropriation and rhetorical strategies could make possible this successful cultural translation from the proto-nationalism of a nineteenth-century German state to the full-blooded version characteristic of twentieth-century China.

Kurtz also shows how the criterion of fidelity to an original text in another language can become irrelevant. In the case analyzed by him, the issue of fidelity does not arise for two reasons: first, since Liang had assembled three previously unconnected writings by Fichte, there was no one such original; second, since Liang knew no German, he translated into Chinese a composite volume of extracts taken from Japanese versions of Fichte. Thus Liang published something close to a pseudotranslation, that is a text, not only purporting to be, or taken for a translation, but also a work, the status of which is uncertain because it calls into question the distinction between a translation and an original work.[27]

The chapter by Howland on Nakamura Keiu's translation into Japanese of Mill's *On Liberty*, is set in a context both resembling and strikingly different from that depicted by Kurtz.[28] In the third quarter of the nineteenth-century, China and Japan were both ancient East Asian

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27) Robinson, Douglas(2001), "Pseudotranslation," in *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, pp.183~185.
28) This context has been described by Howland in both his books, *Translating the West. Language and Political Reason in Nineteenth-Century Japan* (Honolulu, 2002) and *Personal Liberty and the Public Good: The Introduction of John Stuart Mill to China and Japan* (Toronto, 2005).

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civilizations with histories and high cultures fully comparable to those of the Western states which now sought to conquer, dominate and exploit them.

Japan, despite being the later of the two to be exposed to extensive foreign contact, developed a government far more capable of determining its own destiny than the decaying Qing Empire which nominally continued to rule China until 1911. As Howland's two books make clear, the transition from the previous Tokugawa regime(1603~1867) to that of the westernizing Meiji(1868~1912) involved transforming both the actual structures of government, society, and the economy, and developing the concepts of the new language that would be used to describe and legitimize these far-reaching changes. Howland refers explicitly to Koselleck's formulation of the tension between past experiences and expectations of the future which altered political and social concepts during European transitions to modernity. Treating in terms, analogous to but not identical with, Koselleck's depiction of the relationship between conceptual and social history, Howland charts the introduction of Western political and social thought to Japan. He is concerned to explain its reception, which he relates both to the distinctive patterns of Japanese westernization of its governmental and economic structures by the self-appointed oligarchy that led the Meiji Restoration, and to the transformative processes of translation as it actually took place.

Howland's books, like his chapter in this volume, emphasizes the role of translation in two processes often, if arbitrarily, treated apart: the creation and circulation of new concepts, and their application to political action.[29]

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29) See endnote 24.

Novel concepts were needed to frame the intense debates about which policies ought to be adopted in Japan, whose new rulers believed, had to be westernized in order to survive. While it seemed inevitable that many, if not all of these new concepts were to be translated from Western thought, it mattered a great deal how they were to be interpreted and applied. It was no easy matter to adapt existing Japanese concepts to those being introduced from contemporary Western political and social thought, particularly when it became necessary to choose among the many variant forms of liberalism. Since even in Europe the key concepts of liberalism were bitterly contested, disputation was even more intense in Japan.

In addition, Howland emphasizes, certain elements of pre-Meiji Japanese political culture persisted even among proponents of reform. As for the terms available for the new political vocabulary, some key concepts of nineteenth-century western thought such as "society" did not exist in Japanese; other concepts such as "liberty" or "individualism" were apt to be resisted by many, perhaps most, Japanese politicians, educators, and intellectuals. "In translation, a word like 'liberty' connoted a measure of selfishness that restricted its ready acceptability; in the arena of political action, liberty posed an anarchic threat to social stability—thus the ethical decision to restrict liberty seemed reasonable."[30]

Howland applies conceptual history when explaining the nature and significance of translation in Japanese cultural transfers, particularly those involving political and social concepts. His subject is the translation of Mill's *On Liberty* by Nakamura Keiu, whose version of Samuel Smiles's Self-Help also became a bestseller. While Nakamura Keiu's enormously

30) Howland(2002), *Translating the West*, p.4.

popular rendition of *On Liberty* retained some of the central arguments originally made by Mill in this essay, Nakamura also attributed to Mill certain positions conspicuously absent from, or even opposed to Mill's own beliefs, such as the view that Christianity is the "quintessential form of freedom." Other elements of Mill's argument, congenial to the Meiji oligarchy, were preserved by Nakamura. These included the restriction of political participation to a minority of the population, and the indefinite postponement of any extension of the suffrage until the elite judged that the majority had been sufficiently educated.

In a stunning departure from Mill's analysis of the greatest dangers to individual liberty in modern states, Nakamura built upon the fact that at this time the Japanese language had no concept of society. It was, of course, Mill's argument that, in contrast to the past, it was no longer government, but modern society, which constituted the principal threat to individual liberty. In the absence of this concept from Japanese, Nakamura consistently conflated government, society, and the power of both. He sought to paraphrase Mill's dichotomy by constructing an analogy between Japan as a whole and a self-governing, harmonious village community made up of households equal in wealth and power. While denying the legitimacy of social hierarchy, Nakamura's model left no room for either a theory of representation, or of constitutionalism. He simply assumed that when the common interest of the community has priority, this will ensure that the government will always limit the exercise of its power. Although endorsing Mill's vision of a polity based on the liberty and rights of the individual, Nakamura sought to limit that liberty by depicting it as ultimately subordinate to the general interest of the community. The concepts of Christian love and conscience were also introduced by

Nakamura (who had been converted to Christianity) as means indispensable to preventing the individualism lauded by Mill from turning into selfish self assertion incompatible with the general interest of the community.

Howland rejects the view, which he attributes to social science theorists of modernization, that the political concepts and values originating in the West and adapted in China and Japan were "semantically transparent," that is, when translated and deployed in their new context, they meant the same to the Chinese and Japanese as they had to those who had coined them. Instead of this view of translation, Howland examines the ways in which translations engage and deliberately modify the arguments of their originals, in order to comment upon those originals."[31] Particularly in his second book, *Personal Liberty* and the Public Good, when Howland calls attention to Nakamura Keiu's departures from Mill's text, he does so, not to designate them as misunderstandings or as unjustifiable interpretations, but "as elements of an intercultural discussion on individual liberty and public virtue." Devoting a whole chapter to Mill's contemporary British critics, Howland shows how they too questioned the adequacy of the way Mill theorized the relationship between individual liberty and the public good. In short, Mill's translator, unable to accept Mill's treatment of this theoretical difficulty, used the Japanese text as a way of suggesting a different formulation that resolved or mitigated Mill's argument. In this respect, Nakamura Keiu's treatment of Mill, treating translation as the occasion for correcting errors or insufficiencies in the original text.

Conclusion

If conceptual transfers between cultures are to be studied in ways that capture the complexity of the multi-faceted process of exchange and adaptation described by Kurtz and Howland, then the effects of translation must be considered in terms of reception, just as much as the strategies adopted by translators to convey the meaning of the original text. The processes by which translations are received and applied to the conditions of the target society require much more careful analysis than it is possible to outline here.[32] In Peter Burke's previously cited paper, he makes discriminating use of the metaphor of cultural translation in treating "the exchange of ideas and the mutual modifications of meanings in cultural exchanges."[33] While Burke's use of these concepts is illuminating, he does not refer to the part played by comparison in the reception of translations. Ultimately, their fates may be determined in no small part by comparisons between what has been introduced and what is the nearest indigenous analogy to it. Here it may be useful to recall that the concept of comparison itself has a complex history with many significant alterations of meaning since the early modern period.

Following John Locke, eighteenth-century European theorists regarded comparison as both a basic operation of the human mind, and as indispensable to understanding the rest of the world revealed by the three

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31) Personal Liberty and the Public Good, 19. "Semantic transparency" is also treated at length in *Translating the West*, pp.18~25.

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32) While the case studies by Professors Howland and Kurtz demonstrate in detail how analyses of the reception of translations should be performed, the theoretical issues are thoroughly dealt with in a paper by Lázló Kontler(2008), in *Contributions to the History of Concepts* 4, pp.43~53.

33) Burke, Peter(2007), "Lost (and Found) in Translation," *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, p.4.

preceding centuries of early modern encounters. By mid-eighteenth-century, the diversity of known societies throughout the world had become a central concern of the emerging human sciences, which tended to emphasize differences more than similarities, and to offer explanations of why political arrangements, religions, customs, morality, or languages differed from one part of the world to another. However, in the nineteenth-century, previously unknown theories such as those emphasizing putative racial differences and Social Darwinian assumptions about the survival of the fittest, produced drastic revaluations of earlier assessments of non-western regimes, societies, and cultures.[34] Nor was the study of diversities limited to contrasting Europe with societies outside it. Increasingly it was argued that within every country, western or non-western, differences among its population—linguistic, ethnic, social, religious— exist and may determine public policy, the distribution of wealth, and the pattern of cultural practices.

Similar variations occurred in the views of Europe and the west held by the peoples outside it, whether wholly conquered and reduced to colonial status, as in India; or partially but not completely dominated as in semi-colonial nineteenth-century China; or the few societies relatively successful in maintaining their previous autonomy as in Japan. Conceptions of the west developed by those outside it differed greatly from the self-congratulatory images of the powers which for a time dominated most of the non-western world. Both new theories and challenging research

projects will be needed to track the concepts used both to compare western societies with those they ruled, and to analyze the processes by which non-western societies selected and modified western political and social concepts. Such novel theories must deal with the role of translation in the transfer or modification of political and social concepts from one society to another with a different history, set of institutions, religions, political culture, and language. The research projects on conceptual usages in the target society ought to complement those charting the history of concepts in the western societies that were the sources of the translated texts.[35]

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34) Richter, Melvin(2002), "That Vast Tribe of Ideas: Competing Concepts and Practices of Comparison in Eighteenth-Century Europe," in *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* 44, pp.199~219; Melvin Richter(2000), "Two Eighteenth-Century Senses of 'Comparison' in Locke and Montesquieu," *Jahrbuch für Recht und Ethik* 8, pp.1~22.

35) In September, 2008 a conference in Seoul was devoted to "The Global-Historical Diffusion of Western Concepts and the Transformation of Northeast Asia Regional Order." This meeting was sponsored jointly by the Korean project on the introduction and reception of western political and social concepts in East Asia, and by the History of Political and Social Concepts Group, an international organization meeting for the first time outside Europe and the Americas. The theory, methods, and findings of the monumental German works described in Part II have inspired scholars from other European nations and other parts of the world to join together in the History of Political and Social Concepts Group. This brings together interdisciplinary researchers who participate in other projects, sometimes resembling, but never identical with those previously completed in Germany. Such works are being published in the Netherlands, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and Spain. Teams of Italian and Dutch scholars, concerned to compare the concepts charted in their respective national conceptual histories, are planning lexicons of political, social, and legal concepts on an European scale. Nor is conceptual history outside Germany confined to the compilation of lexicons. Critical discussion of its methods and findings have led to innovative applications to projects directed to problems of conceptual transfers as part of international cultural exchanges, such as that recently funded by the Spanish government. In April, 2006, the first meeting was held in Madrid of the Seminario Conceptual Comparada del Mundo Iberoamericano. Beginning with the findings of the *Dicconario Histórico del Lenguaje Politicoy Social*, edited by Professors Javier Fernandez Sebastían and Juan Francisco Fuentes, the panels discussed the reception and transformation of key Portuguese and Spanish concepts in Central and South America. Analogous cultural transfers were

With these additional resources, it will become possible to investigate what in fact occurred when allegedly untranslatable concepts were nevertheless rendered into a language and context differing so much from the original. As has been suggested, what may result are creative new understandings of the political and social concepts being translated. It is here that understanding the multilayered process of translation and appropriation" can be greatly facilitated by detailed histories of concepts, such as those provided by the GG, not only of a single western basic concepts such as Herrschaft(dominion, domination, lordship, rule, command), but also of the other concepts functioning as synonyms or contraries in their semantic fields. It has been established that it is impossible to understand the meanings of such German concepts as Macht(power) and Gewalt(force, violence) without analyzing their relationship to other closely related concepts in their semantic field, such as Herrschaft, Autorität(authority), Staat(state), and Gewaltenteilung(division of powers). Such findings suggest that when comparing the political concepts used at approximately the same time in different European countries and natural languages, it was often be the case that there were no precise matchings of senses and functions. Pointing up differences and incompatibilities in terms was no less valuable than in finding similarities.

Which concepts were included in the semantic field of the term in the target language which the translator used to render the western basic

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discussed in a New York conference on translation in conceptual history which included discussion of Chinese and Japanese versions of texts in western political and social thought. Taken together, the findings of these diverse collective enterprises have begun to make possible the development of theories and methods of inquiry which may shed new light on how societies acquire, develop, and maintain their key concepts and beliefs.

concept? When the intercommunication of concepts in Europe was studied, it was found that even the best-informed scholars of the target society cannot provide reliable answers without the aid of research teams organized to investigate and present the findings of focused historical research. This was the case in Germany, where conceptual history was developed. The same is true of other societies, whether western or non-western. If the intercommunication of political and social concepts in East Asia is to be investigated, national or regional projects will be needed to compile the histories of political and social concepts in each of the areas once connected by their religions, cultures, languages, and writing systems.

High among the goals of future researchers should be the Identification of terms offered by translators as approximate equivalents of those concepts used in the natural language of the source text. No less indispensable is a careful inventory of the other concepts constituting the semantic field in both source and target languages at different times. And because political and social concepts are complex, ambiguous, controversial and contested, adequate histories of them must include both what was said in opposition to their use and the arguments of their proponents. Almost certainly, such research efforts will necessitate the multidisciplinary organization of scholars in national or regional projects designed to investigate these historical questions with the tools provided by conceptual history and translation studies.