



Concepts of Art in History. Summer Course on the History of Concepts and Metaphors.
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Concepts of Art in History. Summer Course on the History of Concepts and Metaphors

The Summer Course was organized by the Van Leer Jerusalem Institute and offered the opportunity for young scholars to become familiar with the newest research paradigms in the scientific fields of the History of Concepts, History of Metaphors and Concepts of Art in History. Some of the participants also had the opportunity to present their work in progress and benefit from the scientific experience of several excellent scholars in their fields from USA, Germany and Israel.

In the first panel, MARTIN J. BURKE (New York) focused in his lectures on the past and current developments of research in the History of Concepts in various countries such as Germany, Holland, France, Finland, Spain, Romania but also South Korea and India. For the future evolutions of the research in the History of Concepts, Burke sees both opportunities and challenges. One of the opportunities is the further development of the current research programs in the History of Concepts and the possibility of developing a common European project in this research field. This also constitutes a challenge from the methodological and theoretical point of view as certain questions such as: "What is Europe?", "What languages should be studied?", "On what historical period should the research be focused on?" need to be answered beforehand.

In the second lecture, Martin J. Burke made a concise presentation on different approaches to the History of Political and Social Concepts from the angle of Cambridge School historians. He put an emphasis on both the

similarities as well as the differences between the views of Reinhart Koselleck and the Bielefeld School on the one hand, and that of Quentin Skinner and J. G. A. Pocock and the Cambridge School on the other. The current developments of the Intellectual History as practiced by the Cambridge School were briefly presented and analyzed from a critical viewpoint. However, Burke still acknowledged the important contributions of Skinner and Pocock to the development of the History of Political Thought. He also underlined a complex theoretical problem common to both Intellectual History of the Cambridge School and also to *Begriffsgeschichte* as practiced by Reinhart Koselleck. Since the two schools underline the importance of context for the understanding of political thought, it is of great importance to define as accurately as possible the meaning of the term context. In this respect, Martin J. Burke insists on the necessity of contextualizing the context, that is investigating also the history of production, circulation and relevance of texts in a given context. According to him, it is also important to acknowledge the difference between dialogue and text and thus to consider the possibility to apply some theoretical tools of the Speech Act Theory to the History of Concepts.

HANS ERICH BÄDECKER's (Göttingen) lecture was also a general presentation of the most crucial present and past theoretical and methodological problems that concerned the practitioners of History of Concepts. He also emphasized the importance of defining what the term context means for the scholars working

in the History of Concepts and in Historical Semantics. Moreover, he provided further details on the approach of Reinhart Koselleck who viewed the term *âcontextâ* as the *âreal historyâ*, opposite to the linguistic expression of the historical events. In B  decker's opinion, the History of Concepts constitutes a very useful tool of the historians working on social-political texts. Quoting Reinhart Koselleck, B  decker pleads for dealing with semantic fields rather than singular words when writing the history of a concept. In addition, B  decker considers some of the assumptions of Hayden White as not entirely useful for the further development of historical research. He stated that considering historiography just another form of a *ânarrativeâ* among others, would rather confuse things than clarify them. In this respect, *Begriffsgeschichte* can contribute to the development of more plausible and more accurate history writing by a careful analysis of social-political languages and their evolution in different contexts.

The first panel closed with the presentation of SARA SCHWARTZ (Open University of Israel) which focused on the history of the covers of various editions of Darwin's world-famous book. Hans Erich B  decker commented that a history of book covers should perhaps be approached best as a history of appropriations in different cultural contexts of the images and ideas related to Darwin's theory.

In the second panel, HANS ERICH B  DECKER lectured on the possibility of a research on the History of Metaphors. First, he addressed the issue of metaphors's identification. B  decker also stated that as in the case of concepts, metaphors can only be identified in the context in which they appear. Secondly, he presented some of the mainstream theories about metaphor, such as Max Black's and Donald Davidson's, and provided further details on the cognitive status (value) of metaphors not only in rhetoric but also in historical and even philosophical expression. B  decker admitted that he shares much of Hans Blumenberg's view on the cognitive value of metaphors and believes that the imaginative potential of metaphorical expression could help to decode languages as imaginative expressions of reality. He concluded his paper with the formulation of basic assumptions that, in his view, could guide the research of the History of Metaphors. Taking into consideration the fact that metaphors are linked to a certain culture, and that culture is also defined by means of representation (comprising also the hopes and expectations of historical subjects in a given time context), B  decker advanced the idea that a History of Metaphors can only be perceived in

relation to and with the help of cultural history. Similarly to the History of Concepts, the History of Metaphors analyzes the changes in the meaning of metaphors through time which also reflects the changes in the systems of representations. Furthermore, as in the case of concepts, the History of Metaphors should include the history of appropriation of metaphors.

In the second panel, there were also two lectures by MICHALLE GAL (Tel Aviv) who emphasized the differences between two opposite theoretical approaches on metaphors: the *âcognitivistâ* and the *âanti-cognitivistâ* approach. While on one hand the supporters of the *âcognitivistâ* approach on metaphor stress *âthe value of truthâ* on the other, the supporters of the *âanti-cognitivistâ* theory disagree. The latter see metaphors as a *âcultural engineâ* and a linguistic tool of *âspeaking differentlyâ* and therefore, underline the impossibility of developing deciphering tools of explanation of metaphors. The second lecture presented in a synthetic manner Gombrich's view of metaphor in arts. Not only does he view art as the *âpeakâ* of the metaphorical field, but also explains the *âpowerâ* of metaphors as residing not in the *âcraving for the newâ* but rather in the *âtendency of making things familiar to usâ*.

GAL HERTZ (Tel Aviv) presentation tried to link the work of two scholars, (Karl Kraus and Hans Blumenberg), in approaching the problem of theatrical and dramatic dimension of metaphors. Following Davidson's suggestions about the theatrical effect of words/ metaphors, Gal Hertz wants to reveal more of the social and political aspects of modernity by exploring the theatrical and dramatic potential of metaphors. This can result in a history of the use and misuse of metaphors as suggested in the work of philosopher Karl Kraus who strongly criticized the *âmisuse of languageâ* and of *âpseudo-metaphorsâ* in caricatures during the First World War.

In the third panel, the concept of arts as it appears in different historical contexts was at the center of the debate. The panel opened with HILLEL BEN-SASSON's (Jerusalem) presentation described the great variety of the lexemes *âA. M. Nâ* in biblical Hebrew, showing that there was hardly any conceptualization of *âartâ* or *âcraftsmanshipâ* related to this lexeme in Hebrew until late in the fourth century A.D. Only the Rabbinic reinterpretation of the Bible created the idea of *âGod as superior and wise craftsmanâ* which was further developed during the Middle Ages. This instead didn't necessarily mean that the *âartsâ* and *âcraftsmanshipâ* were elevated to a higher status, because the Rabbinic literature also

maintained the tension with the *poesis* by underlining the inferior status of creating sculptures and idols.

One impressive lecture was offered by AMIEL VARDI (Jerusalem) on: "Searching for Art in Antiquity". His lecture focused on the differences and similarities between the modern concept of arts and the concepts of the antiquity. Although there is no direct equivalent of the modern concept of art or arts in antiquity, Vardi argued that the category of arts was nevertheless present as an abstract idea, even if the term for it was never comprehensively defined. The lecture then went on to discuss the ideas about arts and their categories as it appears in the philosophical works of Plato and Aristotle and concluded with one surprising discovery: the arts were considered by the ancients as a means of expression and as such were not considered to be superior to other languages. In this respect, their idea about art presents striking similarities to our contemporary views that art as a way of expression requires also interpretation.

Starting from these interesting insights, ANN MOYER (Philadelphia) gave two lectures on the "Concept of Arts in the Renaissance" and on the "Concept of Renaissance in the Renaissance". The focus of the lectures was the specificity of applying the methodology of the History of Concepts to 15th and 16th century in Italy. She emphasized the idea that when historians study the Renaissance they often have to make intensive use of social history and the history of books and their circulation in order to grasp the changing views about arts in the different historical contexts. Moyer's own research focused on various clusters of arts and on the scholarly criticism about them, but also on the evolution of the scholarly debates about the relations between the arts. This specificity of the research also raises interesting questions about the historical consciousness of the historical subjects in the Renaissance. Ann Moyer focused in the second lecture on the difference between previous theoretical assumptions of art historians such as Cassirer and Panofsky, that considered (following Jacob Burckhardt's ideas) the Renaissance people as self aware of their own modernity, and the present views of art historians; in present research the mainstream assumption is that the Renaissance artists and scholars had a rather surprising view of their own historical times. They felt indebted to Antiquity but also to achievements of what we would now call "Middle Ages" and therefore viewed their own historical times as not sensibly different from the time of 1150-1400 AD. The term "Rinascimento" was coined during the 16th century, but was actually referring to political developments in Italy since the reign of

Frederick Barbarossa (12th century) and only vague to artistic developments in relation to the political rebirth of the Republic of Florence.

SARIT COFMAN-SIMHON (Tel Aviv) presentation focused on the development of the concept of *Gesamtkunstwerk* developed by Richard Wagner. The research of Cofman-Simhon traced this development in the context of the debates about the status of music in relation to other arts as it appears in the works of Kant, Schopenhauer and Lessing. Ann Moyer remarked that it is important to emphasize the normative and even absolutist manner in which Lessing and Wagner defined the supremacy of music and music drama in relation to other arts.

Under the title "Arts beyond Conceptuality", ANTON PLUSHKE, NATANEL ELFASSY, ROTEM ROZENTAL, AMIR FAINARU, TAMAR MAYER, AYALA LEVIN and GAL HERTZ presented and discussed various themes and approaches to arts which emphasized once again the complexity of conceptualizing arts and its history. The participants also had the opportunity to briefly present their own interests and work in progress. This was the aim of the central discussion panel where the debate focused on the possibilities of further developing interdisciplinary approaches to the three research areas previously discussed: History of Concepts, History of Metaphors and Concepts of Arts in History. Hans Erich BÄ¶decker and Martin J. Burke emphasized the new possibilities opened to historians in various fields by the History of Concepts, as more plausible historical analysis are possible when a historian is aware of the historicity of every historical time period. Hans Erich BÄ¶decker and Ann Moyer also underlined the idea that the lifetime work of Reinhart Koselleck and other scholars working in the field of historical semantics emphasizes the ongoing effort of the historians to contribute to the scholarship interest in the epistemology of history, which is an integral part of every generation's effort of coming to terms with the past.

The lectures and debates of this summer course reflected the high level of the scholarship involved in researching the History of Concepts and the interest of the participants to explore new possibilities of applying its methods to other fields of historical investigation. One of the most interesting observations made during this summer course, was that the History of Concepts is itself becoming more complex as it becomes more interdisciplinary-oriented.

Conference Overview:

I. History of Concepts

Martin J. Burke:
History of Concepts: An Introduction

Hans Erich BÄ¶decker:
Begriffsgeschichte and Historical Semantics

Martin J. Burke:
Intellectual History and the Cambridge School

Sara Schwartz:
Work in Progress: Visual Aspects of Darwinâs On
the Origin of Species

Commentator: Hans Erich BÄ¶decker

II. Metaphors

Hans Erich BÄ¶decker:
Metaphors

Michalle Gal:
Cognitivist and Anti-Cognitivist Approaches to
Metaphor

Gal Hertz:
Work in Progress: Kraus and Blumenberg on
Metaphor

Commentator: Pini Ifergan

III. Concepts of Art in History

Hillel Ben-Sasson:
A. M. N.: Artistic Lexemes in Biblical Hebrew

Amiel Vardi:
Searching for Art in Antiquity

Ann Moyer:
The Concept of Arts in the Renaissance

Sarit Cofman-Simhon:
Work in Progress: The Supremacy of Music: Rethink-
ing Richard Wagnerâs Gesamtkunstwerk

Commentator: Ann Moyer

Michalle Gal:
Gombrich on Metaphor in Art

Ann Moyer:
The Concept of the Renaissance in the Renaissance

Anton Plushke, Natanel Elfassy, Rotem Rozenal,
Amir Fainaru, Tamar Mayer, Ayala Levin, Gal Hertz:
Special panel: Arts Beyond Conceptuality?

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