

Time and its discontents

-Latin words for culture = agriculture/ domestication AND translation from Greek terms for spatial image of time. We are 'time-binders', creating a symbolic class of life, an artificial world -> control over nature. Time becomes real because it has consequences. Flow of time 'the distinction between what one needs and what one has, the incipience of regret' (Guyau (1890) Carpe diem, but civ(ilization) forces us to mortgage the present to the future.

-time, like techn(ology), not neutral. Like techn, it is a determining fact AND the enveloping element in which divided society develops. Demands that its subjects be realistic, serious, devoted to work. It appears autonomous, like techn, going on forever of its own accord, with us as helpless spectators. But like division of labor, which sets in motion time/ techn, it is a socially learned phenomenon. Time and language are coterminous (Derrida/ Lacan). Time = alienation from nature (PValery). Before time, life had a rhythm but not a progression. Preliterate communities show the human mind functioning on a higher and more complex plane of rationality (Whorf 1956).

-telepathy, precognition sacrificed for evolution into symbolic life. Freud posited that telepathy was 'the original archaic means thru which individuals understand one another.' (*Intro lectures* 1932).

-we experience world under pressure to be representation, symbolic, measured because we use 'time' as foundation of being. => throttling of instinctive desire. Immediacy gives way, replaced by the mediations that make history possible, esp language.

-ritual/ myth is attempt thru symbolism to return to timeless state but is another false step leading further away. Same with timelessness of numbers. 'Time is produced by measurement' (Blumenberg 1983). 'Uncivilized' consider it unlucky to count living creatures, many primitive languages have only 1 and many.

-J-Christian linear, irreversible path between creation and salvation. First clocks to regulate discipline of monastic life. -> precise prayer times as chief externalization of medieval Islamic belief.

-Father Time - fusion of Gk god Kronos with Roman god Saturn - grim deity with fatal scythe (agri/domestication). Dance of Death.

-we 'watch' the time -> watches. Puritans - waste of time the deadliest of sins, Franklin's 'Time is money'

-subjection of outer nature requires conquest of inner nature. Time must subjugate free consciousness to unleash fop.

-language (spoken, written, mass literacy) reinforces logic of linear time (McLuhan 1962)

-defining characteristic of novel is 'alliance of time and Western man/ myth(?)' (Frye 1950)

-narcissist denies time. Non-time of perfection wherein being and becoming are one and time stops. He is despised and narcissism distorted into objectified commodity fetishism in our culture.

-Einstein - distinction between past, present and future only a stubborn, persistent illusion

-micro-physics (timeless) -> macro-physics (complex systems, time-bound) ~ tribe -> 'civilization'/ progress

-2nd law of thermodynamics - general (pessimistic) principle of irreversibility/ entropy - developed in mid-19thc (when industrial capitalism reached its apparent non-reversible point) vs

evolution as 19th c optimistic application of irreversible time (cap fear for its future). But nature is not an engine, does not work, is not closed system.

-resistance to work is the real entropy which time, history and progress constantly seek to banish.

-divided life replaced by living completely and wholly - timelessly - when we erase the primary causes of that division.

Against technology

-techn claims to extend the senses, but ends up blunting and atrophying the senses. offers solutions to everything, but in each case it has created the problem in the 1st place.

-Marx: techn = division of labor. ie, by definition not neutral since => exploitation, with one class owning and controlling (and developing) the techn

-we are becoming more machine-like at the same time as (because) machines are becoming more human-like

-Odysseus sails past sirens with wax in ears to he won't be tempted by pleasure and he can get thru to the repressive, non-sensuous life of civ and techn.

-zero div of labor = state of nearness to reality, of wholeness

-postmodernism claims that totality is totalitarian (can only be fragmentary, pluralist, random, ironic, cynical, emphasizing margins and surfaces), but this is a reaction against Marxism/Stalinism, and is intellectual cowardice. PM against idea of origins. We have always been in culture, so we can't see outside of culture. But need Truth and Meaning, even if we can never be sure.

[same dynamic as shift from medieval to modern in science - only study things now that can be proved or disproved - ie shallow, ignore the most important things.]

Enemy of the state

-anarchism is critique of domination, nation state + patriarchy, racism, homophobia. Exposes ways our philosophy, religion, eco and other ideological constructs perform their goal of rationalizing the domination that pervades our way of life. Destruction of nature and indigenous peoples seen as manifestation of Darwinian selection or God's Will or eco exigency.

-1m yrs sans time, div of labor, but slow slippage into div of labor reached critical mass [thru trade&language = objectification/ metaphor/ symbols]

-primitive peoples live in the present, as we do when we're having fun. Mbuti: by a correct fulfillment of the present, the past and future take care of themselves. Pawnee: life has a rhythm but not a progression. No interest in birthdays, little desire to control what does not yet exist/nature. Moment-by-moment joining with the flux and flow of the natural world. Sequence and rhythm exist, but not time. Identical seconds -> identical people. Each moment is quantitatively and qualitatively different than the moment before. If events are always novel, then routine is impossible and the notion of time meaningless. We give up living in the moment in exchange [sic] for the hope of being able to live in the moment at some point in the future [contradiction in terms]

-linear time <-> habitat degradation (nonreversible)

-must relearn how to live sustainably AND deal with those forces that are destroying all those who do live sustainably now. 'Overcome alienation with alienation (Adorno)

-hysteria from turning anger inward instead of against the system

Age of nihilism

-nihilism 'the fundamental movt of the history of the West' (Heidegger). A set-up whose essence is efficiency is already nihilist.

-techn mediates between ind and nature, abolishing both, the embodiment of the totalizing system of capital

-techn fatalism - cynicism -> conformity.

-freedom reduced to choice of brands of commodities. The KFC in Tienanmen Square expresses domination as much as the massacre in 1989. In commodified existence, consumption becomes the #1 entertainment. Cultural 'radicalism' feeds the dominant system rather than undermining it. Culture, born of alienation, needs alienation to go on. We must challenge the idea of symbolic culture itself, as well as the reality of high-tech barbarism [instead of fashion - handmade/ 2nd hand clothes from friends, family, 'good' production conditions, MAKE music, not passive concerts...]

The transition

-revolution = reconstruction of our inner selves. No ultimate freedom or wholeness sans dissolution of inherent power of specialists. Very few specialists contribute to satisfying authentic needs.

-end of agr. Permaculture - agr that reproduces itself and tends toward nature and away from domestication. Also cultivation within cities. Random propagation of plants a la Johnny Appleseed

-steps toward autonomy and self-help with the aim of abandoning cities eventually (centralized control of property transactions, religion and poli domination). Move from colder to warmer climes to become more intimate with the earth.

-end of formal architecture.

-before civ, disease was generally nonexistent. Disease from work, toxic cities, estrangement, fear, unfulfilled lives

-abolish exchange in favor of gift and play. Return to the multi-sensual intimacy of nature that obtained before symbolization made living a reified, separate caricature of itself.

In memoriam

-reification is foundation of civ

-history - the science of forgetting

-conversion of myth into written language extends a debilitation begun by language itself. Lose memory when it becomes a text. Words reduce and deform the experiences they symbolize.

-Proust equated memory and perception in his notion of 'involuntary' memory - we perceive through the accumulation of past perceptions/ experiences/ memories

-neurology can determine where and how memories [=consciousness] exist in our brains.

-recall involved a flash to the actual moment in spacetime where the event is still eternally present [outside of 'time']

-mind is pervasive and deeply embedded in nature [monism/ Hegel]

-ruling order seeks to enlist memory as an ally in its never-ceasing will to legitimation. Thus memory must battle the deodorizing effects of nostalgia/ routine. Memory should aim for timeless re-enactment/ living of lived experience.

-with techn, memory reduced to info retrieval. Nostalgia (a la virtual reality) 'virtual memory' is mirror image of progress, appealing to the feeling that the past offered pleasures no longer attainable. The only paradises are those we have lost (Proust)

-but art and culture are merely symptoms of human fragmentation. Rather than suppressing/

distorting memory, we must try to realize and supercede it, jettisoning instrumental reason along the way.

-in Star Trek, nature no longer exists. 'Enterprise' ship. characters are machine-like

No way out

-enormous time gap between mental capacity and symbolizing. So humans not necessarily symbol/ tool makers

-'In the beginning was the Word' attempts to overcome the 'original sin' of language (separation of speech and world, words and things) with monotheism. The imperialism of the noun - reification focusing on objects and goals at the expense of process (vb). Symbolic modes may begin with some freshness and vitality but eventually reveal their actual poverty, their inner logic (cave art -> impoverished, stylized aesthetic)

-remnants of unmediated interaction with the world - lovemaking, close relationships, immersion in nature, experience of birth and death awaken our sense and intelligence, stimulate an unaccustomed hunger. World of re-presentation is 2nd hand, artificial, barren (hence 2nd hand clothes are an instance of Adorno's 'fight alienation with alienation')

-anarchism (summary/theory) -> anarchy (lived state of being that rejects hierarchy)

~ animism (belief that everything is inhabited by spirit -> 'animy'/ green anarchy (lived state of relating via spirit, extends anarchy to nature, radically egalitarian)

-movt from animism to ritual parallels the transformation from tribe to large complex societies, dev of language/ techn. longing for communion with other beings and egalitarian intimacy can never be appease by ritual activities developed within a hierarchical social system. This tendency culminates in transcendent religions and heaven (since the meaning of our lives has nothing to do with life on earth)

-because language is a self-referential system, it cannot really involve meaning (PM). Since there is only language, there is no escape from a world defined by language games and domestication. But humanity prospered 1m yrs sans this vicious circle.