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The Interdisciplinarity of History of Concepts – a bridge between disciplines

Abstract:

This essay argues for the duplex interdisciplinarity of the history of concepts. It begins with a brief overview of various projects in different countries mapping and contextualizing key concepts of philosophy and social political language. This section is followed by a discussion of the international debate on interdisciplinarity, and more specifically a discussion of those projects, which endeavour to work on the history of concepts in an interdisciplinary fashion. The essay concludes with an argument on the history of concepts as a *sine qua non* for any interdisciplinary project.

Keywords:

Interdisciplinarity, *Begriffsgeschichte*, metaphorology, *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, Klibansky, Gründer, Blumenberg.

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The Interdisciplinarity of History of Concepts – a bridge between disciplines

For Walter Veit

When name and concepts are not right, language is confused. When the language is confuse, chaos and failure results. When there is chaos and failure, decency and good manner decay. When decency and good manners are jeopardized, there are no just punishments anymore, and the people do not know anymore what to do and what not to do. Therefore, the nobleman has to be able to make correct use of names and concepts and act accordingly. He will never use his words insousciantly (Confucius, 1982: 79).

Una veritas in variis signis resplendit (Cusanus).[1]

Introduction

The theses I wish to defend can be briefly summarized:

History of concepts is more than just a sub-discipline of philosophy where it normally has its institutional location.

History of concepts if it aspires to being *histoire problème* (Starobinski, 1993) and not a pure history of words and terms has to work in an interdisciplinary way. History of concepts as an investigation of the genesis of (scientific) concepts and guiding themes (Blumenberg, 1967) is a necessary pre-requisite of interdisciplinarity.

In what follows I want to concentrate on some arguments for and against these theses, but also critically examine the international debate about interdisciplinarity, the meaning and purpose, the necessity and limits of boundary crossings between the institutionally established disciplines.

I am basing my reflections on my own experiences as a historian of concepts (Veit-Brause, 1978; Veit-Brause, 1981) – if one may designate it as such[2]– as well as on my experiences in teaching at my own university, which was committed to interdisciplinary team work in constructing the undergraduate curriculum (Veit-Brause, 1982). An essential part of these experiences is the insight into the embeddedness of styles of thought into the languages, as becomes obvious to anyone who ever tried, for

example, to interpret a text by Habermas in English translation with students for whom important core concepts – chosen in the English translation – conjure up quite different associations than those intended by the author.

I will approach my argument about the function and achievement of history of concepts as the conditon of possibility of interdisciplinarity from three perspectives: firstly from the perspective of the present crisis of legitimation of the human sciences; secondly, from the angle of requirements, internal to scholarship and science, for interdisciplinary cooperation; her my interest lies in the manner in which interdisciplinarity is promoted in the context of current debates about a reconfiguraton of disciplinary identities and border crossings between the academically institutionalized disciplines. My third perspective attempts to throw light on the external forces putting pressure on the institutionalized disciplines and urging for interdisciplinary cooperation.

From this *tourd'horizon* of current debates some further questions for discussion will arise about the connection between history of concepts and interdisciplinarity while I shall leave aside the *internal* controversies about methodological strategies of this area of research. These specific issues have already been discussed extensively by competent authors (Lehmann/Richter, 1996; Richter, 1996; Richter, 1995), Tully, 1988).

Internal and external motivations for research in history of concepts

As someone moving between worlds, that is between different scientific discourses and scientific cultures, I have immediate personal experiences and sensitivity for different 'national' styles of thought and doing science, while this phenomenon has only recently – with the exception of Pierre Duhem – become an object of attention in the history of science (Bono, 1995: 119).[3] This personal experience has also made me aware not only of the internal but also, and especially, of the science policy motivations for research in the history of concepts. It is an interesting, but also somewhat irritating observation that there is no adequate English or French translation of the German term of *Begriffsgeschichte.* History of concepts is a neologism in English introduced by those who argue for similar projects in their respective national languages and cultures as the ones attempted in Germany (*Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe*, 1972ff.). The older English term *History of Ideas* – or, as Bernard Williams simply said, *key words* (Williams, 1976) – is loaded with a rather different philosophical tradition than the German distinction between

Begriffsgeschichte, Sachgeschichte and *Problemgeschichte.* French terminology prefers to speak of *histoire sémantique* or *mots clefs* (cf. Veit-Brause, 1981). These terminological variants themselves call for a consideration of intercultural aspects and the need to take notice and to scrutinize the distinct contexts of traditions, in which both the history of concepts and interdisciplinarity are being discussed.

In Germany, the prompt for such conceptual historical investigations arose in particular from the internal dynamic of philosophy and of history, partly with a decidedly interdisciplinary orientation. The journal *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte* was founded to accompany the work on the *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie,* which published its first volume in 1971. In the 1950s, Hans Georg Gadamer, who just as Reinhart Koselleck (1972), Karlfried Gründer (1982) and Reiner Wiehl (1970) come from a hermeneutical tradition – chaired the "Senatskommission für begriffsgeschichtliche Forschung bei der deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft" and initiated an interdisciplinary history of concepts, which sought to clarify 'the important core concepts of philosophy and the sciences in exchanges between the representatives of the specific disciplines and philosophy' (cf. Meier, 1977).

In the Anglo-Saxon language community, the impulse for delving into history of concepts arose interestingly enough from political motivations. Prompted by the horrific experiences of the Second World War, UNESCO established in 1946 an international research group on the topic of 'Human Rights,' the results of which were published in 1949 in English and French. As Richard McKeon (University of Chicago) reported in 1959 (McKeon, 1959), there followed other UNESCO projects concerning the key terms of western democracy: *Enquête sur la liberté (Paris 1953*) and a study on democracy with the title *Democracy in a World of Tensions* (Chicago 1951). The fourth world congress of the *Sociétés de Philosophie de Langue Française* was devoted to the topic of "Freiheit" – "Liberty" – "La Liberté" , in Neufchâtel, 1949. The *Revue internationale de philosophie*, published in Bruxelles – with an advisory board, Comité Consultatif, of internationally known philosophers – became the organ for the recently aroused interest in philosophical core concepts with the pragmatic intent of furthering international understanding, ('the interest in fundamental philosophical concepts bearing on practical problems') (McKeon, 1959: 254). In 1950, five years after the end of the war, the plan was ripe for a new type of philosophical dictionary: 'to study fundamental terms and to inquire into the relations of philosophical traditions in determining their meanings' (Klibansky, 1998: 260ff.); cf.

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Augstein, 1990: 37). In January 1950, Raymond Klibansky, the philosopher born in France, educated in Frankfurt, professor at McGill University, and an exile like Isaiah Berlin, presented a memorandum outlining the purpose and orientation of such a project:

'1. Anyone who has had occasion to observe the course of international diplomatic conferences of recent years, will be struck by the recurrence of certain characteristic misunderstandings. An analysis of these misunderstandings shows that, apart from the paramount and obvious factor of conflicting political philosophies, they are – to some extent at least – due to the fact that, in various languages, terms which seem similar differ strongly in their significance.

2. In the Tower of Babel confusion arose when different terms were used by different people to express the same meaning and they did not understand one another's speech. Today we are witnessing another kind of confusion, less obvious, but no less harmful. For often the same terms are now used in different tongues to express different meanings […]'

Klibansky emphasized in 1950 that it was 'imperative to recognize that differences are inevitable and to be able to be taken into account.' Thus a then urgent political motif – and still important today – produced the plan for an International Dictionary of Basic Terms of Philosophy and Political Thought, and the intention was to publish this work in all the world languages. Sample articles in five languages – English, French, Spanish, Italian and German – did eventually appear in the *Revue international de philosophie* for the entries of 'Responsibility,' (1957), 'Justice' (1957) and 'Society' (1961). The work was to be, according to McKeon, a *Handbook for Statesmen*, 'to show the connections among significances required for Statesmen designed to provide fixed meanings congenial to one cultural view and institutional framework and suited to confute other views as obvious deviations from what is true and right' (McKeon, 1961: 5).

In other words, this venture in the history of concepts, which was eventually taken over by the *Institut International de Philosophie* (Paris), was ultimately an attempt in normative definitions of concepts in each of the European main languages and of the conceptual/terminological equivalences. Such a project *de longue haleine* – as Klibansky said in his autobiographical interviews of 1998 – required resources of extraordinary extent. A much more modest publication, the glossaire de mots-clefs de la philosophie, was published before the larger venture was completed and appeared in 1996 with 500 philosophical key terms in five languages (Klibansky, 1998: 261). The purpose of this

Glossaire is 'de montrer quelles sont les équivalents' – and – 'ensuite, des études détailées devont mettre en lumière les différences entre les équivalents les plus proches dans les différents langues en cause' (ibid.).

The great multi-volume Dictionary of political and social language in Germany – *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (1972ff.) – was originally planned in two languages, that is in French and German.

History of concepts thus is oriented towards comparative approaches, or, to use the fashionable word, intercultural perspectives, not to mention Latin and Greek once common to all European national languages. The *Dictionary of the History of Ideas*, edited by Philip P. Wiener (1973ff) places the emphasis 'on inter-disciplinary, cross-cultural relations.' Without wanting to figure as a substitute for specialized histories of different disciplines, the editor emphasizes, this encyclopedia of six volumes serves 'to indicate possible interrelations.' Philip Wiener stressed in particular that '[d]epartmental and national boundaries have thus been crossed in the cooperative exchange of ideas and cultural perspectives among editors and contributors' (*Dictionary of History of Ideas* I., 1973: vii f.).

In the last few years a similar, that is a politically motivated project was devised, financially supported by the European Science Foundation, to get at the roots of European republicanism and thus critically to renew republicanism as a common European heritage. It is interesting to note that here again a historian who is standing in the history of concepts tradition, Quentin Skinner, is one of the main initiators. The sciences are embedded, as we all know, in a historical-political context, so too the history of concepts. Its most significant task should be to serve international, intercultural and interdisciplinary understanding.

It comes as no surprise that the metaphor of the tower of Babel for the confusion of languages has been used to refer not only to the different natural languages and the cultural traditions and styles of thought sedimented in them, but also for the different language games of the disciplines. To overcome semiological barriers between disciplines is also the purpose of interdisciplinarity (Holzhey, 1976).

Referring to the different specialisms, orientations, schools and theory wars in sociology, Mattei Dogan, *Directeur de Recherche au Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris*, poses the rhetorical question: 'Is there still a discipline without using an adjective?' He observed: 'During the last decades, sociology has transgressed the frontiers of all

other social sciences, infiltrating everywhere and expanding immeasurably. To such a degree that it has become a 'Tower of Babel' (Dogan, 1995: 98). That is to say that the relationship between the disciplines is also haunted by the 'curse of Babel.'

Hence, the sense of the history of science has an internal significance for the sciences as well as a significance for science policy. And here we are approaching our special issue, the significance of history of concepts and interdisciplinarity. Again and again the relationship between the disciplines and their highly specialized and formalized languages – which become the signum of scientificity – has been characterized as 'Babylonic confusion' (Bono, 1995: 140).

Disciplines, disciplinary configurations and interdisciplinarity

Let me start in the history of concept vein. The term *disciplina* or *doctrina* has epistemic as well as institutional connotations. *Disciplina* belongs 'into the linguistic field of teaching, school,' that is into the area of learning and teaching. '[T]he basic content [of the range of meaning of disciplina and doctrina] can be reduced to the three main meanings of process, content and result of an education, which primarily passes on knowledge. Within the framework of the second meaning, which is here to be focused on, both terms serve since Cicero, synonymous with <ars>, as designation of the educational canon in toto taken over from the Greeks […] <artes liberales> is being used more often than <disciplinae liberales> […]; <disciplina> and <doctrina> designate furthermore the specific fields of knowledge of this canon; they are synonymous for mathema in the sense of school subject; <ars> and <disciplina> are also synonymous for techne (art) as for episteme (knowledge; science)' (Jüssen/Schrimpf, 1972).[4] Since the Middle Ages the concept disciplina, resp. disciplinaliter is always associated with knowledge/science acquired by methodical stringency.

A discipline is thus characterized by canonized knowledge, which is imparted as certain knowledge – as a coherent and stable body of knowledge. Recent theory of science has demonstrated that the disciplinarity, defined by epistemological criteria, is rarely embodied in the concrete practice of academic disciplines, since the requirements of professional training are in constant tension with the ideals of the epistemic purity and integrity of a discipline. Roland Posner, whose taxonomy aims at defining the criteria of disciplinarity highlights the epistemological eclecticism of the praxis-oriented disciplines.

This, for Posner, raises the question of the 'forms of communication […] between participants in a given field and persons in other fields of studies' (Posner, 1988: 167ff; 179ff.). After even the philosophers consider the search for a unitary language of science – the last attempts were pursued by the Vienna Circle – as finally failed, the philosophy of science has to confront again the question of how disciplines or sciences can at all communicate with one another. In other words, the question concerns the manner and basis facilitating interdisciplinarity (Frey, 1973).

From the sociological perspective of science R. Whitley defines a discipline with reference to the 'identity of an occupational group with intellectual goals and procedures,' which are supported and limited by the system, in which they are institutionalized: 'the organization of that system constraints and frames the organization of the sciences.' The protocols which govern the procedures within the disciplines 'are occupational ones which combine individual prowess and competence with positional dominance and controls' (Whiteley, 1984: 13).

In a similar rigorous manner the sociologist of science Peter Weingart defends the conception of 'pragmatic interdisciplinarity,' which lay at the foundation of ZiF[5], against a 'reductionist image of the sciences, in which a hierarchy of the disciplines can be constructed on the basis of a unified epistemology and a universally binding concept of rationality' (Weingart, 1995: 11) Weingart takes a stance against the Unified Science movement and implies a concept of discipline configurations, which are neither hierarchically arranged (as in Auguste Comte's model) nor integrated by an ideally intended common language. Rather, they mutually complement each other in a sort of cyclical interdependence, as Jean Piaget proposed (Piaget, 1970), or they relationship can be modeled like an overlapping fish-scale model (Sherif/Sherif, 1969). In other words, a discussion about the interdiscipinarity of history of concepts cannot avoid a discussion about the cognitive and institutional conditions of the production of knowledge.

The concept of interdisciplinarity is a very young neologism, compared to the term discipline. It is notoriously difficult to date the first appearance of a new term. It seems though certain that 'interdisciplinarity' as a science policy program appeared much earlier in the Anglo-Saxon, especially in the American, world – OED refers to a citation in the *Journal of Educational Sociology* of 1937 (OED, 1985:1098)[6] – than in other languages. In Germany, interdisciplinarity as a *'forschungsorganisatorisches Postulat'* appeared in the rhetoric of science policy in the early 1960s, in particular in the context of the foundation

of the reform university of Bielefeld. In 1968, Helmut Schelsky founded the *Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung*, with the intent to use organizational means in order to make the disciplinary borders more permeable' (Weingart, 1995: 7)[7].

Interdisciplinarity – the international discussion

The relationship between disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity – the intricate distinctions between inter-, multi- and trans-disciplinarity will be left aside here – has an institutional as well as an epistemological dimension. Disciplines, as we know them today and refer to with the traditional abbreviations, are the result of a protracted historical process of cognitive differentiation, academic institutionalization and professionalization linked up with credentialism (cf. Gusdorf, 1967). Professionalization and credentialism, however, have an inherent drive towards closure rather than boundary crossings. The configuration of disciplines, and the borderlines between them, are – as every historian of science knows – not stable but constantly shifting (Serres, 1998). No single discipline can be precisely characterized by either an exclusive object of study or by a dominant method (Veit-Brause, 1996). Quite a few times new disciplines developed from trans-disciplinary and problem oriented cooperation – interdisciplines (Klein, 1996) – which were later formally institutionalized. From the perspective of sociology and psychology of science, there are always the issues of power, prestige and resources to be considered too.

In the United States, Canada, England and Australia there has been a vigorous debate for years about the function and status of interdisciplinary cooperation and about the continuing role of the so-called base disciplines (Hollinger, 1997). This controversy, it seems to me, has somewhat climaxed in the last few years, not for reasons internal to research and teaching, where the issue is one of enabling innovations (Dogan/Pahre, 1990), but also and foremost for reasons of science policy. Wolfgang Frühwald, the then president of the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft,* noted: 'The interdisciplinary tune, to be sung between the stools, is […] rather a political tune, a nasty tune, as the skeptical word says' (Frühwald, 1995: 206).

In my view, the crux of all debates on the pro and con of interdisciplinarity lies in this unholy alliance of trends internal to the sciences and financial, social and political pressures external to research and teaching. From the science policy view, interdisciplinary curricula are advocated for reasons of so-called efficiency of teaching. In this sense, the merger of departments to larger units is infected by the 'economic

rationalism,' which has forced the humanities and social sciences in particular into a continuing legitimation crisis. To put it in the words of Bill Readings, one of the most skeptical critics of the 'idea' of the university in the contemporary situation of 'economic rationalism' and 'economic globalization' –

'The contemporary situation of the humanities is one of profound legitimation crisis, not merely a crisis in the marginal utility of the liberal arts for a technocratic society.'

Readings argues sharply –

'that the decline of the nation-state that accompanies the globalization of the world economy means that the notion of culture no longer matters to modernity […] that is, as the symbolic and political counterpart to the project of economic integration pursued by the capitalist nation-state, it has lost its raison d'être' (Readings, 1995: 169).

Readings points to the cultural studies programs spreading in all universities in Anglo-Saxon countries and interprets their mixture of 'marxism, psychoanalysis, and semiotics' as a symptom of this crisis of the humanities under a technocratic state in the age of globalization, which deprived the human sciences of their legitimation as the essential cultural sciences. 'To make moral arguments about this process […] is futile.' Readings, whose concern is a fundamental critique of the role of universities in contemporary society, comes to rather skeptical-melancholy conclusions in his larger study *The University in Ruins* (Readings, 1996). Somehow, he submits, the humanities have to nestle in these ruins without recourse to the 'idea of the university'once proclaimed in the great tradition of Humboldt, Schiller or J. Newman and J. J. Pelikan.

Scylla and Charybdis of interdisciplinarity

In this situation of 'very real organizational problems' (Wallerstein, et al., 1996) complex alliances and rather ragged frontlines between the protagonists of interdisciplinarity and the defenders of clear disciplinary identities developed. In the context of our question about the interdisciplinarity of history of concepts it is primarily the internal arguments pro and contra a reconfiguration of the human sciences – which however are not completely unaffected by the external science policy pressures. I am referring, as an example, to the Report of an International Commission, which was concerned with today's organizational problems in the human sciences. The Report states:

'The classification of the social sciences was constructed around two antinomies, which no longer command the wide support the once enjoyed: the antinomy between past and present, and the antinomy between idiographic and nomothetic disciplines. A third antinomy, that between the civilized and the barbaric world, has few public defenders, but in practice still inhabits the mentalities of many scholars' (Wallerstein, 1996: 95).

The summary of the current situation, which is submitted in this Report, distinguishes correctly between the logic of the present differentiations between the disciplines – which are not at all as homogenous and paradigm driven, as Posner wants it to be in his taxonomy – and the problem of resources.

'While social scientists, because of the pressures generated by their intellectual dilemmas, are seeking to expand the number and variety of pedagogical and research structures, the administrators are looking for ways to economize and therefore to consolidate [the finances]. We are not suggesting that there has been too much multi-disciplinarity. Far from it. Rather we are pointing out that organizationally this has gone less in the direction of unifying activities than in that of multiplying the number of universities names and programs. It is only a matter of time for the two contrary pressures to collide, and collide severely' (96).

The Commission appeals to the social scientists themselves to think about and propose a 'meaningful division of labor' in the light of present lack of resources. In its own plea, the Commission emphasizes:

What seems to be called for is less an attempt to transform organizational frontiers, than to amplify the organization of intellectual activities without attention to current disciplinary boundaries. To [think] historical[ly] is after all not an exclusive purview of persons called historians. It is an obligation for all social scientists. To [think] sociological[ly] is not the exclusive purview of persons called sociologists. Economic issues are not the exclusive purview of economists. Economic questions are central to any and all social scientific analyses. Nor is it absolutely sure that professional historians necessarily know more about historical explanations, sociologists more about social issues, economists more about economic fluctuations than other working social scientists. In short, we do not believe that there are monopolies of wisdom, nor zones of knowledge reserved to persons with particular university degree (98).

The defenders of interdisciplinarity and the protagonists of a reconfiguration of disciplines, in particular in the human sciences, conjure up the innovative potential for the progress of knowledge, which arise from such boundary crossings. What is at issue is to overcome the limitations and constraints (Bornierungen), which can develop when 'domains of research' are assigned to one or the other discipline – for example, Kant is owned by the philosophers, not by the cultural scientists, as was deplored at a postdoctoral seminar of historians. Dogan and Pahre celebrated, with a stylish pun, the 'creative marginality' by studying the intellectual biographies of some important innovators in specific disciplines. With the same kind of aplomb, Julie Thompson Klein critically discusses the conditions and possibilities of boundary crossings and underlines in particular 'the integrative habit of mind' of a 'critical interdisciplinarity' (Klein, 1996: 213, 211). In our context her attempt to specify the 'communicative competence' necessary for successful interdisciplinarity is particularly interesting. In a similar perceptiveness as Frey she is aware of the difficulties, but rates the chances much higher: 'Interdisciplinarity is not a monologue' (216).

How are we to describe this dialogical enterprise? My own attitude to interdisciplinary teamwork I used to describe metaphorically as 'bilingualism' in the sense that for the interdisciplinary dialogue to succeed at least a passive competence in the disciplinary language of the partner in dialogue is required. Frey, too, speaks of bilingualism. Klein contradicts this conception and considers it inappropriate. Instead, Klein characterizes the forms of interdisciplinary conversations with other linguistic terms: 'Pidgin and Creole are the typifying forms of interdisciplinary communication' (220). Perhaps it is this hybrid conceptuality and the potentially resulting conceptual vagueness, which brings to the barricades the defenders of a definite disciplinary identity and conceptual 'rigor' (Koepke, 1996), while the protagonists of interdisciplinarity believe in the creativity and the bridging between disciplines as the most important asset – even granted the instability which may be connected with such hybrid forms of conceptuality.

The duplex interdisciplinarity of the history of concepts

In which form are we to imagine the interdisciplinarity of history of concepts? I wish to argue that it is of a dual kind. Firstly, history of concepts has to work in an interdisciplinary way – and it does so *de facto* despite being classified as a sub-discipline of

philosophy (Meier, 1971: 78ff) or located within political theory (Richter, 1995; Lübbe, 1965). Secondly, and that is in my view the most interesting aspect, the achievements of history of concepts are a *sine qua non* of interdisciplinarity. In other words, our attention should focus on the achievements of history of concepts as enabling interdisciplinarity, in particular with respect to the interaction of history of science and history of concepts. As early as 1967 in a discussion about the continuation of the *Archiv für Begriffsgeschichte*, Karlfried Gründer pointed out the inner connections between history of science and history of concepts: 'Not only philosophy and the cultural sciences, in Rothacker's sense, are framing their questions in a history of concepts fashion. Therefore all disciplines, where this is the case, should have a say here…' (Gründer, 1967: 68). In the same debate about the idea, function and method of history of concepts, Hans Blumenberg stated: 'The structure of the genesis of concepts has become interesting as such and independently from historical facticities …' Blumenberg emphasized: 'Under the heading of history of concepts, a more encompassing task has been shaped for some time and by different disciplines, the task of research into terminologies, which comprehends the formation of concepts as processes with consequences and can help to critically practice them.' Blumenberg also underlined 'that terminological problems exist in almost all disciplines … and that these put excessive pressure and difficulties on the communication between the disciplines.' For these reasons, Blumenberg submitted, the collaboration with the natural sciences was imperative. With these new directions, history of concepts was given an important task in facilitating the interdisciplinary dialogue, which went beyond 'the area of philosophical competence' (Blumenberg, 1967: 79f.).

We thus see in most recent research a convergence of history of concepts, history of science and history of disciplines. Even in the history of science, which follows its own impulses towards specialization, there is an increasing trend towards conceptual investigations, which runs counter to a positivist theory of science. In 1973, Gerald Holton attempted a 'thematic analysis of science,' as he called it (Holton, 1973). He meant by '*themata*' the prestructuring of empirical and analytical research by the 'eternal questions' (Holton, 1984) which are incorporated, according to Holton, in not even that numerous metaphors and allegories (Weinrich, 1981). *Themata*, Holton concluded, can neither be proven nor refuted. One example for such a 'theme of the scientific imagination,' pre-structuring empirical research, is the idea of atomism; under this heading quite different empirical findings have been proposed during the long course of

the history of the sciences Holton, 1973: 99ff.). Another of such a pre-structuring allegories is the concept of 'force' (*Kraft*), which found ever new concrete definitions in the human sciences, e.g. with Herder, as well as in the natural sciences (Holton, 1973: 58; Holton, 1984: 16, 19; Mainzer, 1984; Kaulbach, 1976). There are other cosmological metaphors, for example nature as a 'mirror,' or 'book,' ' text' or 'language' have also been used across different disciplines (Blumenberg, 1998). Holton even proposed a 'new discipline', that is 'the thematic analysis of science' (Holton, 1984: 18) and for him, who came from a scientistic tradition, it was important to emphasize, 'how these terms can help us to overcome the usual antithetical confrontations of natural and human sciences' (Holton, 26).

In recent years, James Bono has further radicalized this re-orientation, noticeable with Holton, towards a 'rhetorical turn' (Bono, 1995: 119-151). Bono argues for a 'cultural history of science,' concentrating on the diverging 'epistemic styles.' His attention is focused on the central question of how exactly conceptual diffuseness of metaphors is being hedged in by the embedding in narratives. Dismissing the idea of scientific revolutions, Bono draws attention to the manner in which the negotiation about 'contesting narrative emplotments of key scientific metaphors' is being carried out in scientific discourses.

Conclusion

Metaphors migrating from one discipline to another, one might propose, facilitate – as a medium of exchange (Bono) – the interdisciplinary discourse, on the condition that variants of meaning are clarified in a history of concepts manner. In this sense, I am arguing for the duplex interdisciplinarity of history of concepts, firstly for history of concepts as an interdisciplinary project, and secondly for history of concepts as a bridge between the disciplines, enabling interdisciplinarity.

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[1] Cit. Raymond Klibansky, *Le philosophe et la mémoire du siècle. Tolérance, liberté et philosophie. Entretiens avec Georges Leroux,* Paris, 1998, xvii.

[2] On the English tradition of history of Ideas, cf. Kelley, D. (2002), 'History of ideas in British tradition,' *Storia della Storiografia* 41: 3-19.

[3] Bono reminds us that ' [t]he contention […] is against the background of the universality claim of modern sciences in itself a provocation, or it was such at least at the time when Pierre Duhem, in his studies of theory of physics, referred to the different mouldings of style in England and France (Duhem, 1914);' see also 17, 20f. Further evidence concerning the changes between internationality of research und the nationalization of the sciences in the age of nation-states and the discovery of the utility of knowledge in P. Weingart's Introduction to *Grenzüberschreitungen*, esp. 8, 14f.

[4] Cf. G. Jüssen/O.Schrimpf, doctrina, HWPh 2, 1972, 256-261.

[5] *Zentrum für Interdisziplinäre Forschung,* Centre for Interdisciplinary Research, Bielefeld.

[6] Since then a number of journals devoted to interdisciplinary perspectives has been founded, cf. for example Robert I. Rotberg/Theodore K. Raab: 'Interdisciplinary History,' in: *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 1 (1970) 3-5.

[7] ' … mit organisatorischen Mitteln die in der Universität institutionalisierten und sich weiter verfestigenden Disziplingrenzen […] durchlässig zu machen.'