

Histories and freedom of the present: Foucault and Skinner

History of the Human Sciences

24(5) 124-141

© The Author(s) 2011

Reprints and permission:

sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav

DOI: 10.1177/0952695111415176

hhs.sagepub.com



Naja Vucina

Roskilde University, Denmark

Claus Drejer

Roskilde University, Denmark

Peter Triantafillou

Roskilde University, Denmark

Abstract

This article compares the ways in which Michel Foucault's and Quentin Skinner's historical analyses seek to unsettle the limits on present forms of freedom. We do so by comparing their ways of analysing discourse, rationality and agency. The two authors differ significantly in the ways they deal with these three phenomena. The most significant difference lies in their ways of addressing agency and its relationship to power. Notwithstanding these differences, the historical analyses of both authors seek to problematize the ways in which past thoughts and practices limit contemporary forms of freedom. While Foucault seems to go furthest in this endeavour, a comparison may enrich both lines of historical analyses.

Keywords

critique, freedom, language, method, political philosophy

Introduction

With a few exceptions, little has been done to compare the writings of Michel Foucault and Quentin Skinner. This may not seem very surprising; after all, the former is trained

Corresponding author:

Naja Vucina, Department of Society and Globalization, Roskilde University, PO Box 260, Roskilde 4000, Denmark

Email: vucina@ruc.dk



Journal of Human Sciences
24(5) 124–141
© Author(s) 2011
All rights reserved. No part of this journal may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.
SAGE
10.1177/0898010111415176
jhs.sagepub.com

as a psychologist and philosopher, whereas the latter is trained in the discipline of history. Also, even if both undertake accurate historical analyses, they take their departures in quite different intellectual traditions. While Skinner is regarded as one of the key authors within the Cambridge School of the history of political thought which aims to locate the meaning of political texts within wider linguistic contexts, Foucault's histories are indebted to the French history of scientific reason and its quest for mapping shifts or 'epistemological breaks', in the sciences.

Why then compare Skinner and Foucault? To begin with, as James Tully also emphasizes, both Skinner and Foucault aspire to write 'histories of the present' (Tully, 1988: 16; see also Dean, 1999: 5), that is, historical analyses that aim at shedding light on a contemporary problem. This said, we find, like Ryan Walter, that they display significant differences. Walter argues that Foucault's and Skinner's analyses first and foremost differ in terms of their methods and that this difference can be largely attributed to differences in their political projects (Walter, 2008).

In an article concerned with the problem of objectifying philosophy to history, Ian Hunter places the contributions by Skinner and Foucault within the group of historical writers who aim at contextualizing philosophical thought. They differ, Hunter argues, from another group of neo-Kantian historians and philosophers who are 'drawing their accounts from the nature of human reason itself' (Hunter, 2007: 592). He points out a general concern with how to perceive philosophy as a historical phenomenon and as such opens it up to historical investigations by disconnecting it from its (quasi-)transcendental or metaphysical grip. We agree with Hunter's suggestion that the type of historical contextualization found in the works of Skinner and Foucault is able cogently to address the 'problem of anachronism' in the writing of history, by interpreting philosophical thinking 'in terms of their own canons' (ibid.: 572). One common denominator between Skinner and Foucault is therefore their attempt to analyse the past in a non-reductionist and non-presentist manner. Their shared objective with this endeavour is to avoid a kind of historical writing which assumes that both the past and the present may be explained in more or less universal – or at any rate transhistorical – terms.

However, our main justification for comparing the two authors is less their attempt to tackle problems of transhistoricism than the ways in which they employ their historical analyses to interrogate and possibly provoke the limits of contemporary forms of freedom. As we will show in the following, even if Skinner and Foucault are indebted to and inscribed within quite distinct intellectual traditions, they both relate their historical analyses to the philosophical and ethical problem of how we may adequately understand and possibly provoke the limits of contemporary forms of freedom. It is the way in which Skinner's and Foucault's historical analyses are employed to address this problem that will be the object of comparison here. Our aim is, above all, to identify and describe their analytical differences, but we also provide an evaluation of just how far they go in this endeavour of interrogating the limits of contemporary forms of freedom. It is not, however, the ambition of this article to explain general differences between the approaches adopted by Skinner and Foucault.

Our main argument is, on the one hand, that the two authors differ significantly in the ways they deal with these three phenomena. The most significant difference lies with their ways of addressing agency and its relationship to power. We argue that whereas

Skinner's history
We do so by
two authors
most significant
power. Not-
seek to pro-
ary forms of
parison may

the Foucault
er is trained

Roskilde 4000.

Skinner, at least implicitly, treats freedom as something exercised by the great philosophers within a particular linguistic context, for Foucault freedom and critique are intimately linked together in that critique is bound up with the ethical relationship of the self and his or her relation to others. Notwithstanding these differences, the historical analyses of both authors seek to problematize the ways in which past thoughts and practices impose specific limits to contemporary forms of freedom.

If we accept the premise that it makes sense to compare Skinner's and Foucault's historical analyses in terms of the ways in which they tackle the limits of contemporary forms of freedom, then how may we do this? At the most general level, such a comparison should focus less on Skinner's and Foucault's tentative definitions or conceptions of freedom (or liberty) and more on the kinds of historical writing they employ to interrogate the limits to freedom.

Inasmuch as both authors seek to avoid transhistoricism and, by implication, shy away from adopting more or less universal definitions of such notions as freedom, they should be compared less in terms of the (universal) validity of their concepts and more in terms of the efficacy of their methods and the objects of analyses these methods embrace. As we will try to show below, three objects of analyses seem to play a prominent role in the historical writings of both authors, namely discourse, rationality and agency. Accordingly, the remainder of this article is structured as follows. First, we provide credence to our postulate that Skinner's and Foucault's analyses are actually attuned to tackling the problem of freedom and its contemporary limits. We then examine how this problem is played out in the Skinner and Foucault analyses of discourse, rationality and agency. Finally, we draw some tentative conclusions based on this comparison.

Addressing Skinner and Foucault through the notion of freedom

A cursory mapping of Skinner's authorship suggests that the primary ambition of his historical writing is to unravel the meaning of political texts, not that of interrogating the limits to contemporary forms of freedom. Early on, Skinner announces that his historical analyses are an attempt to break with the idea that the history of political ideas amounts to the study of essentially unchanging questions (Skinner, 1969). Historical writing instead is a matter of uncovering how such questions and answers shift over time. Accordingly, Skinner does not come up with a precise, universal definition of freedom or liberty (the term Skinner prefers to use). Instead, in a nominalist vein, he examines the historically shifting kinds of meaning attributed to this term. By adopting the principle that the meaning of political texts may be unravelled only by locating these in their specific historical and linguistic contexts, Skinner refuses to view political concerns, questions and concepts as invariable and universal. This attention to the historical contingency of political ideas opens up the possibility for creating a critical distance from our current ways of thinking and acting politically.

While Skinner's endeavour is informed by his objective to unravel the meaning of (classical) political texts, the relevance of such historical analyses seems increasingly to be linked to current forms of liberty. In *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* Skinner addresses ideals of liberty and the ways in which they are inscribed in shifting ideas of political communities during the Renaissance and the Reformation (Skinner, 1978a: 3–65;

1978t
how s
politi
includ
histor
Liber
vance
sons v
conce
forme
rejects
and w
compl
Thi
politic
way:

It is
time
argu
of o
to b
mai
situa
appr
way

Whi
openin
later se
ner's ac
of neo-
with in
ing abc
Micl
regarde

My r
they
certa
destr
(Fou

This
the histc

1978b: 154–61, 326–48). While Skinner's concern initially revolves around investigating how such political ideas and their (linguistic) contexts resonate with possible ways in which politics and political liberties could be exercised in the past, he later expands this concern to include the present. In his work from the late 1980s onwards, the relevance of this kind of historical analysis of present forms of freedom is made explicit (Skinner, 1988: 286–8). In *Liberty before Liberalism*, Skinner carefully distinguishes between two kinds of relevance of his histories of political language to our present. The first regards moral lessons whereby history provides us with answers to contemporary problems. The other concerns an awareness of the specificity of our present ways of thinking. Whereas the former presumes the existence of perennial questions – something Skinner squarely rejects – the latter more modestly presumes that our *self-awareness* of what is necessary and what is contingent in our present situation may be increased when confronted with completely different ways of thinking about politics (Skinner, 2002b: 89, 125).

This mutual relationship between the aims of understanding the meaning of past political thinking and creating a critical distance to our present is explained in the following way:

It is true that my work is as historical as I can make it. But it is nevertheless intended at the same time as a contribution to the understanding of our present social world. As I have elsewhere argued, one of the uses of the past arises from the fact that we are prone to fall under the spell of our own intellectual heritage. As we analyse and reflect on our normative concepts, it is easy to become bewitched into believing the ways of thinking about them bequeathed to us by the mainstream of our intellectual traditions must be the ways of thinking about them. Given this situation, one of the contributions that historians can make is to offer us a kind of exorcism. If we approach the past with a willingness to listen, with a commitment to trying to see things their way, we can hope to prevent ourselves from becoming too readily bewitched. (2002b: 6)

What Skinner alludes to here, is a kind of freedom in the sense of expanding and opening up the room for navigation in our ways of thinking. As we will illustrate in the later sections, this point is not just erratic programmatic sentences without a link to Skinner's actual analyses, at least in his later authorship. In fact, Skinner's historical analyses of neo-Roman (classical) republicanism and modern liberalism seem directly concerned with interrogating how historical forms of liberty shape and limit present ways of thinking about and exercising freedom.

Michel Foucault's various historical analyses and philosophical reflections may be regarded as a sustained attempt to unsettle the limits on present forms of freedom. He explains:

My role – and that is too emphatic a word – is to show people that they are much freer than they feel, that people accept as truth, as evidence, some themes which have been built up at a certain moment during history, and that this so-called evidence can be criticized and destroyed. To change something in the minds of people – that's the role of an intellectual. (Foucault, 1988: 10)

This endeavour must be seen against the background of Foucault's attempt to analyse the historically variable ways in which various forms of knowledge about human beings,

such as psychology, criminology and economics, are interrelated with the ways in which power is exercised over and freedom is exercised by human beings (Foucault, 1998a: 444). While the methodological underpinnings of this endeavour have undergone certain shifts from his earlier archaeological writings to his later genealogical analyses, his overall aim appears remarkably stable. Throughout his writings, Foucault seeks to place under critical scrutiny the historically specific ways in which particular forms of knowledge, notably the human and social sciences, are related to and enable the exercise of power and freedom, and, thereby, the shaping of human beings (Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1982: 26–7). This concern with the relationship between knowledge and being is far from the typical philosophical reflections over epistemology and ontology. Furthermore it is not a quest for unravelling more or less universally valid insights. Foucault's historical analyses of psychiatry (Foucault, 1967: Introduction), medicine (Foucault, 1973), biology, economics, philology (Foucault, 1970), penology and discipline (Foucault, 1977) and sexuality (Foucault, 1978) testify to a sustained attempt to account for the production of knowledge. This particularly regards the historically variable ways in which knowledge informs the modes in which we are constituted as subjects both by others, which Foucault regards as the exercise of power; and the ways in which we form ourselves as subjects, which Foucault defines as ethics (Foucault, 1987: Introduction).

At one point, Foucault situates his method within a tradition of critical philosophy, starting with Kant, as a particular modern endeavour (Foucault, 2010: 15). Foucault characterizes his own approach to history as one that turns it into 'a reflection on "today" as difference in history' (Foucault, 1986: 38). Foucault's analyses then seek not to understand the past and present by means of juxtaposing it with the past. Foucault's Kantian-inspired questioning of our present reality is particularly targeted at the making of 'modes of being' in the intersection between the governing of others and the governing of the self (by itself) (*ibid.*: 41). What is at stake in Foucault's historical analyses, at least in his later writings on governmentality and ancient ethics, is how freedom takes form as a particular ethical practice (the governing of the self by the self) when linked to particular forms of power (the governing of others).

At this point, we may conclude that contemporary political thought and action in general and the contemporary limits to our freedom in particular is a key concern for both Skinner's and Foucault's historical analyses. Nonetheless, the brief exposition above also indicates some important differences in addressing this concern. Skinner's attempt at unsettling contemporary limits to freedom seems to hinge on providing a *better understanding* of past political ideas and texts, better than that provided by existing historical analyses. In contrast, the potential of Foucault's analyses rests not on providing a better understanding of the past but on *estranging* us from contemporary ways of thinking and acting. Foucault seeks to produce this estrangement by demonstrating how current ways of thinking and acting on a particular problem differ from the past as well as by showing the mundane and contingent formation of current ways of thinking and acting. In the following, these differences are further examined in the fields of discourse, rationality and agency.

Discourse

For lack of a Skinner and F 'language', de 'discourse', an early authorsh cepts of know Skinner's lang ferences. It re statements and

As Hunter with the 'tran thinking by ob sents his histo: linguistic phil tances himself as the most de: ical events too thinkers articu thus influence

Skinner's n ing the intentic by Austin's d examines an a implies analys *doing*; the latte mentative cont this latter illoc argumentative criticize and p understanding utterance itself ining the linka

While Skin: guistic acts an unsettling pres tions of Moder the state unde 1978b, 1978a, evolves into ar to, a particular of the state ar Skinner's rece: to his attempt

Discourse

For lack of a better term we have used the term 'discourse' in order to compare how Skinner and Foucault analyse statements and arguments. Skinner, who prefers the term 'language', does not use the term 'discourse' very frequently. Foucault uses the term 'discourse', and also 'discursive formation', frequently and quite systematically in his early authorship (Foucault, 1974), but these terms are gradually replaced by the 'concepts of knowledge' or 'regimes of truth' (Foucault, 1980a). The difference between Skinner's language and Foucault's knowledge implies more than simple linguistic preferences. It reflects a significant difference in their analytical approach to the study of statements and arguments, which we will examine in the following.

As Hunter has pointed out, through his use of speech-acts, Skinner attempts to break with the 'transcendental reduction' often displayed in investigations of philosophical thinking by objectifying it to historical interpretation (Hunter, 2007: 575). Skinner presents his historical analyses as essentially linguistic endeavours and explicitly draws on linguistic philosophers such as Wittgenstein and Austin (Skinner, 2002b: 87). He distances himself from the types of historical analyses that would view social behaviour as the most decisive element of history. Rather than posing the question of which historical events took place when and why, Skinner is interested in exploring how past political thinkers articulate an event or a problem and ascribe concepts with new meanings and thus influence historical chains of events.

Skinner's methodological precepts are, above all, attuned to the purpose of identifying the intentions of an author as expressed in one or more texts by that person. Informed by Austin's distinction between locutionary and illocutionary speech-acts, Skinner examines an author's intentions by unravelling not only what the author *meant*, which implies analysing his or her utterances in their own terms, but also what the author was *doing*; the latter implies relating these utterances to the linguistic conventions or 'argumentative context' in which they took place (Skinner, 2002b: 98). In order to illuminate this latter illocutionary dimension of the author's utterances, Skinner analyses how the argumentative context shapes these utterances, and how the utterances address, endorse, criticize and perhaps modify this context. Recently he has boiled down this method of understanding utterances to three main elements: (1) uncovering the meaning of the utterance itself; (2) mapping the context in which the utterance is made; and (3) examining the linkages between the first two (*ibid.*: 114–15).

While Skinner's methodological precepts seem to imply that understanding past linguistic acts and contexts is the central aim of his work, his actual analyses show that unsettling present forms of thinking and acting is part of his goal, too. In *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* and two later essays Skinner shows how the notion of the state undergoes a mutation during the Renaissance and the Reformation (Skinner, 1978b, 1978a, 1989, 2002a). From being intimately connected to a particular ruler, it evolves into an impersonal institution distinct from, but nevertheless intrinsically linked to, a particular political community. Skinner argues that the contemporary conceptions of the state and political roles are shaped by these past events (Skinner, 1978a: ix). Skinner's recent work on neo-Roman (classical) republicanism and liberalism testifies to his attempt not only to understand the meaning of past political thinking, but also

to create a critical distance from our present ways of thinking about and exercising freedom. In his inaugural lecture as Regius Professor of Modern History at Cambridge, published in *Liberty before Liberalism* (Skinner, 1998), Skinner succinctly maps the political-discursive struggles in early-modern Britain between a neo-Roman and a liberal understanding of liberty. He illustrates how the former is related to personal virtues and independence from the threat of coercion, whereas the latter is based on civil and political rights and the absence of actual coercion. This historical break from a neo-Roman republican understanding and ideal of liberty to a liberal one formulated by Hobbes and a number of ensuing political philosophers is also the topic of *Hobbes and Republican Liberty* (Skinner, 2008). Skinner employs this analysis of the reworking of notions of liberty to point not only to the malleability and contingency of liberty, but also to how current, liberal norms of freedom remain within the thought-space delineated by Hobbesian thinking (ibid.: 212–16). Whether this claim is right or wrong, the fact remains that Skinner's historical analyses are directed, and increasingly so, at interrogating and questioning contemporary forms of freedom (see also Skinner, 2003). Skinner argues that the point is to 'acquire a self-conscious understanding of a set of concepts that we now employ unselfconsciously and, to some degree, even uncomprehendingly' (Skinner, 1998: 109–110). Thus, he argues, we may be less bewitched by current (liberal) ways of understanding freedom (ibid.: 116).

The inherent assumption within Skinner's historical work is that language functions both as a structuring principle that shapes a given social context and as an instrument for bringing about social change. On the one hand, language, that is to say, linguistic concepts and structures as well as the meanings ascribed to particular words, is a structural restraint insofar as it reflects a limited field of conceptual possibilities. On the other hand, language is subject to change. Hence, being able to influence the uses and meanings of words and concepts constitutes a key mode of influencing the field of conceptual possibilities and thereby also the social context. This perspective assigns great significance to the speaking agent, who holds the potential to promote social change by skilfully navigating within the 'intellectual contexts' (Skinner, 2002b: 3). The tools for promoting such changes are identified as 'rhetorical techniques' and 'the power of words' (ibid.: 5).

Language is identified as a form of power in the sense that concepts function as tools and weapons (2002b: 117). Yet, Skinner does not develop a theoretical frame for unfolding the notion of power, nor does he elaborate on the analytical implications of such a notion. As a result, power is implicitly regarded as that quantitative capacity, such as money, formal authority, or linguistic skills, held by a given actor to change the behaviours of other actors. The analytical possibilities of Skinner's approach for recognizing historical transformation seem to lie solely in the recognition of the relationship between language and the speaking/writing actor.

Up to a certain point, Foucauldian writing of history follows a similar premise as Skinner's: language is not merely mediating events and social change, but constituting these. However, instead of accepting this assumption as a quasi-transcendental feature of language-cum-being and adopting it as part of an analytical tool, Foucault takes it as an object of historical analysis. Early on he locates this assumption with the mutation of philology in the 19th century and the emergence of the human being as an empirico-

transcendent Agency). L. Greek practices, Foucault by challenging the telling that Socrates' reality to v. This etymology idea of philosophy way of relating cares for our understanding (see Pierre sociology and clear connection with interrogation, but, instead critically ac

In his early work, Foucault is not in terms of the role of the formation of power leaves no room for succumbing to the ethos at stake precisely where we should be. We may go as far as to say that we are informed by the usual quantitative power – at least different from the telling us what liberating or contains both sides (wo)man is that shape (the) tive ideal, or of telling the ideals, Foucault courses in the and moral st

exercising free-Cambridge, publicly maps the man and a liberal sonal virtues and n civil and polit- um a neo-Roman d by Hobbes and and Republican of notions of lib- also to how cur- ed by Hobbesian mains that Skin- ng and question- r argues that the pts that we now ingly' (Skinner, at (liberal) ways

iguage functions in instrument for r, linguistic con- ls, is a structural es. On the other uses and mean- field of concep- ve assigns great te social change 2b: 3). The tools and 'the power of

function as tools frame for unfold- ations of such a apacity, such as hange the beha- i for recognizing ionship between

nilar premise as but constituting endental feature Foucault takes it ith the mutation as an empirico-

transcendental duplet, at once the subject and object of language (see the next section on Agency). Later, he refocuses his investigation of language to *parrhesia*, a set of ancient Greek practices of truth-telling (Foucault, 2010). While *parrhesia* could take many forms, Foucault is particularly interested in those that entail an unspecified risk whether by challenging conventional wisdom or by questioning the decisions of those in situations of power (ibid.: 61–2). He distinguishes between rhetoric, those forms of truth-telling that take the form of a technique fashioned to produce a particular effect, and Socrates' use of etymological language as a way of bringing out the essential truth of the reality to which this language refers with all the risks this may entail (ibid.: 314). This etymological form of truth-telling represented by Socrates is closely related to the idea of philosophy as a form of life in which telling the truth not only entails a particular way of relating fellow citizens and their rulers, but also applies to the ways in which one cares for oneself, i.e. the nurturing of a particular ethics. Whether or not Foucault's understanding of the relationship between philosophy and ethics in antiquity is correct (see Pierre Hadot for a critique of Foucault's reading of the relationship between philosophy and ethics in antiquity [Hadot, 1995: 206–12]), we may note that Foucault sees a clear connection between truthful discourses and a particular form of ethics concerned with interrogating power. Accordingly, it is not language as such that interests Foucault, but, instead, how truth-telling may be taken up as a particular ethical practice aiming at critically addressing the exercise of power (Foucault, 2010: 159).

In his earlier writings, Foucault addresses the relationship between truth and power not in terms of ethics, but in terms of power-knowledge regimes. His historical analyses of the role of the human sciences, including philology, in the exercise of power and the formation of subjectivity have been taken by many as a kind of cynical reading that leaves no room for escaping from power's totalizing grip. However, rather than succumbing to the facile conclusion that this was the analysis of an immature Foucault, who failed to leave enough room for freedom, we may instead note the kind of critical ethos at stake in these analyses of the modern human sciences. This is an ethos concerned precisely with the ways in which these forms of knowledge contribute to telling us how we should exercise our freedom in normal, healthy and productive ways. Perhaps we may go as far as proposing that Foucault's analyses of discourse and knowledge are informed by a project of liberation, though in a particular sense of the word. This is not the usual quest of liberating discourse from instrumental rationality, ideology, or even power – at least not *tout court*. Instead, it is a project concerned with liberating our present from the human sciences and the many expert discourses that make a living out of telling us who we are and how we should act (Foucault, 1980b: 84). It also implies liberating or at least ridding knowledge from the neo-Kantian assumption, which sustains both structuralist and subject-centred analyses, that freedom starts only where (wo)man is conscious of the epistemological, social and political structures or horizons that shape (her)his actions. Such an assumption, which simultaneously acts as a normative ideal, only sustains the authoritative role of the human sciences and their prerogative of telling the truth. By accounting for the ethical and political costs of such normative ideals, Foucault's analyses set out to liberate us from the human sciences and expert discourses in the sense of opening a space for actions informed by other forms of thought and moral standards.

Rationality

Skinner's and Foucault's analyses of rationality share at least one general characteristic, namely that rationality should be studied in its multiple and historically specific forms. Historical forms of rationality are to be analysed by reference to the epistemes, regimes of truth, or linguistic contexts of the time in which they were uttered, not to some allegedly universal standards of truth, which often carry contemporary biases. However, their approaches to rationality reveal significant differences in the ways in which they relate to the aim of provoking the limits of contemporary (liberal) forms of freedom. Whereas Skinner seems attuned to explaining past rationalities by placing them in their proper historic-linguistic context, Foucault is concerned with showing the productive capacities and dangers of such rationalities.

Skinner's writings are an attempt to tease out the rationality at stake through the utterances of a given author and their argumentative context. He goes to great lengths to steer clear of a trans-historical position, or evaluating the level of rationality of beliefs held by particular actors according to contemporary (or universal) standards. Further, he distances himself from the relativist position holding that because such standards are historically specific and variable we may as well abandon the scrutiny of rationality. For Skinner rationality is seen as historically specific modes of accepted reasoning which vary over time. By paying attention to these we gain an understanding of the beliefs and the utterances made by particular authors at the time (Skinner, 1988: 242–5). In an attempt to understand why human beings of the past thought and acted in a certain way, Skinner illustrates how utterances and beliefs that seem irrational today were rational given their local and historically specific linguistic context (Skinner, 2002b: 31). Even beliefs that were regarded as irrational at the time of their articulation can be said to be rational at a deeper level if we manage to account for the motives of such utterances or beliefs (*ibid.*: 38). Skinner argues that beliefs are rarely to be regarded as irrational when judged by the conventions of the time in which they were pronounced. Yet, their contemporaries may still have seen them as controversial or even outright wrong. For instance, Machiavelli was strongly criticized for his insistence on the importance of virtues to political success. Skinner illustrates how such contested beliefs were nurtured by and, in turn, gave way to the linguistic conventions and conflicts surrounding them (Skinner, 1978a: 128–38; 2008: xv).

Skinner may not exclude the possibility of irrational beliefs. Yet his analyses seem to be driven by the assumption that if only we understand the local linguistic context well enough, we will eventually be able to detect or recuperate the rationality of apparently irrational speech-acts. Perhaps the clearest example of this attempt of recuperation is found in Skinner's discussion of a recent phenomenon, not a past one. He turns to Laing's and Esterson's work on schizophrenia in order to discover whether or not the autistic conduct of an allegedly schizophrenic adolescent may be the cause of deliberate and meaningful behaviour (Skinner, 2002b: 142). Could it be, Skinner asks, that this conduct represents a 'conventional form and degree of protest, rather than a set of pathological symptoms awaiting a straightforward causal explanation' (*ibid.*)? It seems fair to conclude that Skinner's approach resonates with the ambition of recuperating rationality across time and space in the sense of making the strangeness of the past more meaningful and, by implication, more familiar to the present.

Foucault's analyses of rationality reveal significant differences in the ways in which they relate to the aim of provoking the limits of contemporary (liberal) forms of freedom. Whereas Skinner seems attuned to explaining past rationalities by placing them in their proper historic-linguistic context, Foucault is concerned with showing the productive capacities and dangers of such rationalities.

Foucault's analyses of rationality reveal significant differences in the ways in which they relate to the aim of provoking the limits of contemporary (liberal) forms of freedom. Whereas Skinner seems attuned to explaining past rationalities by placing them in their proper historic-linguistic context, Foucault is concerned with showing the productive capacities and dangers of such rationalities.

Rationality is seen as historically specific modes of accepted reasoning which vary over time. By paying attention to these we gain an understanding of the beliefs and the utterances made by particular authors at the time (Skinner, 1988: 242–5). In an attempt to understand why human beings of the past thought and acted in a certain way, Skinner illustrates how utterances and beliefs that seem irrational today were rational given their local and historically specific linguistic context (Skinner, 2002b: 31). Even beliefs that were regarded as irrational at the time of their articulation can be said to be rational at a deeper level if we manage to account for the motives of such utterances or beliefs (*ibid.*: 38). Skinner argues that beliefs are rarely to be regarded as irrational when judged by the conventions of the time in which they were pronounced. Yet, their contemporaries may still have seen them as controversial or even outright wrong. For instance, Machiavelli was strongly criticized for his insistence on the importance of virtues to political success. Skinner illustrates how such contested beliefs were nurtured by and, in turn, gave way to the linguistic conventions and conflicts surrounding them (Skinner, 1978a: 128–38; 2008: xv).

Foucault's ambition is almost the opposite, or at least very different. He seeks to alienate us from the present, not by recuperating the rationalities of the past but by demonstrating their variability and their contingency. Foucault does not set out to ask whether a certain type of conduct is really rational or pathological; instead he examines the potential power effects of a particular rationality emanating from a body of knowledge such as psychiatry. His concern is thus with the forms of political intervention, medical therapy and even physical coercion that may become possible by latching on to a rationality that assumes a distinction between mental sanity and insanity. By using genealogy as a tool to account for the possible linkages between rationalities and regimes of practices, Foucault clears a space for illuminating how specific rationalities inform the exercise of more or less systematic forms of power. Rationality is interesting because it may favour some actions at the expense of others as Skinner rightly shows, but it also engenders forms of power allowing some practices and utterances to be regarded as rational and therefore difficult to question or oppose.

Foucault's preoccupation with rationality is addressed nominalistically in the sense that it is taken to be the forms of knowledge and forms of reasoning that at any given time are recognized as scientific with all the political consequences following such recognition. This nominalist approach is applied to unravel the material effects of given rationalities with regards to the power-knowledge relations informing them. In his early analyses of madness and medicine, Foucault's focus is on spoken and written texts that together amount to historically specific discursive formations or epistemes. In his later analyses of penology and sexuality, the focus is on the shifting ways in which rationalities are linked to regimes of practices, or the manifold concrete techniques, methods and procedures that political interventions employ. Here it may be added that while Foucault's analyses were intensely concerned with the dangers of rationality, they should not to be confused with the critiques launched by the Frankfurt School (Horkheimer and Adorno, 1972; Habermas, 1987). Habermas's critique is heavily indebted to Weber's ideal type distinction between value/substantive rationality and instrumental/formal rationality which serve as universal normative yardsticks. Foucault explicitly rejects such ideal type bifurcation of rationality and any talk of a general western instrumental rationality (Foucault, 1991: 78–82). Instead rationalities are understood as multiple and often contradictory forms of thought and means-ends calculations that are already inscribed in diverse practices and actions.

Rationalities, then, are analysed not only as they are articulated in bodies of knowledge but also as they inform the concrete and material ways in which we govern others and ourselves. The more or less systematic forms of governmental rationalities, such as *raison d'état*, *polizei*, liberalism, social liberalism/welfarism and developmentality have been of particular interest to Foucault (Senellart, 2008) and some of his followers (Donzelot, 1984; Escobar, 1995). In line with his concern for the material dimension of power, Foucault urges us to address the way in which such often overlapping and contradictory rationalities are linked to regimes of practices; that is to say, the schemes, procedures and techniques by which we should govern. In brief, whereas Skinner's explanation of social action seems to end up recuperating the rationality articulated through the speech-acts of given individuals, Foucault's concern for the exercise of power makes him focus on the dangers of historically specific rationalities in terms of their capacity to provide ways of reasoning, observing, classifying and regulating the conduct of groups and individuals.

Agency

Both Skinner's and Foucault's analyses are acutely concerned with the ways in which humans act, even if they rarely use the term 'agency'. Skinner's concern with agency is first and foremost linked to his analyses of the meaning produced through diverse *speech-acts*. This concern is indebted not only to speech theorists like Austin and Searle, but also to the Weberian notion of social action, which implied subjectively meaningful action (Weber, 1978: 4–26). Skinner analyses meaningful action in which language plays a crucial role in the creation of meaning (Skinner, 2002b: 143). Like Weber, Skinner is careful to distinguish between subjectively meaningful actions on the one hand, and objectively explainable *behaviour* on the other (Skinner, 2002b: 4, 87, 125). Whereas behaviour may be explained in terms of the responses produced by objectively verifiable stimuli or forces, Weber and Skinner converge on analysing agency in terms of the subjective meaning developed on the basis of symbolically significant realms.¹

In accordance with his approach to agency in terms of meaningful speech-acts, we may first note that Skinner's ambition to unsettle present forms of freedom revolves around the constituent features of language. The type of liberation at stake for Skinner is one that enables us to free ourselves from the strings of contemporary political language and therefore allows us to navigate more freely (Skinner, 2002b: 6). The historian may contribute to this kind of liberation by examining the discourses drawn upon and the language used by historical actors within a given linguistic context. Thereby the historian may reveal that past political actions were enacted in ways that fundamentally differ from the present forms. This type of analysis may also show that such past actions took place in accordance with historically specific contexts rather than with some transcendental forces or *telos* (ibid.: 5, 7, 178).

Another significant implication of Skinner's notion of agency is that it tends to make his historical analyses focus almost exclusively on grand authors. Notwithstanding Skinner's provision of histories detached from grand teleological narratives, his analyses of changing political language depend on grand authors, or more precisely on persons whose linguistic inventiveness and shrewdness made a difference to the political language at their time. While Skinner goes to great lengths to examine the constitutive effects of language on political norms and thought, his accounts of agency are limited to the speech-acts exercised by what our present regards as canonical political thinkers. But what about all the many other forms of agency upon which politics depend, such as forms of schooling, community programmes, election procedures and citizen empowerment? While political language in general and hegemonic forms of expert discourse in particular may play a crucial role in informing political actions, Skinner's focus implies an overtly narrow scope for analysing politically relevant agency.

Finally, we may note that the critical edge of Skinner's analysis and its potential for unsettling present forms of freedom seem to assume the existence of a mature and self-responsible subject. Skinner makes it clear that his attempt to unsettle the present certainly does not – like so much of current critical social science and political philosophy – rely on moralizing and judgemental accounts of social and political phenomena:

My own
themselves
misfortun

This is no
as the recogn
who are abl
(1998: 119–
role is to 'u
them once
Skinner seen
developmen
vocabulary
autonomy.

Foucault
present, whi
or humans.
supporting
Agency is a
from domin
through his
ambition ha
shape and g
together the
and less a se
methodolog
(Deleuze, 19
as the basis
to be applic
think and ac

Foucault
ways. First
in the form
tion to know
avoids addr
Instead he p
are govern
or knowled
(Foucault, 1
medium for
shifting and
themselves.
that the cor
scientists as
not a histori

My own admiration is emphatically reserved for those historians who consciously hold themselves aloof from enthusiasm and indignation alike when surveying crimes, follies and misfortunes of mankind. (Skinner, 1998: 118)

This is not to be taken as an arrogant position held by the distanced historian but rather as the recognition that the critical potential of Skinner's histories rests on mature subjects who are able to reflect and choose between substantially different sets of moral values (1998: 119–20). Referring to Nietzsche's *Genealogy of Morality*, Skinner argues that his role is to 'uncover the often neglected riches of our intellectual heritage and display them once more to view' (ibid.: 118s–19). Rather than posing normative standards, Skinner seems to be endorsing that political historians assist their contemporaries in their development as mature and self-reliant citizens by clarifying the wide-ranging political vocabulary and thereby the normative resources at their disposal in the exercise of their autonomy.

Foucault's concern with the question of agency can be found in his history of the present, which above all revolves around the question of how we are made into subjects or humans. It is important to stress the non-normative – or rather nominalist – approach supporting this concern, which Walter also calls attention to (Walter, 2008: 103). Agency is addressed neither as a given capacity nor as something that may be deduced from dominant (Althusserian) ideologies, but rather as practices of the self conducted through historically specific assemblies of knowledge, power and ethics. Foucault's ambition has been to account for the multifarious ways we know, relate to, identify, shape and govern others and ourselves as human beings. What ties Foucault's analyses together then is more an ethos concerned with diagnosing and problematizing the present and less a set of definite methodological guidelines. Foucault's analytical strategies and methodological choices were constantly modified and new avenues were attempted (Deleuze, 1977: 208; Foucault, 1998b: 445). His histories are therefore not to be taken as the basis for developing standardized principles of investigation but as possible tools to be applied and adapted to the ongoing interrogation and problematization of how we think and act today.

Foucault's approach to agency differs from Skinner's in at least three significant ways. First Foucault explicitly seeks to avoid taking human agency for granted whether in the form of linguistic capacities or otherwise. While Foucault's analyses do pay attention to knowledge, discourses and language in the making of subjectivity, he explicitly avoids addressing agency as a universal game between language and human beings. Instead he proposes an analysis of the historically variable ways in which human beings are governed and govern themselves through shifting assemblies of discourse (language or knowledge) and material practices, techniques and administrative procedures (Foucault, 1998a: 375–6). The question of agency is unfolded not as a transcendental medium for the transformation of discourses and the social world but as historically shifting and multifarious practices by which subjects are constituted by others and by themselves. It is this approach that enables the argument, found in *The Order of Things*, that the conception of the subject articulated by Skinner and numerous other social scientists as both an object and an agent of language is a specifically modern phenomenon, not a historical invariant (Foucault, 1970: 294–306, 322–7). Accordingly, for Foucault,

agency as the object and subject of language is something to be explained, not something to take for granted in analytical terms.

Second, agency is analysed by Foucault not only in terms of discourse (language or knowledge), but also in terms of power. His analyses thus involve painstaking accounts of the ways in which agency is nurtured, facilitated and shaped through regimes of power-knowledge relations. The notion of 'regime of truth' suggests that we should neither reduce knowledge to the exercise of power (the typical approach of various Marxist theories of ideology) nor reduce power to knowledge (the approach by which power is seen to rest with epistemic communities and scientific authorities) (Foucault, 1980a: 131-2). Instead it is the mutual and irreducible interrelationship between the production of true knowledge and the practices of power that such engenders that is the focus of Foucault's analyses. Accordingly, agency is analysed in terms of the historically contingent procedures for uttering the truth and producing knowledge on the one hand and the techniques for regulating individual conduct and interventions targetting the movement and well-being of populations on the other. What at first seems fixed, obvious and natural becomes the unstable effects of the workings of such historically variable regimes or assemblages of power-knowledge. What is at stake for Foucault is the historically variable problematizations of government: how to govern oneself and others (Foucault, 2007: 88-9). In the so-called 'Governmentality' lectures, Foucault illustrates how freedom in modern, liberal societies is intimately bound to liberal government, that is, an art of government that operates by producing, organizing and administering the conditions for the exercise of freedom (Foucault, 2008: 63-4). If freedom is generally understood as the governing of the self by the self through concrete reflections and ethical practices, then freedom today is increasingly seen to be aligned with the exercise of power. This is not in the sense that freedom in liberal democracies is somehow fake or unreal, but in the sense that the exercise of liberal forms of power hinges on systematically organized forms of freedom. For Foucault then agency today is understood not as a given capacity but as a particular outcome of the relationship between liberal government (power) and the production of self-governing citizens (freedom).

Finally, Skinner and Foucault differ significantly in the way in which they locate the kind of agency that may unearth new forms of freedom by challenging and eroding limits to these. As we have shown earlier, Skinner's ambition to unsettle the limits to current forms of freedom is made possible by what he regards as the quasi-transcendental human capacity of linguistic action. Foucault, of course, will have no such thing. At first, the understanding of agency as the product of regimes of power-knowledge relations seems to exclude all possibilities of thinking differently and thereby unsettling current forms of dominant political thought and the limits they impose on our freedom. Foucault's early work on madness does seem vulnerable to such questions in the sense that power is mainly seen as repressive whereas freedom is not really dealt with at all. However, as argued above, this changes quite significantly with Foucault's preoccupation with government and ethics. By locating freedom not with some transcendental human capacity, but with the multiple and highly variegated ways in which the self governs itself, a series of practices that may more often than not be linked to the attempts by others to govern that self, Foucault does allow for a kind of agency reflecting upon and challenging existing forms of and limits to freedom. His genealogy of *parrhesia* in ancient Greece may be

seen as an
conducting

As Da
destabiliz
human sc
(Owen, 1'
that has s
is this unc
basis of J
380) or a
the preser
presumes
in their lo
of power.

Conclu:

This articl
seek to un
lyses displ
more conv
as to expo
assumptio
but are cru
we find im
their analy

The ev
overshado
discourse,
what histor
on the spec
liberty is a
current un
inasmuch
analyses a
phers, but
point in ti
governed.

Second,
and lingui
Skinner's a
culous acc
and the lin
stand the p
Ultimately,

seen as an attempt to historicize not only ethics in general, but Foucault's own attempt at conducting critical philosophy by way of historical inquiries.

As David Owen argues, Foucault's analyses are driven by an ethics which seeks to destabilize the link between contemporary forms of freedom, on the one hand, and the human sciences and the particular modern forms of power linked to these, on the other (Owen, 1995: 493). While Foucault refuses to define the substance of such a freedom that has severed or destabilized its links from modern power, we may conclude that it is this understanding of power as fundamentally dependent on freedom that forms the basis of Foucault's aspiration of providing an 'effective history' (Foucault, 1998a: 380) or a 'history of the present' (Foucault, 1977: 31). Not only may such a history of the present be seen as a practice of freedom exercised by the historical analyst. It also presumes that other contemporary citizens are able to take such histories and use them in their local struggles and attempts to question, thwart and undermine current relations of power.

Conclusion

This article has compared the ways in which Skinner's and Foucault's historical analyses seek to unsettle the limits of present forms of freedom. We have argued that their analyses display several similarities. Both break with presentism, partly in order to provide more convincing accounts of the past – certainly a motivation for both authors – as well as to expose the immense variability of political thought and actions. They also share the assumption that discourse and rationality cannot be reduced to schemes of legitimization but are crucially informing, if not constitutive, of political activities and practices. Thus, we find important overlaps both in their aims (or politics) and in the methods supporting their analyses.

The evident similarities between Skinner's and Foucault's analyses should not overshadow that they differ importantly on at least three areas. First, with regard to discourse, Skinner consistently focuses on authoritative speech-acts revolving around what historically were regarded as politics and liberty. Skinner's analyses above all focus on the speech-acts that at some point in time became hegemonic understandings of what liberty is and how it should be exercised. His historical analyses thus inevitably start with current understandings of politics and freedom. Foucault's analyses are much broader inasmuch as they focus on multiple forms of power and freedom. Accordingly these analyses are not only 'political' discourses enunciated by canonized political philosophers, but both authoritative and much more obscure forms of knowledge that at some point in time importantly informed the ways in which states and/or individuals were governed.

Second, while Skinner's analysis revolves primarily around language, speech-acts and linguistic contexts, Foucault also pays attention to non-discursive practices. Skinner's attempt to unsettle the limits to present forms of freedom is predicated on meticulous accounts of the emergence, development and transformation of political concepts and the linguistic context in which they were situated. Such analyses help us to understand the past and expose the contingency of contemporary political thought and actions. Ultimately, Skinner's form of historical writing may produce a diagnosis and an awareness

of our current linguistic and normative limits to our ways of thinking about politics and freedom. Even if Foucault is concerned with language, discourse and knowledge, his starting point is ways of doing things, or regimes of practices. This difference becomes crucial when we take into consideration that the practices that have Foucault's key attention are the disciplinary techniques, administrative procedures, political programmes and other practices through which power is exercised. Discourse and rationality are interesting not as linguistic contexts but as ways of thinking about and acting in accordance with social phenomena in ways that render these amenable to more or less systematic governing interventions. Foucault's analyses thus invite us to pay attention to the manifold practices, techniques and institutions through which power is exercised. To the extent that such practices of power are important for shaping the limits of the exercise of freedom, then, Foucault's analyses do seem to have a stronger potential to interrogate such limits than do Skinner's analyses.

The third and perhaps most significant difference between Skinner's and Foucault's analyses lies within their respective approaches to agency. Whereas Skinner locates agency as the ability of given authors to manoeuvre and manipulate their linguistic context, Foucault addresses agency as the outcome of ways of doing and knowing things, or regimes of practices and regimes of knowledge. This implies that while Skinner may effectively expose the historically shifting linguistic tools available at any given time to a diligent author, he is not really able to account for the ways in which this and other forms of agency are made possible. In particular, by (implicitly) regarding power as the capacity to manipulate linguistic contexts, Skinner is unable to illuminate the ways in which the exercise of power hinges on the facilitation, production and structuring of agency. If we accept that the exercise of power in industrialized societies hinges on the nurturing, facilitating and shaping of the freedoms and self-steering capacities of citizens, groups and organizations, then Foucault's analyses seem to be able to take us further in the quest for unsettling current limits to freedom.

Put somewhat schematically, both Skinner's and Foucault's analyses contain a dual strategy by which their historical-empirical analyses are linked to their critical ambition of challenging contemporary forms of freedom. Skinner asserts that what we can and cannot say is to a certain extent determined by historically specific linguistic contexts. At the same time, his analyses are employed to show the speaking subject's ability to manipulate the linguistic context and thereby change the limits to how one can think and act in a given period. Skinner then evokes these analyses to make 'us' aware of the limiting effect of the linguistic contexts so that we are able to be less bewitched by the selfsame and thereby venture to contest and possibly dissolve existing ones (and raise new ones).

Foucault's dual way of addressing freedom implies, first, studying the intimate relation between power and freedom, that is, the relation between acting upon others and acting upon oneself. This clears a space for critically addressing the ways in which power is linked to and often depends upon freedom. Second, following Owen's point, the notions of government and ethics not only allow us to view freedom as a vehicle for the exercise of more or less sophisticated forms of liberal power. They also suggest an ethics guided by a concern for and a critical interrogation of power and the limits it imposes on our freedom. While Foucault's analysis of ancient forms of *parrhesia* does not tell us what a contemporary ethics should look like, it may inspire us to reflect upon the way

in which his limits to co
We may
On the one
While Skin
for living th
lytical synt
result in th
That said, to
exclude the
argues that
(Dean, 199
very well e
upon himse
Foucault's a
of political
the status of
Moreover, v
is nothing ir
speech-acts
the governir
disciplinary
us to go fu
freedom, we
by these two

Notes

1. While We concerned Skinner lo

Bibliograph

- Dean, M. (199
Deleuze, G. (1
Deleuze', i
University
Donzelot, J. (1
of the Soci
Dreyfus, H. L.
London: H
Escobar, A. (1
Princeton.
Foucault, M. (1
Foucault, M. (1

in which historical writing today may be most effectively employed to interrogate the limits to contemporary forms of freedom.

We may lastly speculate on the potential of the two analyses to enrich one another. On the one hand, we find it untenable to try to engage in some happy analytical marriage. While Skinner and Foucault do share certain political ambitions, the methods they adopt for living these out differ substantially as shown above. Any attempt to establish an analytical synthesis would, in our view, not only be a sign of disrespect but also very likely result in throwing out the sharp and valuable analytical edges of the two approaches. That said, to maintain that the two approaches are distinct and should remain so does not exclude the possibility of mutual enrichment. We agree with Mitchell Dean when he argues that Skinner's analyses may complement Foucault's analysis of the reason of state (Dean, 1999: 5). Also, Skinner's analyses of political virtues and Christian ideals could very well enrich Foucault's studies of ethics, or the practices which the self exercises upon himself or herself in rapport with prevailing codes of conduct. Conversely, Foucault's analyses of subjugated forms of knowledge may support Skinner's analyses of political language by paying attention to discourses that were hegemonic (and achieved the status of *classics*) and those that for a variety of reasons never obtained that status. Moreover, while Skinner's own analyses focus on the legacies of political thought, there is nothing in his approach that disallows an expansion of its analytical scope to include speech-acts that are not strictly speaking political but nevertheless part and parcel of the governing of a state, such as the many forms of normalizing knowledge supporting disciplinary power. In brief, while Foucault's analytics in certain ways seems to allow us to go further than Skinner's in unsettling contemporary limits to the exercise of freedom, we need to explore further the potential for complementing the insights generated by these two forms of analyses.

Notes

1. While Weber and Skinner converge on studying subjectively meaningful action, Weber is concerned with locating such horizons of meaning within particular value spheres, whereas Skinner locates these within linguistic contexts.

Bibliography

- Dean, M. (1999) *Governmentality: Power and Rule in Modern Society*. London: Sage Publications.
- Deleuze, G. (1977) 'Intellectuals and Power: a Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze', in D. F. Bouchard (ed.) *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, pp. 205–17.
- Donzelot, J. (1984) *L'invention du social. Essai sur le déclin des passions politiques* [The Invention of the Social. An Essay on the Decline of Political Passions]. Paris: Fayard.
- Dreyfus, H. L. and Rabinow, P. (1982) *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*. London: Harvester Press.
- Escobar, A. (1995) *Encountering Development. The Making and Unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Foucault, M. (1967) *Madness and Civilization*. London: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (1970) *The Order of Things*. London: Routledge.

- Foucault, M. (1973) *The Birth of the Clinic*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Foucault, M. (1974) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock Publications.
- Foucault, M. (1977) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Harmondsworth, Mx: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1978) *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, *An Introduction*. Harmondsworth, Mx: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1980a) 'Truth and Power', in C. Gordon (ed.) *Michel Foucault. Power/Knowledge*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 109–33.
- Foucault, M. (1980b) 'Two Lectures', in C. Gordon (ed.) *Michel Foucault. Power/Knowledge*. New York: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 78–108.
- Foucault, M. (1986) 'What is Enlightenment?', in P. Rabinow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*. Harmondsworth, Mx: Penguin, pp. 32–50.
- Foucault, M. (1987) *The Use of Pleasure*, vol. 2, *The History of Sexuality*. Harmondsworth, Mx: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1988) 'Truth, Power, Self: an Interview with Michel Foucault', in L. H. Martin, H. Gutman and P. H. Hutton (eds) *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, pp. 9–15.
- Foucault, M. (1991) 'Questions of Method', in G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller (eds) *The Foucault Effect*. London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, pp. 73–86.
- Foucault, M. (1998a) 'Nietzsche, Genealogy, History', in J. D. Faubion (ed.) *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology*. New York: New Press, pp. 369–92.
- Foucault, M. (1998b) 'Structuralism and Post-Structuralism', in J. D. Faubion (ed.) *Michel Foucault: Aesthetics, Method and Epistemology*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 2. London: Penguin, pp. 433–58.
- Foucault, M. (2007) *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–78*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2008) *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–79*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Foucault, M. (2010) *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France 1982–1983*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Habermas, J. (1987) *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. II, *Lifeworld and System: a Critique of Functionalist Reason*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Hadot, Pierre (1995) *Philosophy as a Way of Life: Spiritual Exercises from Socrates to Foucault*, trans. Michael Chase. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T. W. (1972) *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. New York: Continuum.
- Hunter, I. (2007) 'The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher', *Modern Intellectual History* 4(3): 571–600.
- Owen, D. (1995) 'Genealogy as Exemplary Critique: Reflections on Foucault and the Imagination of the Political', *Economy and Society* 24(4): 489–506.
- Senellart, M., ed. (2008) *Michel Foucault: The Birth of Biopolitics. Lectures at Collège de France 1978–1979*. Basingstoke, Hants: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Skinner, Q. (1969) 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory* 8(1): 3–53.
- Skinner, Q. (1978a) *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. I, *The Renaissance*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Skinner, Q.
Cambri
Skinner, Q.
and his
Skinner, Q.
Concep
Skinner, Q.
Skinner, Q.
Univers
Skinner, Q.
sity Pre
Skinner, Q.
Citizens
Skinner, Q.
Tully, J. (I
(ed.) *Me
Press, p
Walter, R.
History
Weber, Ma*

Biograph

Naja Vucina
examines health
Foucault's

Claus Dreier
examines s
Foucault's

Peter Triebel
Roskilde U
rently resear
usage in th
Sørensen, i

- Skinner, Q. (1978b) *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, vol. 2, *The Age of Reformation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, Q. (1988) 'A Reply to My Critics', in J. Tully (ed.) *Meaning & Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 231–88.
- Skinner, Q. (1989) 'The State', in T. Ball, J. Farr and R. Hanson (eds) *Political Innovation and Conceptual Change*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 368–413.
- Skinner, Q. (1998) *Liberty before Liberalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, Q. (2002a) *Visions of Politics*, vol. 2, *Renaissance Virtues*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, Q. (2002b) *Visions of Politics*, vol. 1, *Regarding Method*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Skinner, Q. (2003) 'States and the Freedom of Citizens', in Q. Skinner and B. Str ath (eds) *States & Citizens: History, Theory, Prospects*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 11–27.
- Skinner, Q. (2008) *Hobbes and Republican Liberty*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Tully, J. (1988) 'The Pen is a Mighty Sword: Quentin Skinner's Analysis of Politics', in J. Tully (ed.) *Meaning & Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 7–25.
- Walter, R. (2008) 'Reconciling Foucault and Skinner on the state: the Primacy of Politics?', *History of the Human Sciences* 21(3): 94–114.
- Weber, Max (1978) *Economy and Society*, vol. 1. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Biographical notes

Naja Vucina, PhD student, Department of Society and Globalization, Roskilde University, examines health policies and preventive actions against lifestyle diseases from the perspective of Michel Foucault's notions of biopower and governmentality.

Claus Drejer, PhD student, Department of Society and Globalization, Roskilde University, examines strategies of subjectivation in the Danish primary school from the perspective of Michel Foucault's notions of power and forms of knowledge.

Peter Triantafillou, PhD, Associate Professor, Department of Society and Globalization, Roskilde University, is interested in the exercise of power, government and freedom. He is currently researching the methodological dimensions of Michel Foucault's analytics of power and its usage in the study of new forms of governing. His most recent publication, edited with Eva Sørensen, is *The Politics of Self-Governance* (Aldershot, Hants: Ashgate, 2009).

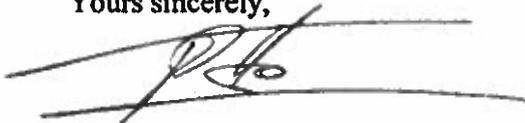
27th June 2012

Co-author statement

I hereby confirm that Claus Drejer is a co-author of the journal article 'Histories and freedom of the present: Foucault and Skinner' prepublished in the History of the Human Sciences, August 18 2011 as doi: 10.1177/095269511141593524.

As a co-author Claus Drejer has contributed substantially to the designing and the actual writing of the article.

Yours sincerely,



Peter Triantafillou, PhD, Associate Professor