

Quentin Skinner

2006 Balzan Prize for Political Thought; History and Theory

For his formulation of a distinctive methodology for the study of the history of ideas, his major contribution to the history of political thought and his acute reflections on the nature of liberty.

Balzan-Skinner Lectures and International Conferences University of Cambridge

Adviser for the General Balzan Committee: Salvatore Veca

With the second part of the prize, Quentin Skinner initiated two programmes which are aimed at encouraging and involving younger researchers, and above all at ensuring the publication of new research that could not have been planned in the absence of the funds made available to Quentin Skinner by the Balzan Prize.

1. *An annual Lecture, for a period of five years, with accompanying one-day Conferences, on themes in Modern Intellectual History.* The Lectures will be delivered at the University of Cambridge under the joint auspices of the Faculty of History and the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH). The Managers of CRASSH, who have representation on the Appointments Committee for the Lectureship, have further agreed that the successful candidate will be made a Fellow at CRASSH during the academic Term in which the Lecture is to be delivered, thereby providing the Lecturer with a period of residence at Cambridge and the opportunity to make use of the full range of its outstanding facilities for research.

The regulations for the series require that each Lecture will be delivered on a topic in Modern Intellectual History (1500 to the present day); that the Lectureship will be restricted to younger researchers in the field (Lecturers must be no further advanced in their careers than 10 years since the completion of their Ph.D.); and that a one-day Conference will be associated with each Lecture, to which other younger researchers in the relevant field will be invited. The Appointments Committee will ensure that the Lectureship is equally open and hospitable to researchers working in all idioms and traditions of intellectual history.

The main outcome will be a series of published lectures. The editorial Board of *The Historical Journal*, which is arguably the leading Anglophone journal with a special commitment to publishing research in modern intellectual history, has agreed that

it will publish each of the Lectures in a suitably extended and annotated form. It is further hoped that it may be possible, after the completion of the series, to publish the entire set of lectures as a book.

The first two Lecturers have already been appointed. The first, Dr. Hannah Dawson of the University of Edinburgh, will deliver her Lecture on 9th September 2010, with the accompanying Conference on the 10th September. The second Lecturer, Dr. Joel Isaac of the University of London, will deliver his Lecture on 5th May 2011, with the accompanying Conference on the 6th May. The Prizewinner, Quentin Skinner, has been invited by CRASSH to attend both these occasions, and plans to be present.

2. A series of four international conferences under the general title *Freedom and the Construction of Europe*. These conferences have now taken place. They were held at the Conference Centre of the European University Institute (EUI) at San Domenico di Fiesole (Florence). Very grateful thanks are owed to the President of the Institute at the time, Professeur Yves Mény, who offered warm hospitality to the younger researchers involved, as well as furnishing superb facilities for the conferences and arranging for help to be given with the administration of the events.

The core group of young researchers: As the result of an international advertisement, over a hundred applications were received from young scholars wishing to join the core group. After dossiers and references had been read, the following twenty-two names were selected: Catherine Balleriaux; Theodor Christov; Rosanna Cox; Hannah Dawson; Serena Ferente; Felicity Green; Thomasz Gromelski; Polly Ha; Lena Halldenius; Susan Karr; Jaska Kainulainen; Lovro Kuncevic; Daniel Lee; Avi Lifschitz; Reidar Maliks; Sarah Mortimer; Eric Nelson; Alexander Schmitt; Freya Sierhius; Antti Tahvanainen; Huseyin Yilmaz; Marton Zaskalczyk.

The senior visitors: At each conference the core group was joined by a number of senior scholars, who were asked to deliver papers but also to give assistance and advice to the members of the core group. At the first conferences the visitors who attended and delivered papers were: Dr. Annabel Brett (Cambridge); Professor Thomas Kaufmann (Göttingen) and Professor John Coffey (Leicester). At the second conference the visitors were Professor Georg Schmidt (Jena); Professor Iain Hampsher-Monk (Exeter) and Professor Thomas Maissen (Heidelberg). At the third conference they were Professor Peter Stacey (California) and Professor Philip Pettit (Princeton); at the fourth they were Professor Lars Magnusson (Uppsala); Professor Fonna Forman-Barzilai (California); Professor Martina Reuter (Helsinki); Professor Michael Cook (Princeton); Dr. Noel Malcolm (Oxford) and Professor James Tully (Victoria, Canada).

The topics of the individual conferences: The general topic, 'Freedom and the Construction of Europe', was divided into four parts with the following titles.

- First Conference, 3rd to 5th July 2008: *Religious Freedom and Civil Liberty*. The papers focused on the emergence of ideas about freedom of conscience and religious liberty in the era of the Protestant Reformation.

- Second Conference, 25th to 27th September 2008: *Liberty and Liberties in Legal and Constitutional Thought*. The papers focused on the various rights and liberties guaranteed under different European constitutions, including those of England, Hungary, the Italian city-states, Poland and the Holy Roman Empire.

- Third Conference, 2nd to 4th July 2009: *The Freedom of Individuals*. The papers focused on the evolution of, and the debates about, different understandings of the ideal of individual freedom in various European countries, including England, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands.

- Fourth Conference, 24th to 26th September, 2009: *European Freedom and its Boundaries*. A more wide-ranging and summarising meeting, in which the idea of the bounded character of freedom was treated in metaphorical as well as in physical terms. The exclusion of various groups as well as geographical areas was examined, as well as the emergence of ideas about freedom of trade.

Publication plans: Before the conferences were held, a steering committee was formed to work out the topics to be covered at each individual conference, and at the same time to make plans for the eventual publication of the conference proceedings in the form of a book. Members of the steering committee included the Prizewinner, Quentin Skinner, together with the Professor of Early-modern History at the European University Institute, Professor Martin van Gelderen, who acted as host to the conferences, and Mr. Richard Fisher, the head of Humanities and Social Science publishing at the Cambridge University Press. Mr. Fisher kept closely in touch with the progress of the conferences, and attended the final one in September 2009. There he made it clear in a closing speech that the Press would be willing to consider the publication of the conference proceedings in the form of a two-volume book to be jointly edited by Martin van Gelderen and Quentin Skinner. Mr. Fisher set a deadline of 30th June 2010 for the receipt of all chapters, which will then be submitted to the usual refereeing procedures employed by the Press. If the reports are favourable, it is hoped that the proceedings of the conferences will thus give rise to a major publication by the Press.

Statement by the Prizewinner: *When I thank the Foundation for supporting this kind of research, I am saluting its willingness to encourage the kind of humanistic studies that seek not merely to understand but if possible to change the world.* Quentin Skinner (Rome, 24.11.2006)