

The Finnish Orientation in the History of Political Theory and the History of Political Concepts: An Analysis with Examples from Political Economy and Public Management¹

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ABSTRACT

In the course of thirty years, an internationally noted orientation in the study of the history of political theory and conceptual history has arisen around Professor *Kari Palonen* of Finland. In the article, *first*, the orientation is positioned within political science as an enterprise likened to the work of early sophist philosophers, which is how its place is seen also by its very representatives. *Second*, exactly because within the orientation its hermeneutic nature is denied in word, a dialogical-philosophical hermeneutic approach is adopted as the perspective to analyse it. *Third*, meta-concepts used within the orientation are given a treatment analogous to that given to political concepts within the orientation's work, namely politicisation and historicisation. Importantly, this concerns 'nominalist' vs. 'essentialist' concepts and concepts related to 'contingency'. The political science examples and the practical political examples are brought for illustration, in particular, from "political economy" and 'New Public Management'.

Towards dialogue with respect to a "reference horizon"

This text focuses on a referential topic, called here 'reference horizon', as it has evolved in texts by a key Finnish scholar and other scholars around him.³ However, this study also aims to go beyond the reference horizon in that it more generally deals

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³ The key figure is Professor *Kari Palonen* (b. 1947) of the University of Jyväskylä, Finland, see, e.g., Palonen 1992, 1996, 1998, 2000a, b, 2002a, b, Lindroos & Palonen 2000, Palonen & Pulkkinen 2003, Palonen 2003a, b, and Soininen 2005. See also Hyvärinen et al. 2003. – The reference horizon has gradually become visible also in international citation databases, see, e.g., the Social Sciences Citation Index, which is accessible through any well equipped university library. In this respect, Palonen 2003a is definitely making the grade.

with selected issues, features and properties that one encounters within the reference horizon. This is motivated by the fact that although the reference horizon has opened up in Finland, it can hardly be seen as more Finnish than, say, the Nokia Company. That is, both the horizon and Nokia have a definite Finnish origin but both now also have a global reach. The elaboration of the horizon – just like the rise of Nokia in the global IT business – has been a contingent event. It could have been otherwise; it might have been the case that no such horizon would have been defined. Equally, no company named Nokia might ever have become known beyond its earlier core businesses including rubber boot making and automobile tyre making.

The present analysis is illustrated with examples brought from afar in comparison to the lofty domain of political theory. The exemplary domain consists of the trite field of political economy as applied in today's public sectors of European countries. In the same way, examples are brought from what is preposterously known as New Public Management, which in many ways overlaps with political economy in the above sense.

In its intentions and its mode, this article can be characterised with the attribute 'hermeneutic'. The same attribute is not alien to the reference horizon, either. However, it is symptomatic that its proponents never make this explicit.

Typologies of approaches tend to be excessively categorical, but in the present case they are of definite use to shed light upon the reference horizon. We can start from 18th- and 19th- century efforts to specify methods for the interpretation of texts with an aspiration towards the one and the only right interpretation of the intentions of the authors (Scholtz 2001). Such approaches are sometimes referred to as *conservative-hermeneutic*. It is not wrong to trace analogous features – to be seriously contested from the viewpoint of other hermeneutic approaches – in many of today's qualitative methods of research.⁴

The above hermeneutic approach is inadequate for the purposes at hand. It is true of the reference horizon that although its proponents have codified definite elements of method they prefer, they have no belief in a sole right interpretation. This justifies the conclusion that the first approach does not apply here.

Lately, the reference horizon has been moulded through influences from *Quentin Skinner*, *J.G.A. Pocock* and *Reinhart Koselleck* of conceptual history and the history of political theory (Palonen 2002b, 2003a, b). *Max Weber*'s influence also has become prominent. For this study, it is relevant that parallels have been drawn between Weber's methodological view on the one hand, and hermeneutics on the other (Oliver 1983). There have also been other influences upon the reference horizon, starting from *critical rationalism* in the 1970s that was first prominent in Kari Palonen's work as a result of his German study years, but these other influences will not be dealt with here.

Next, let us ask if it might be possible to study the reference horizon in its own terms. This is prevented by the sheer variety of influences upon the horizon during three decades, the many "archaeological" layers of conceptual influences upon it, and the different degrees of maturation of its different elements. However, *interpre-*

⁴ For a particularly perceptive discussion with definite hermeneutic sensitivity, see Schwandt 2000.

tive distanciation is the strongest argument against applying the reference horizon upon itself.

Some of the features of the reference horizon are analogous with what is sometimes referred to as *radical-hermeneutic*. This involves, for instance, Rorty's (1989) view of radical contingency as the situation of the contemporary human being. However, the reference horizon adopted the analogous idea rather from Sartre (e.g. Palonen 1998, 272-287). In the reference horizon, also the notion of 'game' receives emphasis, but this is in no way in the vein of rationalistic approaches but instead makes up a root rhetorical figure constitutive of the horizon.

The reference horizon has a problematic and in its own discourse negated but evident relationship to Heidegger's work. Whereas one seeks in vain explicit references to Heidegger, references to Koselleck (e.g. 1985, 1991, 2003; cf. Palonen 2002a, 2003b) abound, which is enough to give Heidegger an indirect presence. Being provocative receives esteem in the reference horizon. This justifies the provocative suggestion that in elaborating and applying the reference horizon, not only *Sein* has been in the focus, but *Zeit* has also come to be so. Corresponding to the former, one finds such emphases in the reference horizon as the Pocockian view of the 'political' as dealing with the 'contingent event' (Pocock 1975, 156). As to the *Zeit* dimension, one finds in the reference horizon significant emphasis upon 'temporalisation' of political phenomena including political concepts. In the reference horizon an indirect Heidegger reception transforms the horizon towards a medium that is sensitive towards possibilities of interpretation seen to open up only in historicity "proper" in the sense of the Heideggerian notion of *eigentlich*:

"Die eigentliche Geschichtlichkeit versteht die Geschichte als die Wiederkehr des Möglichen und weiß darum, dass die Möglichkeit nur wiederkehrt, wenn die Existenz *schicksalhaft- Augenblicklich* für sie in der *entschlossenen* Wiederholung offen ist."⁵

Roots of radical hermeneutics have been traced from Heidegger and, from times before his, from Nietzsche. Later growth from those roots has been followed up to Derrida, Foucault and beyond. Which value might the respective approaches have for the present analysis? The conclusion is that the approaches share tendencies towards such totalisation that they are unfitting for the present purposes even though they have given stimuli for the reference horizon and can be allowed to do so for the present study as well.

Let us turn to modes of interpretation referred to with such attributes as *philosophical-hermeneutic* and *dialogic-hermeneutic*. There, assuming understanding as a universal characteristic of human activity is substituted for the search and elaboration of specific let alone universally valid methods of interpretation. S/he who engages in interpretation cannot avoid first building upon his or her presuppositions

⁵ Heidegger 2001, § 45, 231-235, § 75, 387-392. The citation is from § 75, 391-392. It is the present author's point that Heidegger's view, conveyed by the cited point, very well characterises also the reference horizon. – The available English translations are dissatisfactory for the present purposes. Because the interpretation builds here upon the German texts, there has been no point of providing (misleading) English translations. However, the commentary around the cited passages provides background also for the reader who does not want to read German.

and prejudices, reflecting the dual meaning of the word *Vorurteil*. In the same way, s/he interprets him- or herself. While proceeding in his or her interpretation, s/he moulds his or her relationship to the object of interpretation and the relationship of that object or focus to him- or herself. In a nutshell:

“Verstehen heisst primär: sich in der Sache verstehen.” (Gadamer 1977, 59)

The citation also sums up aspects of the interpretive situation of the present author. The author participates in what in the parlance of the reference horizon is made up of acts of theoretical politicisation and ‘politicking’ within theoretical political science, with special reference to political thought and its study.⁶ The interpretive situation is also well characterised by the notion *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* (Gadamer 1977, 61; 1990, 305-312, 366-367).⁷ This involves that as the interpreter steps into the situation of interpretation and proceeds, s/he always already has at least some kind of historical consciousness. This consciousness is conditioned by the interpreter’s own historicity. In the process of interpretation the consciousness changes and the historicity changes as well. To be interpretation, interpretation cannot be made up of the interpreter’s solipsist monologue, let alone one that s/he carries out at will. The interpreter’s tame agreement with the texts and other objects of interpretation and the opinions of their authors or creators do not consist of interpretation. Instead, to be interpretation, interpretation must be *dialogue*.

“Meinungen sind zwar eine bewegliche Vielfalt von Möglichkeiten, aber innerhalb dieser Vielfalt des Meinbaren ... ist doch nicht alles möglich.” (Gadamer 1977, 57)

In order to proceed in interpretation, the interpreter must abandon at least some of his or her prejudices and preconceptions. This can be comprehended in the terms of a structure of posing questions to open up possibilities and to keep them open in order to receive answers. In formulating such questions, the interpreter asks to which questions has that which s/he is interpreting been an answer in its own time. (Gadamer 1990, 304; cf. Collingwood 1956, 269-274.) For instance, conceptual political innovations might be studied as answers to questions posed by action situations that have been encountered by the political actors in question in their own time. Why, for example, did such concepts as ‘governance’, ‘public management’ or ‘New Public Management’ appear, let alone such catchwords and buzzwords as ‘value for money’, ‘accountability’, and so on?

⁶ ‘Politicking’ is an English word transferred in the reference horizon from other uses to refer to particular acts of political activity. This includes activity carried out within language by the means of language, such as contesting established canonical uses of words of political vocabulary and political concepts. The transfer of ‘politicking’ in the said way is a good example of politicking that has been carried out in terms of the reference horizon.

⁷ *Bewusstsein* is a word adopted by Gadamer from Hegel. The notion *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* has been used also in a different and possibly more naïve way than Gadamer, namely to refer to the effects of a certain thing over time (e.g. Ankersmit 2000, 156-157, 161). Koselleck (2003, 117) takes into account both the Gadamerian and the ‘Ankersmitian’ modes of use. – A frequent English translation of *wirkungsgeschichtliches Bewusstsein* is ‘history of effect’, which unfortunately badly fails to reveal what is at stake.

The situation of the interpreter can be characterised as a contingent one. Compare this with the Pocockian notion of the ‘political’, adopted in the reference horizon, stressing the contingency of political action situations. The interpreter faces the challenge of doing two things and also finding a balance between them. S/he has to contextualise his or her object or focus of interpretation into its proper *tradition* on the one hand, but on the other, s/he has to apply his or her own approach. The latter involves *distanciation* from the object by such means as particular methods and techniques that aid in the interpretation. Frequently, such views are expressed that observing traditions and contextualising objects and foci would lead to conservatism and therefore to over-cautious and therefore fruitless interpretation. However, this is so only insofar as the distanciation fails to bring about tensions that make it possible to question the prevalent preconceptions and prejudices. Where the distanciation succeeds, the interpreter is able to project – in the Heideggerian sense of *entwerfen* – his or her alternative possibilities of interpretation. With stress on the temporal dimension, Gadamer (1977, 60; cf. Gadamer 1990, 300-301, and cf. Heidegger in the above citation) inserts to the centre of interpretation the balancing act between contextualisation and distanciation:

“Die Zeit ist nicht ... ein Abgrund, der überbrückt werden muss, ... sondern sie ist ... der tragende Grund des Geschehens, in dem das gegenwärtige Verstehen wurzelt.”

Here comes into play what Gadamer calls *Horizontverschmelzung* (Gadamer 1990, 311), frequently translated into English as ‘fusion of horizons’. This notion contests the conventional adaptation of the interpreter to what s/he interprets and to the pre-existing interpretations. In the fusion, what changes are both the horizon of the present, out of which the interpreter interprets his or her focus or object of interpretation, and the horizon of the past, which the interpreter tries to interpret on the basis of what s/he concludes are traces of his or her object or focus of interpretation.

Gadamer characterises the activity of interpretation with the rhetorical figure of ‘game’. The interpreter cannot accomplish the task of interpretation with the sole means and support of principles and methods of interpretation, but s/he must also allow the focus or object of interpretation to influence him or her. The game is very different from games played in terms of any rationalist framework. The other type of game has no definite objective but instead, it is played with and in terms of the possibilities that the game itself makes available (Gadamer 1990, 109, 111). The player puts into the play also him- or herself:

“Alles Spielen ist ein Gespieltwerden.” (Gadamer 1990, 112)

The reference horizon as rhetorical-sophist rehabilitation

Proponents of the reference horizon characterise it as ‘rhetorical’, but they never call it outright ‘hermeneutic’. Note also that there are interesting rhetorical aspects related to Heidegger’s work, but let us not consider them here beyond merely referring to them (Feldman 2004).

Let us clarify what the ‘rhetorical’ does *not* involve within the reference horizon according to its representatives. It is not seen as an undesirable or immoral charac-

teristic of the ‘political’ such as camouflage or outright deception, which is how rhetoric has often been seen for over two millennia. In the reference horizon, rhetoric is not reduced to “sheer rhetoric” that would just decorate verbal expression, which is also an interpretation not infrequently proposed for over two millennia. Within the reference horizon, the notion ‘rhetorical turn’ involves rejection of such *essentialism* as that in some other, more extreme “linguistic turns” (see Palonen 1996).⁸

In the reference horizon, the notion ‘rhetorical’ is related both to features that can be identified in the *objects* of enquiry and to characteristics of operations that the interpreter *him- or herself* may carry out. One of the analytical media towards this end is a rhetorical figure known as *paradiastole*. (Skinner 2002, 183-187; Palonen 2000, 22-24; Palonen 2003a, 161-169.)⁹ It is no exaggeration to propose that *paradiastole* may even be the very rhetorical figure that stands out in the reference horizon and its applications.¹⁰ For an example of *paradiastole* analysis, Skinner (1998, 2003) has studied *liber* words as far as they refer to ‘liberty’, and he has questioned the hegemony of corresponding -isms – that is, ‘liberalisms’ that have declared themselves under that name– to interpret these words.

Let us briefly consider some words of the *liber* family, with special reference to ‘-ist’ and ‘-ism’ words. In many languages, such words refer to a progressive mood or moral permissiveness (e.g. Vierhaus 1982; the same applies also, e.g., to the Finno-Ugric language Finnish). Within philosophical discourse with political relevance, Rorty (1989) characterises the *liberalist* as a permissive and a particularly gentle actor figure. However, from the viewpoint of applying *paradiastole* figures, the same ‘-ist’ and ‘-ism’ words may reveal actor figures that are antithetical both to ‘progressive mood’ and ‘moral permissiveness’. This is so as far as their focus is upon unconstrained liberties and freedoms to acquire, to transfer and to use properly. In that case, their preferred interpretations of *liber* words keenly exclude the have-nots from amongst those who are to enjoy the widest liberties in any substantive sense. Some first signs but hardly more are visible of the rhetorical-political analysis of the *liber* thicket of political vocabulary (Bridges 1994).¹¹ Might these

⁸ For the present author, experiences of the more extreme turns accumulated among some semiotic and many “postmodern” approaches. As to them and their likes, Ankersmit (2000, 167) suitably writes about counterintuitive linguistic appropriation of all ‘reality’.

⁹ Skinner has both traced *paradiastole* figures in texts he has studied and constructed some such figures in his own analyses. A venerable application is made up of Machiavelli’s utilisation of the *paradiastole* to contest claims on the good ethical character of actor figures (e.g. Machiavelli 1984, ch. XVI).

¹⁰ The *paradiastole* also involves definite psychic elements of shame, playing with shame and trying to shame others. However, any further discussion on this dimension must be left for later analyses despite the related promises of delving deeper into the actual mechanisms by the means of which *paradiastole* may work. For instance, as shame is connected to depressive processes in metapsychology, one should study to what extent equivalents to depressive processes with such further features as mourning and efforts at reparation may be launched in by the winners in those who lose in political encounters.

¹¹ Bridges does not refer to Skinner. However, similarly with Skinner, he indeed aims at rhetorical redescription, criticises essentialist and foundationalist liberalism, and works to construct a contingent interpretation of liberalism. He sees that political citizenship, in particular, involves possibilities that may remain unused or underutilised because of the contingency involved. Bridges sees that the condition to utilise those possibilities consists of the rhetorical-political capacity of the citizens. Similar emphases can be found also in the reference horizon (Palonen 2002b, 143). – There will be substantially more discussion both on essentialist and foundationalist features below, and matters of the ‘contingent’ will also be dealt with.

themes be connected with the trite everyday world of economic and social policy-making, governance, public administration and public management? Indeed they might. One could study, for instance, to which extent *liber* words may have done their share in the further dispossession of the have-nots and, on the contrary, in the further “empowerment” of the haves and such aides of theirs as, for instance, ‘new public managers’.

For over ten years, since the early 1990s, proponents of the reference horizon have increasingly delved into the ‘political’ through the ‘rhetorical’. For instance, they have studied the politicking in which users of certain words, vocabularies, concepts and *topoi* have subdued their opponents both within practical and theoretical fields of the ‘political’. Within the reference horizon, there is an explicit acknowledgment of parallels between the rhetorical emphases of politicking on the one hand, and on the other practices in which the *sophist* philosophers of Classical Antiquity engaged.¹²

The reference horizon crucially differs from such *political philosophy*, whose proponents present themselves as representatives of “eternal”, ever resurrecting *perennial* “truths”. Political philosophers of the respective creed may also try to render practical advice to political actors. The reference horizon also fundamentally differs from such modern *political theory* that proceeds either through empirical generalisations or rationalist, formal and even deductive modelling. Strauss (1959) considered each of the three orientations mentioned above from the sophist one on, and placed himself within the second orientation.¹³ As has been said, the reference horizon falls into the first type of approaches – and the same can be seen to concern the present approach as well.

A discernible characteristic of the reference horizon is made up of relativisation of differences between three things: theoretical analysis, methodology of the research process, and the objects that are being studied. This is related to the frequent notion within the reference horizon, namely the said ‘theory politicking’. According to the self-understanding of representatives of the reference horizon, the theory politicking involves political activity made up of political acts with respect to previous political theory and thought. Despite that proponents of the reference horizon do not call their approach ‘hermeneutic’, the above reveals that the horizon also involves the definite hermeneutic aim towards self-reflection. Yet it remains to consider where the limits to self-reflection will eventually be found, as they remain always there.

In the metalanguage of the reference horizon, considerable imports have been made from linguistic, rhetorical and related terminology, from ‘thematization’ to

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¹² Cf. Platon, *Protagoras*, 319a1-a2. For direct references within the reference horizon, see, e.g., Palonen 2002b, 2003b, *passim*.

¹³ On Strauss’ rhetorical-political strategies see Strauss 1988, and on some of Strauss’ reception by “Straussians” and others, see Drury 1988.

‘intertextuality’ to such words as *topos*.¹⁴ There are also elements of philosophical vocabulary, such as ‘-essent-’, ‘-nominal-’ and ‘-contingen-’ words, imports from the vocabulary of historical research, and general abstract words such as ‘game’, ‘space’ and ‘time’, with many derivations and combinations. Within the reference horizon, the more specific vocabulary includes, in particular, many ‘-polit-’ words, their derivations and their combinations with the said abstract words. There are also very special notions such as *déjouement/Vereitelung*,¹⁵ referring to an actor’s successful ‘frustration’ of the aims of his/her political and theoretical opponents. In later theoretical language applied in the reference horizon, this frustration might take place by such means as skilful use of *paradiastole* rhetorical figures to reveal the despicable but so far hidden character of the political or theoretical opponents.

On the essential contestability of what is ‘nominalist’ and what is ‘essentialist’

In theoretical elaborations and applications of the reference horizon, hefty criticism towards what is seen as essentialist abounds, equally as there is strong and explicit appreciation of what is ‘nominalist’. Because this has not been done within the reference approach, it is useful to consider some of the roots of the essentialist-nominalist juxtaposition. This consideration can be seen as rhetorical-political provocation with respect to the reference horizon; not abandoning it, but calling for its better fidelity to its proper principles of self-reflection and therefore ultimately probably strengthening it. There is a particular consequence arising out of this shape of the present article: it does not in itself involve any standpoint in the issue of essentialism vs. nominalism, but it only tries to make and even force the reference horizon to be “ever more like itself”. Therefore, for instance, even if this article may come to convey aspects of major irritation to the self-respecting professional philosopher, the present author is not to blame, but the fault if any should be sought with the reference horizon.

In philosophy, the problematic at hand is known as one of *universals*: what is the relationship between concepts crystallised by and within the human mind on the one hand, and on the other whatever, if anything, is seen to lie outside the mind (Klima 2000). Plato saw the sensible world, meaning the world that can be caught with human senses, to be made up of singular things. Using modern parlance, those things are *contingent*, that is, whatever and however they are, they might be otherwise. Outside the sensible world, Plato positioned the “real”: the stable things in themselves, *ontos ón*, of which each and every one was an *eidos*. At best, these stable things could be caught by the human mind as something like occasional glimpses and hunches of “original images”. Aristotle, in turn, saw that the human being would

¹⁴ According to rhetorical tradition, *topoi*, literally ‘places’, enable thematisations, emphases, temporal perspectives and the many various genres of language use. In rhetorical tradition, command of *topoi* has been seen as a key part of rhetorical dialectic. The rhetor who was in good command of *topoi* was seen as capable even to make anybody believe in anything. (Molinié 1992.)

¹⁵ See Palonen 1992.

proceed from observations of singular things towards the abstract forms of “essences”, according to which the observations would organise themselves.

Scholars of Medieval philosophy have juxtaposed two views on the problem of the universals. According to the *realist* stance, represented by *St. Thomas Aquinas*, there would be general things, and general concepts in the human mind would correspond with those things. According to the *nominalist* stance, represented by *William of Occam*, the human mind would construct the concepts taking into account the individual objects of the “external world”. There, the universals would, as general concepts, only be abstracting *nominations* or names for groups or temporal series of singular contingent things characterised by at least some degree of similarity. In Occam, each concept involves *activity* in the sense of intellectual acts. This activity involves conclusions on similarity within groups and series of contingent things. Further conclusions can be drawn regarding the potential of the conclusions – and the resulting general concepts – to characterise also groups and series of things other than the original ones. In Occam, concepts are placed simultaneously in thought and practice outside thought. On this basis he has often been called ‘conceptual naturalist’.¹⁶

Given the first origin of Professor Palonen’s work in critical rationalism, it is very relevant that Popper (2000, 1957) wanted to replace the older notion of conceptual ‘realism’ with the notion of ‘essentialism’. Popper saw that a ‘philosophical-nominalist’ stance would indeed be the best ‘realist’ stance instead of the stand traditionally known as the ‘philosophical-realist’ one.¹⁷ In the English language, the close relationship of *essentia* to ‘essence’ is evident. According to Popper, for the essentialist each thing is what its *definition* spells out: the ‘nature’, the structural principle or the dynamics of the genus of that thing. On the basis of its *essentia*, the thing would be what it is or what is its end state towards which it has the tendency to change.¹⁸ Popper tried to give his anti-essentialism a political-philosophical character, criticising Platonic, Hegelian and Marxist constructions and the finalistic views of the ‘state’ that he felt he found in each of the constructions.

In contemporary discussions, especially ones with a “postmodern” tilt, it is common to find hefty criticisms of essentialism, but is this still only the same criticism

¹⁶ Occam constructed an example of a barrel hoop as a sign of a pub. Thus, although anachronistically, one can detect a “semiotics” in Occam. According to Occam, the sign, *signum*, would not come into question nor would it work, if there were no singular events that correspond to the general concept at stake – here, the pub. If no pubs were found anywhere near the displayed barrel hoops, the sign would stop functioning, equally as the sudden disappearance of pubs also would make the barrel hoop extinct as a pub sign.

¹⁷ Popper also took into account that by his time, ‘philosophical realism’ had come to refer to the stance, according to which thought, at least in principle, would be able to catch “reality” approximately “as it is”. Here, the opposite to ‘realism’ is ‘skepticism’.

¹⁸ Popper 1957, especially ch. I, part 10, “Essentialism *versus* Nominalism”. – Although the pragmatic political scientist or scholar of public administration or public management might think that these issues are very far removed from his or her concerns, s/he is wrong. Very frequently, a politician or a civil servant may ask the scholar questions of the form “What is the definition of ‘X’?”. The ‘X’ may be, for instance, ‘New Public Management’, ‘public policy evaluation’ or this or that fashionable trick of the trade of generic management or public management. The scholar may find it very hard not to fall into the essentialist trap and give some shorthand “definition”, which consigns to silence the nominalist possibility that essential contestedness is a likely feature also in the political, policy, public administration and public management discourse.

as in Popper? Popper's main opponents while he wrote on the 'open society', Marxism, let alone National Socialism, are no more in a strong state at all. One can also ask if the latter and in many of its forms also the former were somehow too easy targets in their naïve essentialism and their likewise naïve philosophies of history. Popper coined – or rather, adapted – the notion *historicism* to refer to teleological views of history. Accordingly, history would tend towards some given end state, which would prevail at least for some given 'nation' and 'people', or perhaps for the entire humankind as represented by a given social 'class'.¹⁹

Popper has by far not remained the only known anti-essentialist. There have also been related relativist standpoints, and there has been Nietzsche with his nihilism and his many explicit and implicit more or less loyal followers. Besides, in epistemology and the philosophy of history nominalist and essentialist views enter into conflict also in ethical questions. Sartre can be taken for an example of an ethical nominalist, whereas anybody who proclaims any substantive ethical principles can be seen as an ethical essentialist. There is also 'legal nominalism' such as the one in Weber's (1985a, 29) ideal type of the 'state'. He saw the state to be a community to which everybody in its domain must belong or at least subdue, and which possesses the monopoly of violence in its jurisdiction as legitimated by the sheer positivity of its legislation. In turn, essentialist efforts to define the 'state' have involved, for instance, reference to its rôle as the body that maintains property rights, the internal and external order or the legal or other types of equality between its citizens, or which pursues some metaphysical end as the 'public interest', the 'common good' or the 'welfare' of the citizens.

The words 'nominalism' and 'nominalist' deserve a meticulous analysis of conceptual history.²⁰ The same concerns the words 'essentialist' and 'essentialism'.²¹ However, such analyses are no parts of this study, which has its other, proper aims.

¹⁹ Above all, Popper (1957, 3) refers with the word 'historicism' to efforts to construct historical predictions. In actual practice, this is somewhat misleading. Namely, both in English and *mutatis mutandis* in some other languages, the same word may also be used to refer to the "historical" character of certain things or processes, and also certain features that are characteristic of the study of history.

²⁰ Note that Occam did not baptise his stance with any particular nomination. Besides a 'nominalist' one, his stance has also been called a 'termist' and 'conceptualist' one. It would not be wrong to call Occam's stance a 'philosophical-realist' or a 'nominalist-realist' one, either, as he did not deny an external world outside the human mind, nor did he deny the possibility to acquire knowledge on that world. What he denied was only that there were "real essences" outside the mind. – Here, the reader must be forewarned that philosophical terminology is vague as regards essentialism and nominalism, that professional philosophers seem to have "narcissist wounds" in this respect, and that therefore a non-philosopher dealing with these issues easily receives accusations of ignorance or partiality. But is philosophy indeed devoid of essentially contested concepts? If it is, what is it needed for in the first place?

²¹ For instance, this study does not regard the essentialism in phenomenological philosophy (Mohanty 1997), nor the *predicate essentialism* in the 'semantics of the possible worlds' in general analytic philosophy (Klima 2002). In a suitable context it would also be well-founded to consider the common claims that anti-essentialism would in itself involve a hidden essentialism. To take an example, Gray (1978, 402), in analysing the word 'liberalism', takes refuge to the claim that it would be essentialist to come forward with any claims that any concepts would be *essentially contested* in the vein of *W.B. Gallie* (e.g. 1962, see also Palonen 2003b, *passim*). Importantly, and as accepted both in the reference horizon and the present text, many a central concept is indeed essentially contested in that there is no neat, let alone generally accepted, 'essentialist' definition available. In the reference horizon, the essential contestability of key political concepts is in effect one of the keys and clues to the 'theory politicking' that the proponents of the horizon themselves wish to carry out, there somehow reproducing what they see to happen in the actual practice of political and political-rhetorical activity.

Not only new anti-essentialist and nominalist standpoints appear, but also new essentialist standpoints arise. To take an example from Finland, the multitude of political appeals, policies and programmes to make the country an “information society” and even the world’s leading one among the “information societies” do reveal one kind of essentialism. Insofar as efforts to make Finland such a society are launched, there is the implicit presupposition that the *essentia* of such a society can be somehow defined, even if civil servants and political advisors drafting decisions for politicians to make are far from conscious philosophers of any kind. In discourse with theoretical pretensions, interventions as the one of Fukuyama (1991) are prime examples of new essentialism. Fukuyama applied the Christian eschatological figure of the ‘end of history’ as a “political theology” and developed an apology of U.S. American liberal democracy at the stage of its apparent global victory.²² It is also interesting that despite his apocalyptic vision, Fukuyama identified serious opponents of the essentialist *Endlösung* of history, namely people known in American parlance as ‘welfare liberals’. Using the rhetorical figure of *paradiastole*, one can ask that if Fukuyama indeed believes that his pseudo-apocalyptic predicament is deterministically true, why on earth does he find it necessary to make voluntaristic allegations to the annihilation of political ‘liberals’ as this word is understood in the particular U.S. American context?²³

Complicating the matters further, in “postmodern” discourse, anti-essentialism joins with something else, namely what is called *anti-foundationalism*. Indeed, there are authors who have tried to contest foundationalism and in particular its rationalist and empiricist varieties. For instance, there has been criticism towards foundationalist Lockean property-rights natural-law liberalism and toward equally foundationalist-rationalist, equality-centred liberalism (Bridges 1994).

Further below, there will be consideration of what will be called ‘object essentialist’, referring to notions that certain objects indeed possess essential features. In analysing foundationalism, Crook (1991, 181) determines a definite equivalent to the object essentialist stance made up of efforts to build upon some such basis as assumptions on the ‘*existence*’ of some such entity as ‘society’. Below, what will be called ‘approach essentialist’ will also be considered. Crook also distinguishes an equivalent to the second type of essentialism, made up of assumptions on the primacy of some definite *method*. Moreover, Crook considers foundationalism that presupposes some *end state* of development, that is, by and large what Popper called ‘historicism’. Finally, he considers foundationalism that privileges some *tradition*. An example of the deepest foundationalist disease would consist of conceptions of substituting markets and ‘quasi-markets’ for the alleged horrors of ‘Weberian bureaucracy’ and the ‘Big State’, replacing administrative regulation with applied rational choice economics and business cost accounting, tending towards ‘lean gov-

²² By the way, although this is no place to delve deeper in the issue, Fukuyama’s predicament was even questioned within the very camp of thought within which he can be placed, namely the American Straussian political theorists. Especially the ‘end of history’ thesis was seen as worrisome.

²³ Fukuyama 1991, 295-296. The nastiest criticism of this might draw parallels between Fukuyama’s “enemy figure” and its equivalents in Marxism and even Nazism. But let us not get that nasty.

ernment' that is subservient to 'politics', and introducing traditions of 'business' also in the 'public sector' to replace those of the said 'Weberian bureaucracy'.

Because of the risk of overlaps, foundationalism and criticisms towards it will not be separately considered here. Moreover, the reference horizon has not developed as criticism of foundationalism but as one of essentialism. Only exceptionally has it been considered as a representative of a 'post-foundationalist paradigm' (Marchart 2000).

From the outset, the proponents of the reference horizon have been militantly nominalist and anti-essentialist, not only in the epistemic but also in the ethical sense. In vain does one seek any explicit commitments of theirs to any particular "values". Only implicitly are there such signs as selecting – as happened especially earlier – "radical" and "alternative" political actions as research topics, such as the turn of the 1910s and 1920s German *Rätedemokratie*. The distance taken from Heidegger – i.e., a definite "silence" toward an author who also himself was known for his post WWII silence – also makes its revelation of the implicit values in the reference horizon.

Further refinement in the reference horizon has taken place in the vein of Occam's conceptual naturalism through stimuli from Koselleck (e.g. 1985). Here, equally as Occam, Koselleck – and proponents of the reference horizon – trace each concept both in the world of thought and action. Moreover, there is an emphasis on multiple layers of the best interesting concepts, the corresponding multiplicity of possible interpretations, the co-existing but oftentimes uneasy *Gleichzeitigkeit des Ungleichzeitigen* between concepts, and resulting difficulties but at the same time interesting challenges to render interpretations.²⁴ It is also relevant that both the methodology of Koselleck and the methodology of the reference horizon are naturalist in that the concepts being studied are being traced in occasions of the presence of the corresponding words in the source texts.²⁵

Subject, object and approach: nominalist vs. essentialist

For the present analytic purposes let us take apart three facets of interpretation: an "object dimension", a "predicate dimension", and a "subject dimension". It is no coincidence that this is equivalent to the structure of full transitive sentences of natural language.

Let us pass the subject facet and the *subject essentialist* aspects only with some comments. For instance, this facet has to do with the essentialism vs. nominalism of an intellectual's or scholar's life. One could consider this facet with the support of Sartre's and Weber's ideas, which has also taken place in certain applications of the reference horizon. One might also be able to open perspectives in a Heideggerian or

²⁴ It is useful to refer back to the relationships of the issues here with *W.B. Gallie's* (1956) notion of *essentially contested concepts*.

²⁵ Cf. Koselleck (1991), who considers several concepts, which have changed and posed particular challenges of interpretation in German conceptual history. See also Klaes (2002) who, explicitly referring to Koselleck, gives an interesting analysis of a certain contemporary concept of political economy.

Nietzschean way or by building upon the longer-term history of the *topos* (see Hadot 1995). One but only hypothetical observation is that even the best committed intellectuals might have found it difficult to apply their own philosophical and theoretical convictions upon themselves without serious compromises. At least, in the long run they might end up considering the justification of some of their choices and their resulting acts (see de Beauvoir & Sartre 1976, 120).²⁶

Let us now turn to consider what can be called *object-essential*, and which also could be called ‘ontological-essential’. In the vein of a *Verfremdungseffekt*, the examples come from outside of general political science, namely mostly so from the special political science fields of political economy and also observing its overlaps with public administration and public management (cf. also Klaes 2002).

Let us start with comments on the theme of “economic necessities”, which can be seen as one variant of conceivable political-rhetorical “necessity discourse”. Such discourse may be oriented to the actual present and its alleged necessities, to the past and the necessities seen as having been prevalent then, and the future and the necessities seen to wait there. One conceivable characteristic of necessity discourse consists of references to ‘future’ as something which becomes apparently stripped of alternatives by the means of such trite catch-all notions as ‘the greying of the population’ or the ‘pensions time bomb’. Such threats are also habitually temporalised by situating them in certain moments or periods of the conventional calendar chronology. However, economic sciences proper do *not* without reservation support the view on any particular economic necessities. There are fundamental disagreements between professional economists, and the transient opinions of any of their majorities are no proof of their unanimity nor the incompetence of those in the transient minority. Note that what is at stake here is not as such the questioning of the necessities despite their frequent relativity but instead questioning the political-rhetorical mode in which they are frequently spelled out.

Let us next ask if it is conceivable that an economist presents his or her views in such a fashion that his or her abstract model appears as nothing less than a Platonic *eidōs*. Let us thus assume that an economist constructs and by the means of partial derivation of differential calculus “resolves” a formal model to the effect that executive politicians who should be subservient to the people’s elected representatives in effect work to their own advantage with the ultimate consequence of bloated public budgets and an inefficiently high tax burden (Niskanen 1971; for context Mueller 2002). May the economist – let alone the politician, the consultant or the vulgar economist of New Public Management – slip from this into an object essentialist mode? As far as this takes place, it could be traced, for instance, from ethical condemnation towards politicians and leading bureaucrats, accompanied

²⁶ This has to do with certain aspects of Sartre’s and de Beauvoir’s relationship, which has, as such, been much discussed in literature. Perhaps first in a ludicrous manner but in the ultimate end maybe less so the couple referred to their mutual relationship as *essentiel*, whereas the other, including intimate relationships that either might have had with others received the attribute *contingent*. Literature hints that in actual practice, the division was not that clear cut. A layperson might suggest, for instance, that probably both Sartre and de Beauvoir were psychically hurt by some of the contingent stints of their essential companion despite contrary predilections.

with recommendations for measures that aim at the minimisation of their influence and the crucial reduction in their numbers. Note that this is a completely *different* question than that of either the formal validity of the economist's models or the empirical support that may be received once parameters of those models are being estimated and tested. Above all, this is a question of the *political-rhetorical efficacy* of certain appeals, which, exactly due to their oftentimes hideous political-rhetorical character, may deserve criticism starting first from their revelation.

May the economist also present his or her views as if his or her inductive generalisations were not subject to the contingency of any inductive inference? Here, also this question is dealt with as a *political-rhetorical* one only instead of a question of empirical methods of parameter estimation and significance testing. One can trace to which extent and in the name of which economic principles and objectives determinate *depoliticisation* has been pursued, for instance by disengaging fields seen to require sophisticated technical expertise from the sphere of unstable and unpredictable political decision-making "proper". One conceivable example is the monetary policy integration in the European Union (Burnham 2002). Essentialist traits have been traced also elsewhere in EU integration – despite the fact that the Union itself and many concepts around it are "essentially contested" (Bellamy & Castiglione 2002; Bańkowski & Christodoulidis 1998). Note that here the aspects of EU integration are not questioned in any essentialist fashion, but there is only the problematisation of certain *rhetorical-political strategies* and calling for their closer analysis. The "what" is not questioned, but only the "how" is.

Let us next consider what can be called *approach essential*, 'epistemic-essential' or 'epistemological-essential'. Rationalist approaches are a conceivable candidate to the approach essential mode. Let us take the example of *Friedrich A. v. Hayek*. He can hardly be suspect of object essential features as for decades he stood in opposition against regulation aims carried out or proposed in the name of "society". On the contrary, he stressed the key role of spontaneous processes. However, in an often cited criticism, Oakeshott (1991a, 26) pondered that even if Hayek's "plan to oppose all planning" might be "better" than its opposite, both find their place in the same rationalist policy style. In the present parlance, Oakeshott found Hayek's perspective to be an approach essentialist one.

However, in certain respects object essentialist features are not absent in Hayek, either. In an apparently Conservative mood that he shared with Oakeshott, he gave a positive appreciation of the British circumstances as far as the British themselves are concerned, seeing those circumstances as the best fitting for them. In spite of this, Hayek's but not Oakeshott's views also involve a "non-conservative", namely a "liberalist" strive to find motivation for changing things instead of leaving them as they are in the pure Conservative mood, where one would expect complete reliance upon spontaneous processes only.

It is a separate question to which extent Hayek's consideration even in its object nominalist features has changed in its *reception* towards an object-essentialist direction. As to this, Oakeshott – and not only Hayek – has been claimed to have been one of the key figures behind the phenomenon known as "Thatcherism". However, neither Oakeshott nor Hayek could exert influence upon how others interpret and apply their ideas and which effects these interpretations and applications have in the longer run.

Margaret Thatcher's expression *there is no such thing as society* has been seen to derive by and large from Hayek (Thatcher 1987).²⁷ From the nominalist viewpoint, the expression is well-founded in that it rejects a collective concept. (Soininen 2005; Hayek, e.g. 1998, 153). However, did Thatcher *really* put an end to "society" in Britain? Instead, wasn't *society* replaced by other, and no less essentialist, concepts as *the British people*, *community*, elements of the vocabulary that relates to the nuclear family and such notions as spreading an *enterprise culture* all over Britain (Fairclough 1989, 178-182; Peters 2001)?

What appears as nominalist could also be studied from the viewpoint of intricate *political-rhetorical games*. For instance, it is not ruled out that somebody presents him- or herself and his or her views as nominalist, but the ultimate purposes are far from nominalist ones. As to Thatcherite rhetoric, it has been asked to what extent "Thatcherism" was no coherent ideological body of thought at all, as few successful political doctrines are, but rather a mixture of multifarious elements. For instance, one could trace essentialist-conservative, revivalist early 20th century neoliberal and moralist-populist elements (Fairclough 1989, 177). Even with elements like this, a skilful rhetor may be able to offer suitable mixtures in suitable portions to different audiences in different situations for long periods.

To consider Hayek, Oakeshott and even Thatcher, one should take into account much more than only what is recorded in texts. One should take into account, for instance, *influences upon* each focal author or rhetor, the *reception* of his or her discourse and contemporary and later *commentary* upon that discourse, to take a few examples. However, trying any of this, the interpreter may get lost into a thicket of threatening essentialisms. Take the example of the political and constitutional theorist *Carl Schmitt*. In the essentialist mode, there have been both efforts in the political "right" and the political "left" to use him, and the same also concerns certain types of political "radicalism" (Thornhill 2000). Sartre, Oakeshott and Hayek are less extreme examples. There have been authors who have wanted to strip from Schmitt any Nazi taint or suggest that his relationships with the NS regime was contingent with respect to his key ideas, as the case undoubtedly was with this Conservative Catholic thinker. As to Sartre, there have been efforts to belittle his Communist sympathies; as to Oakeshott, the same has concerned his alleged 'essentialist' Conservatism; and as to Hayek, there have been efforts to prove that he was no Conservative at all but the purest classical liberal.

Given complications of the above type, it is well understandable that within the reference horizon there has been a definite effort to decline analysing the reception of texts, although this cannot have been fully avoided (e.g. Palonen 2003b, 310-317). One should neither completely rule out the possibility to study the reception of the reference horizon itself.

²⁷ Literally, Thatcher exclaimed in a 23 September 1987 interview: *Who is society? There is no such thing! There are individual men and women and there are families....*

Permanence, transition and jeopardy with respect to the nominalist stance

Might the pursuit of a nominalist stance presuppose stable political and other circumstances? In the present era, might the conditions for such a stance be better or even substantially better than, for instance, in Hitler's Germany, many a war-waging democracy during World War II, let alone Stalin's Soviet Union even during peacetime?

Let us consider the possibility that avoidance of object essentialist and approach essentialist features presuppose at least some degree of stability in the prevailing circumstances. Oakeshott's (1991b) appreciation of British Conservatism is appropriate for an example. And as said above, Hayek did about the same. This, however, earned him a taint in the eyes of those who would have wanted to see the purest classical liberal in him (Pirie 1987).

In a neutral sense, the word 'innovation' refers to bringing anything novel to a new context. Take again Finland as an example, although one could take many other countries instead. Many innovations in the vocabulary and conceptual innovations indeed have stranded to Finland from Britain since the 1980s. This has not infrequently happened with depoliticising intentions or at least such effects. In the particular Finnish case, there is an internationally unique academic field of now fewer than 15 academic MA and PhD disciplines in the administrative sciences as they are defined in the very special case of Finland (Ahonen 1999). This field, almost entirely separated from political science and definitely fully separate from, for instance, business administration and economics, is one of the evident breeding grounds of the British imports. The Finnish administrative sciences have hardly been able to buffer themselves even from some of the most vulgar influences, unlike many parts of political science with their more reflexive, critical and also internationally quality-assured orientation.

Consider the possibility that such innovations as those above lead more or less to confusion, because the circumstances in the source and the target countries are different, or because the rationalist assumptions relied upon in implementing the innovations do not take into account the particular contexts of application. Next, let us imagine an observer who has adopted a simultaneous object nominalist and approach nominalist stance. Whether s/he is Conservative or not, it is logical that s/he considers such innovations utopian, leading astray and potentially harmful even before there are actual effects first to detect and next to evaluate.²⁸

²⁸ Take the *Führerprinzip* (e.g. Czada 1995) of administration, which was neutral before the 1930s but hardly since at least in the German linguistic sphere. Has it not returned in the New Public Management (NPM) with emphases on management by individual, empowered managers and the professionalisation of management, often meaning more power and salary to managers but little re-education to them? Take also such technical terms as *accountability* and the *value for money* and consider the conceivable effects of their skilful political-rhetorical use upon the redistribution of power shares to those who have the command over the use and application of such terms. More theoretically, one can take Lane's (2000) proposal that the NPM is really an administrative extension of contractarian theories of state. As far as the case is so, the NPM also brings in the limitations of those theories. The NPM also brings in risks of its own as political-ideological camouflage. Take also that part of the conceptual history of economic knowledge and business management, which nowadays also regards the topics still often referred to as 'public administration' (Klaes 2002, Abrahamson & Fairchild 1999). Pollitt (e.g. 2000) seems to be one of the few scholars who have focussed their attention to the political-rhetorical features of the NPM innovations and the ways of their diffusion and application.

S/he who has adopted a nominalist stance may also have to encounter *different* but coexisting essentialist stances. Perhaps, s/he will contest the most hegemonic of these, or those of them whose proponents strive towards a hegemonic position most keenly and with the most universal aspirations. Perhaps s/he will also side with the mildest and most fragile ones among the essentialist stances. In the absence of other reasons for this, s/he may want to expand his or her own degrees of freedom in political and political-rhetorical “games”.²⁹ One could even draft a pragmatic maxim such as: “As you cannot act alone and therefore have to join with others to exert influence, do not side with the strongest but with the weakest. But prepared to change coalition partners as far as these start to become strong.”

The nominalist stance is in its way merciless. It does not allow its proponent to commit him- or herself to any values whatsoever. S/he should indeed doubt even the smallest traces of his or her own value commitment as sheer, contingent idiosyncrasy. Proponents of the reference horizon strongly underwrite Weber’s (1985b, 604, 612-613) predicament on *die Entzauberung der Welt*. It calls for each human being to look for his own *daimon* instead of bowing to any particular established gods, strips what is ethical of *any* values, and forces the human being to choose, to choose and to choose again on his or her own behalf and take the sole responsibility for the consequences before him- or herself and the others.

Let us consider ‘democracy’, both to elaborate an example and to go beyond a mere exemplary case. Might democracy be more than only an abstract general concept? If it is more, might not even s/he who has adopted a nominalist stance actively defend what the concept happens to refer to in his or her relevant action environment? If so, the nominalist might not have to accept or allow – in Britain, in the United States, in Finland, in Estonia, or elsewhere – that the opponents of democracy and its procedures acquire power by the means of the formally political democratic procedures, but then use their acquired power to weaken democracy and its procedures and even to put an end to both.³⁰ It appears logical that s/he who has adopted a nominalist stance will defend democracy also if those who aim at toppling it try to bring it into disarray, whichever their arguments, from those of national interest to those of economic rationalism and monetary stability. An extreme example of the latter consists of the American orientation referred to as ‘Leninist Liberalism’, which has extrapolated the natural law principle of property rights to the extreme. After having indoctrinated its avant-garde with its doctrine, and after

²⁹ In the reference horizon organised around Professor Palonen, siding, e.g., with Green or Feminist ideas has been common. However, this has taken place without any degree of subscription to any Green or Feminist substantive *essentiae*. Of course, Palonen himself remains a male person, and he has never expressed any sympathy as such, say, towards the stereotypical “big-eyed, small, furry and endangered wild animals”, the preservation of any particular ecosystems, nor even the nurture of the cause of any sexual, ethnic or other minorities.

³⁰ As a historical contingency, let us refer to the polemical essay by Urho Kekkonen (1934), later the President of Finland in 1956-1981. After having pursued legal studies in Germany leading to his D.Law dissertation, Kekkonen published a consideration on possibilities to defend democracy. In 1938, as Minister of Justice, Kekkonen tried to disband the Finnish Fascist party IKL or the Patriotic Popular Movement, but his decision was overruled in court. Accordingly, the IKL was only disbanded in 1944 after Finland had withdrawn from her WWII alliance with Germany.

having wielded the avant-garde into an unbreakable shape à la Bolsheviks, they would first work to put the welfare liberal state into disarray and, once in power, they would irrevocably prevent the return of the subdued to power (Barry 1984, 50-51).³¹

Should risks of the above type arise, it would be logical that even the object nominalist Conservative who is most satisfied with the prevailing circumstances would rise to resistance. On the contrary, might the object essentialist Conservative not do otherwise, whether s/he would have generally presented him- or herself under the label 'Conservative' or some other label? Might s/he not join those who aim to put an end to democracy and its procedures in order to reach the *essentia* they prefer? Might the extreme liberalist not do the same, provided that s/he is a proponent of extreme conceptions of property rights seen to derive from natural law, and provided that even after democracy a rudiment of a legal system would stay to ensure property rights and a market economy?

Contingency: always only relatively unconstrained

In the reference horizon, the attribute 'nominalist' presents itself as an outright synonym to 'contingency' despite no syntactic similarity. Here it is impossible to engage in any analysis of conceptual history proper. Let us reconstruct only some of the roots of the contingency and some of its later outgrowths. In any event, the *topos* is substantially older than one might imagine on the sheer basis of "postmodern" and other contemporary uses of the word 'contingency'. The word was indeed present in the discourse of the theory of history as long as a few decades ago (e.g. Gallie 1963, 182-186; examples could be found also, for instance, in Oakeshott). The word was also used some 700 years ago in a sense that is still comprehensible to us. Just like the outlining of some traces of the conceptual history of what is 'essentialist' and what is 'nominalist' above, doing the same with 'contingency' involves constructive political-rhetorical provocation vis-à-vis the reference horizon, which has not itself engaged in such a reconstruction of elements of its own metalanguage.

Above, there was reference to Occam (2000; see also Coleman 1999). He has also been portrayed as an opponent of Aquinas on the theme of contingency. Occam has been portrayed as a representative of a nominalist *via moderna* as opposed to an essentialist *via antiqua* of Aquinas and others. Occam positioned *libertas*, 'liberty', and *contingentia*, 'contingency', against *necessitas*, 'necessity', which was in turn emphasised by Aquinas. For Aquinas, the necessities demarcated what the human being had to see as "natural" for him- or herself. To contest the necessities received the definition of being *perversio*, "perversion".

In Occam's view, the stress on necessity would hardly leave room for the human being's freedom, the responsibility of the free human being, and his or her guilt as a risk that threatens him or her if s/he engages in certain acts. Occam also saw that the stress on necessity left hardly any scope for the choice of the human beings between

³¹ Barry considers, in particular, the 'Leninist liberalism' of the ultraliberalist Murray Rothbard (e.g. 1977).

“good” and “bad”. Without delving into the theology of Occam, we can remind ourselves that according to him, any criteria for “good” and “bad” are contingent in that they could even have been opposite to the ones they happen to be at any moment and in any given situation.

Occam has certainly not completely subdued Aquinas even in our times. A glimpse at contemporary political vocabulary reveals that ‘crimes against humanity’ are seen to exist by many including some international law courts. The United States has also been keen to define ‘rogue states’. We can also remind ourselves of the reception of an analysis presented by Arendt (1994). Arendt was heftily criticised – up to being called *Hannah Eichmann* – for the sake of her nominalist conclusion that the NS-criminal Eichmann was no incarnation of the devil himself. On the contrary, Eichmann was hardly different from any prudent and banal university bureaucrat or general administrator who has not the slightest moral sensitivity or the slightest intellectual and ethical comprehension.

Contingency may characterise not only physical and tangible activity, but it may also be a feature of activity in which oral or verbal statements are being made while an actor interacts with other actors. Here, it is relevant that both *Quentin Skinner* and the reference horizon which has more lately been influenced by Skinner have explicitly adopted influences from *J.L. Austin’s* (1975) speech act theory. In Austin’s theory, *performatives*, that is, acts carried out in speech or by the means of speech, are divided into two types. First, there are *illocutionary* acts in somebody *saying something*, such as asking, replying, proclaiming a verdict, agreeing upon a meeting, making an appeal, identifying a thing or describing such a thing. Austin saw that effects of illocutions, or *illocutionary force*, is predictable within the bounds of existing conventions. Second, there is another type of performatives, the analysis of which by the way seems to have been neglected by too many Austin scholars. The other type is made up of *perlocutions*. In them, effects arise *by* somebody *saying something* (see BeDuhn 2002). According to Austin, the perlocutions are not necessary, predictable or conventional but *contingent* as to their effects. One cannot speak of any equivalent of illocutionary force there, because it is well possible that the perlocutions remain without effect. However, alternatively they may have greater or smaller effects, although no predictable ones.

As examples of perlocutions Austin mentions the generation of effects through definite chains of influence. This may take place, for instance, when people have been alarmed, startled, humiliated or scared. Austin also sees as perlocutions the convincing of people of something and persuasion that makes them believe in something or that makes them do something.

As an example, let us consider the illocutions and perlocutions in the context of Weber’s (1985a, 28) analysis of *Disziplin*, ‘discipline’. Following elaborations within the auspices of the reference horizon, discipline can be subject to fundamental contingency. According to Weber, it involves *die Chance* only to find obedience to an issued order. However, a routine order that finds docile obedience is an illocution in Austin’s terms, but on the contrary a perlocution is at stake if something more is hidden in the order. There may be, for instance, a hideous intention by the actor who issues the order to deepen the subjection of the actor to whom the order is directed to the effect that the power share of the former actor increases. Yet such an effort

may not work as intended by the former actor, which is also in accordance with the Austinian notion of perlocution. In Weber's terminology, there may be *Nebenfolgen*, 'side effects', from the viewpoint of the former actor. One can ponder that as far as the former actor's intention to win more power shares is revealed too early, there may be consequent further perlocutions by the latter actor, who rises into vocal opposition. It is not ruled out that in this way the latter actor either is able to preserve the relationship between the two actors as it used to stand, or even conquer power shares from the former actor quite against the latter's intentions. But one can also take into account the possibility that the *Nebenfolgen* in a way exceed what was intended by the actor issuing orders, such as when bossy efforts at subjection in a New Public Management –infested workplace leads to the resignation of a competent but harmfully independent-minded employee who finally had enough of it.

That the above case was drawn from Weber and elaborated is not coincidental. Despite the fact that the case presentation is brief, the case tries to bring forward *den Kern des Pudels* in the reference horizon. This involves the key role of Weber as the towering figure lately built into the reference horizon, which is also evidenced by two key works (Palonen 1998, 2002b).

In applications of the reference approach, there has been considerable appreciation of emphases on contingency in the works of Sartre, Weber, Oakeshott and – although with limitations – Rorty (Palonen 1998). Assumptions on the constraints and limitations to contingency have been seen as essentialist. Take for example *Adam Smith's* rhetorical figure of the 'invisible hand' (Palonen 1998, 51).³² This figure can be seen to involve an "object essentialist" stance towards the markets and their automatism. Extensions of such a stance have been traced in the ethical direction with value-laden appreciation of actors who or which have found success in markets, with a corresponding depreciation of the "losers" in the markets (Haworth 1994).³³ In this very example, socialism, which involved rhetorical pejoration towards markets, towards market success and towards capitalists as the successful market actors has been turned on its head, but with no weaker essentialist features.

Is contingency *fully* constrained even where it is less constrained than elsewhere or in most cases? In the work of most authors who have taken contingency into account in their analyses, there are discernible limitations in this sense. We have seen above how Oakeshott's liberal conservatism and Hayek's conservative liberalism were both anchored upon Britain in quite an essentialist way. However, the most serious effects working against the contingency of anything referred to with *liber-* words can be found where the British anchorage has been abandoned and especially Hayek has been applied in ways that may have been far from anything denoted with *liber-* words. There was also reference to Rorty (1989). Despite the merits of his consideration of contingency, he puts the U.S. American democracy to no lesser

³² Nozick (1974, 18-22) gives a very long apologetic list of "invisible hand" arguments.

³³ As a happenstance, the word *luuseri*, from "loser", has become common in Finnish jargon including jargon among youth. *Luuseri* is, for instance, someone who falls chronically unemployed as opposed to the lucky ones without such an adverse fate. Remember that Finland's unemployment rates have been two-digit ones since 1994, and only by 2005 have they converged towards the EU average at about 10 per cent but with local figures up to 30 per cent. Thus, *luuserit* abound.

place than that of an *essentia*, with which he wants to delimit the most contingent hovering of political thought and political action.

In conclusion, it is not possible to remove all constraints to contingency – neither in thought nor in action – even in the best case. We can also ponder if it is true that the more extremely we commit ourselves to presuppositions on the ubiquity of contingency, the more conservative we remain in respect to our own presuppositions and prejudices in the sense of Gadamer’s key concept *Vorurteil*. Might it be true that it is exactly in this case that even a relatively small, let alone a serious disturbance in our circumstances encounters us in a particularly crushing way?

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