



Reinhart Koselleck's theory of moral critique and political crisis

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Introduction

„what makes a social crisis?“
(social constructionism):
Steady state – moral critique –
crisis – redemption – steady state

Crisis as a concept of (public)
discourse

Semantic of crisis developed in the „saddle
period („Sattelzeit“, 1750-1850)

Two variants of European crisis
(present as turning point):
Edmund Husserl: turning back
Jürgen Habermas: looking
forward

**Koselleck's theory of
moral critique and
political crisis**

Further programme:

2. Structural background of critique and crisis in the „Saddle period “ (new awareness of time)
3. The destructive dynamics of critique and crisis
4. Conclusive remarks regarding the present EU crisis(es)



the history of crisis in Europe – Koselleck`s theory I

Invention of critique and crisis in the history of semantics in Europe

Enlightenment and the „republic of letters“
freemasons,
philosophy of history,
.
.(Husserl, Habermas...)
.
Multiplicity of EU crisis
(finanze, migration, statehood, Brexit....)

Structural conditions (according to Koselleck): differentiation of moral and politics in the absolute state

- Political realism of interests: peace, prosperity
- Private citizens, economic wealthy but political powerless
- Today: neoliberalism and governmentality (technology of political leadership)

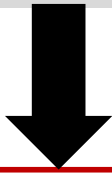
Dialectic of Enlightenment:

- Privatization of the conscience
- Genesis of critique and crisis in the moralizing ‚safe space‘ of society,
- development of utopian thinkink devaluing the „steady state“
- Conflation of moral and political action



the escalation of critique and crisis

Structural background (state politics against private reasoning)



Critique: Retreat into the private space of reasoning and opinion, apart from political necessities

Developing utopian views – critique of the present without pragmatic restrictions

Duality of politics and society



**Super critique:
Self empowerment as „true“ court of moral judgement
devaluing politics as unmoral
-State as enemy**



**Hypocrisy (for neglecting the political quality of action):
closing in of the future towards an unpolitical state of bourgeois virtues – crisis as necessary turning point of a self fulfilling moral prophecy
Pushing towards perceived future by whatever means necessary – truth will prevail**



conclusive remarks

Europe as a project of the prevention of violent conflicts by enhancing economic freedom and prosperity (neo-liberal project)

Contemporarily a strong appeal of moral judgement (for Germany: Habermas, Honneth and others)

Multiplication of cleavages, addressing EU politics as series of crises → moral deficit of the EU

Utopian devaluation of the steady state in favour of a morally defined future?

Or: inner value of the separation of politics and morality (Koselleck)?