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# KOMPOSITA: Contributions to Reinhart Koselleck's "Space of Resonance"

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# KOMPOSITA: Contributions to Reinhart Koselleck's "Space of Resonance"

The historian Reinhart Koselleck would have turned one hundred on April 23, 2023. The work of Koselleck, who died in 2006, is now in vogue in the humanities and historical social sciences, both in Germany and internationally.<sup>1</sup> The fact that Koselleck addressed a basic question of historical scholarship with his contributions to a theory of historical time is a likely factor in this successful reception, as is the diversity of his oeuvre, in which new facets can continually be discovered, and which invites surprising readings.<sup>2</sup>

Historically shifting conditions of making sense of the world through linguistic concepts and images, forms of memory of the political cult of the dead, and the cultural-material reshaping of history; the constitutive role of notions of time for collective self-perception and the perception of others; the temporality of media and technology as a factor of historical dynamics ("acceleration"); bodily and sensual perception as conditions of action and multi-perspectival (conflictual) histories; modernity characterized by the notion of "denaturalization;" a thinking of histories in perceptual models; composite metaphors as analytical terms<sup>3</sup> – Reinhart Koselleck's insights and theses on these and other themes illuminate such basic and mutable relationships between people and their environments; his research practices and his highly particular analytical terminology continue to open up new intellectual horizons.

With this special blog issue, entitled KOMPOSITA, we would like to invite an exchange – about current insights and resonances that can be found in Reinhart Koselleck's work, but also about limitations that call for transgressing it. The blog medium supports multi-perspectival, multi-lingual, pithy, and dialogical reflection. The name KOM-POSITA means something composite: an eclectically-assembled birthday gift and at the same time an inspiration arising from the tension between the heterogeneous, which for Reinhart Koselleck was connected with composite metaphors, with spaces of experience, horizons of expectation, slices of memory, and layers of time.

The KOMPOSITA blog entries, written in several languages, also form a glossary. They list and discuss not only conceptual classics of political discourse and Koselleck's analytical language (*Krisenzeit, revolution, Zeitschichten*), but also vocabulary, practices, images, or objects in Koselleck's research laboratory that

establish intersectional links within and beyond Koselleck's work but have so far received little attention (*Differenz, survival, Welt/world*). They also contain entries with which Koselleck's movements of thought and research practice can be grasped (*excursion, Kaleidoskop, metaphor, tecnologia*) and terms that, with Koselleck, lead beyond Koselleck (*jinnns, ghosts, nocchiero, seriality*). The contributions create a glossary that discovers and describes Koselleck's intellectual cosmos, historicizes it, catches it up to date, and develops it in light of new directions in historical thought.

A special section of KOMPOSITA is devoted to the experience of translating Koselleck's texts under the heading of "Translating Koselleck." With their idiosyncratic, metaphorical terminology, Koselleck's writings pose particular challenges for translation into other languages. However, it is precisely in the gaps between languages that new room for play and reflection on analytical and historical concepts can open up and semantic limitations, such as those set by national historiographic perspectives, can be transcended.

Starting on January 24, 2023, two blog posts will be published every two weeks, each of them reflecting on and sharpening the suggestions and blind spots of Reinhart Koselleck's work in an essayistic manner. [Click here to explore the issue.](#)

We invite interested colleagues to engage with us and participate in KOMPOSITA in the form of comments on blog posts, contributions to a lemma that expands the glossary, or by describing and interpreting images and objects.

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**Tags:** history writing / Koselleck / metaphors

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<sup>1</sup> See, for example, Reinhart Koselleck, *Sediments of Time: On Possible Histories*, translated from German and ed. by Sean Franzel and Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2018; Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, "Koselleck in America," *New German Critique* 44, no. 3 (2017), 167-187.

<sup>2</sup> Hubert Locher and Adriana Markantonatos (eds.), *Reinhart Koselleck und die Politische Ikonologie*. Berlin/Munich: Deutscher Kunstverlag, 2013; Bettina Brandt and Britta Hochkirchen (eds.), *Reinhart Koselleck und das Bild*. Bielefeld: Bielefeld University Press, 2021; Jeffrey A. Barash, Christophe Bouton, and Servanne Jollivet (eds.), *Die Vergangenheit im Begriff. Von der Erfahrung der Geschichte zur Geschichtstheorie bei Reinhart Koselleck*. Freiburg/Munich: Verlag Karl Alber, 2021; Lisa Regazzoni (ed.), *Im Zwischenraum der Dinge. Annäherung an die Figurensammlung Reinhart Koselleck*. Bielefeld: Bielefeld University Press, 2023.

<sup>3</sup> See Reinhart Koselleck, "Kriegerdenkmale als Identitätsstiftungen der Überlebenden," in *Identität*, ed. Odo Marquard and Karlheinz Stierle. Munich: Fink, 1979, 255-276; Reinhart Koselleck, "Politische Sinnlichkeit und mancherlei Künste," in *Politische Inszenierung im 20. Jahrhundert. Zur Sinnlichkeit der Macht*, ed. Sabine R. Arnold, Christian Fuhrmeister, and Dietmar Schiller. Vienna/Cologne/Weimar: Böhlau, 1998, 25-34; Reinhart Koselleck, "Zeitverkürzung und Beschleunigung: Eine Studie zur Säkularisation," in *Zeitschichten: Studien zur Historik*. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2003, 177-202; Reinhart Koselleck, "Über die Theoriebedürftigkeit der Geschichtswissenschaft," in *Zeitschichten*, 298-316; Reinhart Koselleck, "Historik und Hermeneutik," in *Zeitschichten*, 97-118.