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## Histories before History

### Condorcet's Temporal Dimensions Considered as History of Knowledge

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## CHAPTER 9

# Histories before history

## Condorcet's temporal dimensions reconsidered as history of knowledge

*Victoria Höög*

How many general histories can we have that are regarded as reliable, professional accounts of the past? The history of knowledge has been both welcomed as a renewal and questioned as too vague and beyond definition. The latter argument is that knowledge without a specified subject can be interpreted as including everything from perceptions to practices, both in past and present. The claim of 'uncovering and explicating diverse forms of knowledge', it has been asserted, is not substantial enough to form its own discipline.<sup>1</sup> However, given the view that history should be considered in the plural, light is glimpsed at the end of this blind alley. Until historicism's academic triumph in the mid nineteenth century, history writing was a flexible genre close to literature, in its descriptive form as well as content. History was considered in plural, not a singular, universal, progressive process. In the German language, history was originally in the plural form *die Geschichten*, but changed in the eighteenth century to be used as a collective singular. From then on, history acquired its modern shape, and with it the task to report what counted as historical reality.

Despite intense scholarly discussions in recent decades, general academic history has neglected temporality, or more specifically how different experiences of time are historically shaped, viewing it as a problem for the philosophy or theory of history, and hence not of interest for the practising historian. Practices, materiality, mediality, and circulation have dominated the present theoretical discussion.

The widely used concept of the circulation of knowledge was imported from science studies.<sup>2</sup>

By contrast, I would suggest that a revival of Reinhart Koselleck's concept of multiple histories, paired with a theory of temporality, can provide a new, though pragmatic justification for a history of knowledge as a refigured academic history subject in its own right. Together with a new focus on temporality that extends beyond linear time, the history of knowledge can provide something new, with the added virtue of connecting to the ongoing historiographical discussion of the past's relation to the present.<sup>3</sup>

The international historiographical discussion of time has thus far been largely historiographical and not applied to specific cases.<sup>4</sup> My suggested case is a rereading of Condorcet's *Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit humain* (1794) with temporality, or the relationship with time as the guiding framework, suggesting that it will open for a multi-dimensioned view of progress.<sup>5</sup> A helpful concept for a reinterpretation of Condorcet is 'regimes of time' or more precisely 'multiple of temporal regimes', concepts coined by Reinhart Koselleck and further developed by Helge Jordheim.

The thesis pursued in this essay is that a theory of historical time, building on Koselleck's later work, would be a theoretical concept that could provide history of knowledge with a unique quality. I will proceed in three steps. First I will give the historical background to the theories of histories and temporality by introducing Koselleck's concepts. Second, I will use the Koselleckian tools of multilayered temporality on Condorcet's well-known *Esquisse*.<sup>6</sup> My intention is to depict a humanistic multifaceted view of Condorcet that replaces the standard view of Condorcet as ardent promoter for cold reason- and science-driven society. Third, I will discuss what a practical application of historical time can do for establishing the history of knowledge as a historical field in its own right, and lastly, some comments on how a theory of time can help to form a less mythical account of the Enlightenment.

### From scientization to narrativism

In the post-war period, historicism was given a post-Rankean nudge towards scientization by the Anglophone analytic philosophy of science. Questions such as how history relates to science, how we understand or explain historical events, whether historical explanations have different forms from other sciences, what sort of objectivity is conceivable, and can and should historians formulate laws as in the natural sciences have dominated the theoretical discussions. Carl Hempel's covering law model, first formulated in *The Function of General Laws in History* but reiterated in new editions into the 1970s, kept its hold on history's philosophical identity as primarily a branch of epistemology.<sup>7</sup> Debates about history's scientific and methodological requirements detained historians. The idea of several histories became forgotten in the scholarly climate that dominated history departments in the Western world.

A slow but fundamental change took place beginning in the 1960s, with a focus on the forms of historical writing. Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* in 1970 and Hayden White's *Metahistory* in 1973 were very influential in driving the historiographical shift from epistemology to rhetorical narrative strategies.<sup>8</sup> Foucault had his international breakthrough when his books were translated to English in the late 1970s, whereas Hayden White enjoyed more immediate success.<sup>9</sup> A discussion and awareness of different imaginative styles of historical writing emerged. The rhetorical aspects came to the fore, leading to a new awareness of how texts, not only in fiction, but historical writing, were influenced and marked by the existent cultural configuration. Episteme and discourse were the buzzwords for several decades. The focus on style and discourse impacted on how historical change was recorded by historians. However, it is not an exaggeration to say that Foucault was not interested in temporality as an analytical category, which he viewed as belonging to old-fashioned historicity. Neither in *The Archaeology* nor in *The Order of Things* is temporality described among the defining rules for an archaeological formation.

Belonging to the same generation as Foucault, another great European thinker, Reinhart Koselleck, had to wait until the 1980s to be translated

into English. In Koselleck's interdisciplinary works, which range widely from political philosophy and hermeneutics to anthropological history, one particular idea stands out: that human history, unlike natural history, is fundamentally non-singular and constituted by several temporal dimensions, distinctly expressed as 'the synchronicity of the non-synchronicity' ('Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen').<sup>10</sup> Since *Kritik und Krise* (1959), his main focus has been to understand how individual and collective self-understandings are formed by historical events, their dynamics and structures.<sup>11</sup> In his dissertation, inspired by Carl Schmitt, Koselleck looks for a historical answer what went wrong in Germany in the catastrophic twentieth century; however, his answer applies to the whole of European political thought, including French and English political philosophy. The utopian thought that took over the European political imagination with the French Revolution lacked the ability to distinguish between morality and politics, and constantly intermingled the two. This led to a historical consciousness, with concepts that only could imagine a history in the singular, which inaugurated a world of wars, revolutions, and permanent political crisis. The dissertation can be read as the first normative step in deconstructing this singular, unified history and open up for a plurality of histories. The methodological way to do it was to explore the history of central concepts, such as crisis, critique, and revolution, led by the idea that historical agents use language and concepts to make history.<sup>12</sup>

After the Second World War, time was chiefly conceived of as a given natural entity, not fluctuating in the chosen historical period of interest.<sup>13</sup> When Koselleck published in the 1970s, temporality once again became a subject for historians, but modelled and hidden in what in a more immediate sense caught the reviewers' attention: *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland*.<sup>14</sup>

The intellectual project changed shape over the years. From a more general knowledge approach that viewed concepts as constructions of historical agents to create and shape history, Koselleck changed focus to theorizing time: how the individual and collective self-understanding of time had developed in history.<sup>15</sup> Temporality became for Koselleck

ultimately constitutive for individuals as well as societies, the former aspect a heritage from Kant and Heidegger, but developed as new perspectives. His efforts have provided historians with an impressive set of new temporal terms, such as *Zeitschichten* (time layer), *Sattelzeit* (saddle period), and *Ungleichzeitigkeit* (non-simultaneity), held together by a problematization of the origin and nature of modernity.

What happened during the *Sattelzeit*, according to Koselleck, is what he calls ‘a process of singularization’, which is reflected in the shifting content in central concepts. Freedoms became freedom in the singular, and histories that hosted a spectrum of different experiences and temporal horizons became history in the singular—a history that is in perpetual change, filled with the spirit of the time. Progress also lost its multifaceted references and became a singular abstract concept, without specified content: one of the prime examples of the changed temporal dimensions in modernity. For the later Koselleck, a main requirement for history to remain a scientific discipline was to develop a theory of historical times. He claimed that history in general, and not only conceptual history, could not do without a theory of time.<sup>16</sup>

In this Koselleckian framework of objecting to singularity, a history of knowledge might have an emancipatory potential. Behind the undertaking is a normative conviction: that we cannot form a sustainable politics from any viewpoint, neither the ordinary citizens, politicians or policy planners in a market-driven corporation without an imaginary that comprise ideas of progress in the future. Without an imaginary that feeds hope we are lost in collective depression. If we accept Koselleck’s theory of multiple temporalities, another image of the eighteenth century might emerge, hosting multiple ideas of progress, a possible platform for an enriched political imaginary that goes beyond today’s gloomy or even catastrophic outlook on the future.

Instead of viewing a historical period as constituted by one temporal dimension, multiple temporal regimes make sense for a reinterpretation of the *Esquisse*. That can open for a historical understanding of the Enlightenment not as a one-way argument leading straight to a dangerous Utopia, but more in line with a profound historicity. The standard interpretation of Condorcet’s last work has kept to the linear time model

held together by an idea of progress. Keith Baker's biography *Condorcet: From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (1975) positioned the 1970s perspective on Condorcet, congruent with the collective mindset of the time, interpreting the Enlightenment as the successful elaborator and follower of the scientific revolution.<sup>17</sup> Condorcet is portrayed as the excellent thinker that worked hard to apply scientific thinking in 'all aspects of social affairs', an ambition that 'marked a feature of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth centuries, particularly in France.'<sup>18</sup> Subsequent biographies followed the same path.<sup>19</sup> An accurate brilliant version was given in Rothschild's masterly monograph, but temporality and plurality are not among her analytical tools.<sup>20</sup>

### Condorcet reread

My purpose here is to explore if a retemporalization can change interpretation of the *Esquisse* or *the Sketch* as the Enlightenment manifest for interminable progress.<sup>21</sup> For that we need to return to the seventeenth century, and the origin of the modern 'regimes of historicity.' If we accept multiple histories, we might accommodate multiple temporalities without the quest to synchronize. From a multiple view of history as *histories*, it follows that the concept of progress can be rehabilitated to include a varied and non-deterministic content.

In the last decades the negative view of the Enlightenment's heritage has taken over and dominated the academic circles inspired by post-structuralist views on history, strengthened by Foucauldian influences.<sup>22</sup> What these interpretations share, despite their contrary conclusions, is the same view on the modern temporality. Temporality is conceptualized from a linear progressive time concept, as processes of speed, on one hand glorified as the wanted and non-avoidable journey to a continuously better future, on the other hand a destructive temporal order, fragmenting the roots of the past that frame its necessary human meaningfulness.

A superficial reading of *The Sketch* can prove that the mythical prejudices about the book are correct. Progress is one of the most frequent nouns and verbs in the introduction and makes it easy to hang



up one's attentions to afford the standard interpretation. However, the first thing to bear in mind is that Condorcet used *progrès* in the plural: *les progress* with concrete references and instances. This crucial grammatical difference is a first indication of how Condorcet viewed progress: as uneven and with different historical dynamic. Progress in the plural makes it relevant to identify a direction in history, but not as one firm, abstract-determined, metaphysical totality. Instead it opens for many histories; history in the plural. One passage at the end of the introduction is significant for the whole *Sketch* and turns around the standard interpretation:

if we survey in a single sweep the universal history of peoples we see them sometimes making fresh progress, sometimes plunging back into ignorance, sometimes surviving somewhere between these extremes or halted at a certain point, sometimes disappearing from the earth under the conqueror's heel, mixing with the victors or living on in slavery, or sometimes receiving knowledge from some more enlightened people in order to transmit it in their own turn to other nations.<sup>23</sup>

Condorcet's way of pointing out that progress and knowledge are not gained in linear temporality is a substantial idea in the *Sketch*. The awareness and attention to unequal human conditions is the dominating theme, not abstract progress in general, or in the sciences. There is manifold of expressed hopes, but sided with multifarious of gloomy conditions.

The first epoch in mankind's history is outlined with the title 'Men are united in tribes.' Here Condorcet points out a detail that reverses the standard story. The first signs of a political institution are detected, as it also 'has had the contrary effects upon human progress' and 'accelerated the progress of reason at the same time as it has propagated error'.<sup>24</sup> The complexity of the history of humankind is obvious for Condorcet: it is not one singular history, but a multiplicity of histories, taking place in chorus. The division of mankind into two races occurs; 'one destined to teach, the other for believing...the one wishing to place itself above reason, the other renouncing its own reason'. This unequal condition accompanies humanity through all the following epochs. First in the



future, in the tenth epoch, the abolition of inequality *might be* diminished without disappearing altogether. The cause of inequality is closely connected to dependence. Condorcet's proposal is astonishing for its clarity, and precedes political ideas of social justice by centuries:

The degree of equality in education that we reasonably hope to attain, but that should be adequate, is that which excludes all dependence, either forced or voluntary. We shall see how this condition can be easily attained in the present state of human knowledge even by those who can study only for a small number of years in childhood, and then during the rest of their life in their few hours of leisure...we can teach the citizen everything he needs to know in order to be able to manage his household, administer his affairs and employ his labour and his faculties in freedom; to know his rights and to be able to exercise them.<sup>25</sup>

In the second epoch several statements do not point at collective singular progress as the dominating feature, but as well the beginning of miseries such as slavery that since have accompanied mankind.<sup>26</sup> In the third agricultural epoch the alphabet was invented, which of course was progress, but simultaneously a new class of men arise, 'an hereditary nobility...a common people condemned to toil, dependence, and humiliation without actually being slaves...origin of feudal system'.<sup>27</sup> As in the previous epochs, this one ends with more oppression.<sup>28</sup> The fourth epoch was Greek. Most of the section discusses the mistakes the Greeks made as thinkers—largely, establishing theories before assembling facts. The death of Socrates marked the beginning of the war between philosophy and superstition, a war that is still going on. Condorcet highlights the advantages of political citizenship that brings together citizens in a public place, but immediately writes at length that this arrangement 'had as their object the liberty or the happiness of at most only half of the human race.'<sup>29</sup> A look of the temporality in the subsequent fifth to eighth epochs shows an unevenness in the history of the progress of the human spirit. Progress is not depicted as a singular movement, but in the plural, spread over a range of human spaces, sometimes stable and sometimes in decline. Much in human history is

characterized by repetition, not only by change, and structures interact with singular events.

In the ninth epoch, 'From Descartes to the Foundation of the French Republic', the text has a more dramatic character. France as a nation is glorified in a few sentences, but with the strong statement that liberty also has encouraged tyranny and superstition to return, and 'mankind is plunged once more into darkness'.<sup>30</sup> The progress of the different sciences is uneven and difficult. A comment on the application of the probability theory expresses Condorcet's modesty: 'the applications have also taught us to recognize the different degrees of certainty we can hope to attain'.<sup>31</sup> It was well known that his conception of knowledge was probabilistic and nonelitist: only knowledge attained by education across a whole community, living lives of liberty and equality could be relied on, and was a condition for communal well-being. To ascribe Condorcet the view that the sciences are unaffected, objective phenomena is a misreading, frequently made in the twentieth century, illustrating what Quentin Skinner identified as 'the mythology of prolepsis'.<sup>32</sup>

The need for a plurality of histories is directly addressed by Condorcet in the last pages of the ninth epoch: 'Up till now, the history of politics, like that of philosophy or of science, has been the history of only a few individuals: that which really constitutes the human race, the vast mass of families living for the most part on their fruits of their labor, has been forgotten...it is only the leaders who have held the eye of the historian.'<sup>33</sup> It is the consequences of historical changes for the majority of people that should be the historians' vocation to record.<sup>34</sup> The people's history has been absent from the historical record.

After the opening section of the tenth epoch, the text shifts focus to describe how the abolition of inequality between nations and men will bring an end to 'our murderous contempt for men of another colour or creed, the insolence of our usurpations'.<sup>35</sup> Several pages discuss the enslaved colonies, and the necessity of fighting for change—for Condorcet the necessary action if one comprises the idea of equality between men. But this equality is not unconditional. Condorcet is unambiguous about the fact that inequality can never totally disappear, as it is a result of natural causes. An attempt to bring about an entire disappearance

would ‘introducing even more fecund sources of inequality,...more fatal blows to the rights of man.’<sup>36</sup> Inequality between men is a part of human nature; it can never be totally abolished.

The standard version of Condorcet as a spokesman for human progress is true, but in a more multifaceted and non-deterministic way. For Condorcet *les progrès* are not a ‘supranatural organ of performance of events’, not abstract historical agents.<sup>37</sup> Progress is not used as an overarching concept from which the human conditions can be assumed.<sup>38</sup> He uses the concept, founded on concrete details from how the human conditions can improve and leave behind the sufferings the common people have experienced. He does hope for a better future, he believes in justice and equality for all humans, but is completely averse to using political or social force to establish it—that would be tyranny. Man must encompass these principles voluntarily, exercising the moral sentiments that are a shared human property. Condorcet viewed freedom as a sentiment, in the same way as the Scottish philosophers, a fact that most scholars of the French Enlightenment have neglected.<sup>39</sup>

Thus Condorcet is not modern in the sense that he calls progress in itself a determinate legitimate historical process. Rather his use is anthropological—what man was, is, and could be—which implies an openness to many possible human histories. His view is very far from ‘the embodiment of the cold oppressive enlightenment’, and instead emphasizes sentiments as individual properties that have differentiated cultural and historical shapes.<sup>40</sup> Condorcet was neither bold spokesman for the scientization of the politics and a society built on reason, nor incongruous revolutionary leader. He believed in universal principles, but also in the individual’s right to decide for themselves, and never impose their beliefs on others. He rejected the concepts of collective happiness and public utility; ‘it was in the name of public utility that the Bastille was filled...and that people were tortured.’<sup>41</sup> He belonged to the Enlightenment, but was also one of its sternest critics.

## Temporality and the history of knowledge

Let us return to the theme with which I opened this essay: the history of knowledge as an innovative academic field. How can the history of knowledge develop by adding a temporal perspective? In the present scholarly discussion the two subjects—temporality and history of knowledge—have not been discussed together.<sup>42</sup> From a history of science view, the most advanced theoretical argument for a history of knowledge was formulated by Lorraine Daston in the journal *Know* in 2017. There her two main arguments are both negative; for decades we have known that the narrative of modern Western science that we teach students is ‘gravely flawed’. She points to Steven Shapin’s textbook *The Scientific Revolution*, which begins by ironizing that ‘There was no such thing as the Scientific Revolution and this is book about it.’<sup>43</sup> The second argument is a variant of the first, namely that the phrases about modernity and science are no longer evident statements and hence a disciplinary change is needed. More exactly what history of knowledge would be about is stated as a vision that lists the difficulties. The ‘probing conceptual analysis’ that the history of science in dialogue with ‘sociology, philosophy, psychology, and science studies’ has undergone in recent decades is also needed for the category of knowledge to undergo. She illustrates this by noting that such an analysis ‘might begin by looking at how classifications and hierarchies of knowledge as well as cardinal epistemic virtues shift over time’, but also ‘more comparative studies also offer a promising field’.<sup>44</sup>

Temporality is not given as a topic for reconsideration, despite the fact that main criticism of the history of science is the idea of a linear narrative with its clear-cut periodicities from antiquity to modernity. Daston’s article, like other texts about the history of knowledge, illustrates the prevalent attitude towards time among historians. Time has become naturalized and instrumentalized, and is used unreflectively as a matter of periodization.<sup>45</sup> Jordheim points to the mistranslation of Koselleck’s ‘theory of historical times’ as the ‘theory of periodization’, yet the same reduction was made by German scholars.<sup>46</sup>

So what can a theory of historical times do for the history of know-

ledge? What need is there for a theory? Koselleck posed this very question in 'On the Need for Theory in the Discipline of History.'<sup>47</sup> One challenge is that history cannot be defined in terms of its object of research as 'economics, political science, sociology, philology, linguistics', 'for history can declare just about anything to be a historical object...Nothing escapes the historical perspective.'<sup>48</sup> Yet, according to Koselleck, 'only theory transforms our work into historical scholarship'.<sup>49</sup> Historians have treated time as a naturalized, non-analytical category, and have ignored the fact that from the eighteenth century on the old regime of temporality was denaturalized. Time was experienced and expressed by new concepts of movement.

The theoretical concept of the 'circulation of knowledge' has been one of the founding elements in the history of knowledge. Though still vague and much-questioned, it has the advantage of introducing movement as a force for change, forcing it on our historical attention. The results offer the hope of introducing further metahistorical concepts to empirical research.<sup>50</sup> The theoretical framework helps with probing and deconstructing the rigid chronological triad of antiquity, Middle Ages, and modernity, leading us to look instead for the 'simultaneity of the non-simultaneous', or discrepant structures of time, in what is approved as the natural course of time. To single out temporal differences may push the history of knowledge to renew history, loosening it from its nineteenth-century historical moorings of personality, people, and class as the structuring categories of historical writing.

The analytical category of 'temporality' can support historians in stepping back from descriptive, fact-determined history writing that assumes all historical perspectives are self-legitimizing. My suggestion is that Koselleck's concept of historical times and multiple histories provides a new, though pragmatic, legitimation of the history of knowledge as a refigured academic history subject in its own right. With its focus on temporality, extending beyond linear time, the history of knowledge can provide a historicity that identifies the forces in history that induce transformation *and* combine them to new configurations. It also has the added virtue of connecting to the ongoing historiographical discussion of the past's relations to the present.

An analytical concept of multiple historical times paves the way for a history of multiple histories. Applied consistently, this would influence the practice of history. In normative terms, getting away from a single chronological time will push us to write multifaceted histories that include the history of the oppressed and the victimized, not only the story of the positive fruits of modernity—equality, freedom, and technological progress, with their beginnings in the Enlightenment. As I have argued, one of its leading thinkers, Condorcet, did not support the mythical standard view of the French Enlightenment as obsessed with reason and progress. The recent debate about the Enlightenment’s historiography illustrates that pertinent history writing involves taking an ethical stance. My belief is that the Enlightenment’s legacy can be a source of emancipatory thinking in an age of disillusion and despair. Condorcet and his fellows were the first to fight for equality and liberty, regardless of cultural borders, class, sex, and ethnicity. Perhaps the time is out of joint, but modernity cannot subsist without foundational truths that give hope for the future.

## Notes

- 1 ‘Editor’s introduction,’ *KNOW: A Journal on the Formation of Knowledge* 1/1 (2017).
- 2 Bruno Latour, *Science in action: how to follow scientists and engineers through society* (Cambridge, Mass: HUP, 1987); James A. Secord, ‘Knowledge in Transit,’ *Isis* 95/4 (2004): 654–672.
- 3 Aleida Assmann, *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (New York: CUP, 2011); id. *Shadows of Trauma: Memory and the Politics of Post-war Identity* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2016); id. & Linda Short (eds.), *Memory and Political Change* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012); Anton Froeyman & François Hartog, *Regimes of historicity: presentism and experiences of time* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015); Eelco Runia, *Moved by the Past: Discontinuity and Historical Mutation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014); *Past & Present*, volume 243, Issue 1, May 2019 has a special section about temporality. In anthropology, postcolonialism renewed an awareness of how time is part of constructing the Other, which has been prominent theoretically for several decades, see Johannes Fabian, *Time and The Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia Univ.



- Press, 1983); for a more recent text see Stefan Helgesson, 'Radicalizing Temporal Difference: Anthropology, Postcolonial Theory, and Literary Time', *History and Theory* 53/4 (2014): 545–562.
- 4 One of the first contemporary scholars, except Koselleck, to explore changes in society's ways of relating to past, present and future was François Hartog, see above. The recognition from Sweden is still pending with some exception, for example Victoria Fareld 'Tiden är nu. Presentism, tidskris och historiska sår', *Samtider. Perspektiv på 2000-talets idéhistoria* (Gothenburg: Daidalos, 2017), 19–36.
  - 5 Condorcet's *The Sketch or in French Esquisse d'un tableau historique des progrès de l'esprit Human* is available in many editions. I have used easily accessible English and French scholarly editions. Condorcet, 'The Sketch', in Steven Lukes & Nadia Urbinati (eds.), *Condorcet. Political Writings* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012) and a French Internet edition: Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un tableau historique, des progrès de l'esprit Human*, [http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/condorcet/esquisse\\_tableau\\_progres\\_hum/esquisse\\_tableau\\_hist.pdf](http://classiques.uqac.ca/classiques/condorcet/esquisse_tableau_progres_hum/esquisse_tableau_hist.pdf).
  - 6 Koselleck's work about temporality was published quite late, in the 1990s, also in German. 'Sediments of Time', that gave the title to the recent published English collection, was originally published as 'Zeitschichten' 1994. Helge Jordheim, 'Introduction: Multiple Times and The Work of Synchronization', *History and Theory* 53/4 (2014).
  - 7 Carl Hempel, 'The function of general laws in History', *Journal of Philosophy* 39 (1942): 35–47.
  - 8 Michel Foucault, *The order of things: an archaeology of the human sciences* (London: Routledge, 1970); Hayden V. White, *Metahistory. The Historical Imagination In Nineteenth-Century Europe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins U. P., 1973).
  - 9 About the translation of Foucault's work, see Jeroen Vandaele, 'What is an author, indeed: Michel Foucault in translation', *Perspectives* 24/1 (2016): 76–92.
  - 10 See Christophe Bouton, 'The Critical Theory of History: Rethinking the Philosophy of History in the Light of Koselleck's work', *History and Theory* 55/2 (2016): 163–184; Helge Jordheim, 'Introduction: Multiple Times and The Work of Synchronization', *History and Theory* 53/4 (2014): 498–518; Reinhart Koselleck, *Futures past: on the semantics of historical time* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985); Reinhart Koselleck, *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018); see also the excellent biography by Niklas Olsen, *History in the Plural. An Introduction to The Work of Reinhart Koselleck* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2012).
  - 11 Reinhart Koselleck, *Critique and Crisis. Enlightenment and the Pathogenesis of Modern Society* (Cambridge, Mass: The MIT Press, 1988). Olsen *ibid.* essay two, 'Explaining, Criticizing, and Revising Modern Political Thought', 41–100.
  - 12 When *Kritik und Krise* was published 1959 it was read by some as a conservative



contribution to the post-war political debate, not least because of its negative view on the Enlightenment. Niklas Olsen, 'History in the Plural. An Introduction to The Work of Reinhart Koselleck', 41. In the English edition Koselleck clarified his view in a new preface. For a discussion about Carl Schmitt and his relation to Koselleck, see Jan-Werner Müller, *A Dangerous Mind. Carl Schmitt in Post-War European Thought* (New Haven: YUP, 2003), especially the second essay.

- 13 The exception is the Annales school which in its second post-war era focused on constructing analytical universal temporal structures. Most famous is Ferdinand Braudel, *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l'Epoque de Philippe II* (Paris: Gallimard, 1949).
- 14 Otto Brunner, Werner Conze & Reinhart Koselleck, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe: Historisches Lexikon zur politisch-sozialen Sprache in Deutschland* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1972–1997). Johan Östling reviewed the first Swedish translation of Koselleck's work in *Historisk tidskrift* 126/3 (2006), emphasizing Koselleck as historian of concepts.
- 15 See Koselleck's own reflection on his changing approach in Willem Melching & Wyger Velema (eds.), *Main Trends In Cultural History: Ten Essays* (Amsterdam: Rodopi Press 1994), 7.
- 16 Koselleck, *Sediments of Time*, 3.
- 17 Keith M. Baker, *Condorcet. From Natural Philosophy to Social Mathematics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975).
- 18 Ibid. viii.
- 19 David Williams, *Condorcet and Modernity* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004).
- 20 Rothschild stresses Condorcet's articulated awareness of societal value conflicts: 'the diversity of individual opinions; with the shortcomings of proto-utilitarian theories of happiness; with individual rights and individual independence; and with trying to show that the imposition of universal and eternal principles is the most sinister of despotism.' Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments: Adam Smith, Condorcet, and the Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 2001), 196.
- 21 In the following text the English translation of the *Esquisse* will be used and is hence referred to as 'The Sketch'. References are given both to the English translation and the French original.
- 22 Pankaj Mishra, *Age of Anger: A History of the Present* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2017); Jonathan Israel, 'Poststructuralist and Postcolonialist criticism', [https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/56977381/Insikt\\_och\\_handling\\_26\\_inlaga\\_printed.pdf#page=18](https://portal.research.lu.se/portal/files/56977381/Insikt_och_handling_26_inlaga_printed.pdf#page=18).
- 23 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 5; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 43. Note that in the French original 'progress' is in the plural.
- 24 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 11; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 51.

- 25 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 132; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 201.
- 26 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 14; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 56.
- 27 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 20f; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 65.
- 28 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 24; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 70.
- 29 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 36; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 84.
- 30 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 89; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 150.
- 31 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 116; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 182.
- 32 Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the history of Ideas' in James Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context. Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Princeton: PUP, 1969), 73.
- 33 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 124; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 190f.
- 34 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 125; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 192.
- 35 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 127f; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 196.
- 36 Condorcet, 'The Sketch', 130; Condorcet, *Esquisse*, 199.
- 37 The expression 'supranatural' is used by Reinhart Koselleck in 'Progress and Decline. An Appendix to the History of Two Concepts' in *The Practice of Conceptual History: timing history, spacing concepts* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 219.
- 38 Koselleck makes an important remark about how 'progress' was used by Diderot and Voltaire. Diderot saw a catastrophe in the near future and the Encyclopedia was supposed to be Noah's Ark to save the knowledge. Candide effectively knocked down progress as an honest state of mind. Ibid. 231. About Condorcet, Koselleck mentions the former's pluralistic use of progress, not used as a collective singular. Ibid. 229.
- 39 Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments*, 209.
- 40 Emma Rothschild, *Economic Sentiments*, 195.
- 41 Condorcet, 'On the emancipation of women', in Steven Lukes & Nadia Urbinati (eds.), *Condorcet. Political Writings* (Cambridge: CUP, 2012), 160.
- 42 For an overview of the historiography for the history of knowledge, see the introduction to Johan Östling et al. (eds.), *Circulation of Knowledge: explorations in the history of knowledge* (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2018), 9–33.
- 43 Lorraine Daston 'The History of Science and the History of Knowledge', *KNOW: A Journal of the Formation of Knowledge* 1/1 (2017), 149; Steven Shapin, *The Scientific Revolution* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996).
- 44 Lorraine Daston, 'The History of Science and the History of Knowledge', 145.
- 45 François Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity*, 8.
- 46 Helge Jordheim, 'Against Periodization: Koselleck's Theory of Multiple Temporalities' in *History and Theory* 51 (2012): 151–171.
- 47 Reinhart Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History* (Stanford: Stanford university Press, 2003), 1–19.
- 48 Ibid. 4.

## HISTORIES BEFORE HISTORY

- 49 Quoted from John Zammito, 'Koselleck's Philosophy of Historical Time(s) and the Practice of History', *History and Theory* 43 (2004): 124.
- 50 Johan Östling et al. *Circulation of Knowledge*.