

## **‘Do we all live in the same Now?’**

Intro: My PhD, transition to temporality

Names / Roadmap

→ Philosophy of time *not* the focus.

→ Selective readings; Marxism focused

### **PART I: Time and Historical Time**

#### **What is time? What is historical time?**

Two Ancient Greek conceptions of time: Chronos (Χρόνος) and Kairos (καιρός)

→ Wine example. Kairos complicates directionality.

Human societies evolve and transform. Hence, they have a history. They have a sense of historical time, hence a notion of *temporality*.

#### **Does history ‘make sense’?**

Positivists (e.g. Comte): Yes. History progresses across stages.

Theological: Explanation by personified deities / Metaphysical: Explanation by impersonal abstract concepts / Positivist: Scientific explanation

→ Enlightenment thought

Historical materialists (e.g. Marx): Yes. We can follow a history of *modes of production*. Productive activity is a universal constant, while taking place in specific ways.

→ Historian Benedict Anderson on the power of narratives.

Postmodernists (e.g. Lyotard): No. We project *grand narratives* into the past. These include nationalist historiography, divine ordinance *and* class struggle.

### Questions:

- What is history?
- Do non-human species have histories?
- Does history make sense?
- Does history have a direction?

## PART 2: Temporality/Temporalities

**Temporality:** Lived experience(s) of historical time.

→ Depending on your answer to whether history 'makes sense', there are various theories on temporality.

**Social totality:** G.W.F. Hegel's concept stresses (1) the continuity and homogeneity of time; and (2) the contemporaneity of time, the centrality of the present.

→ Stages of human freedom: Public freedom of the polis, citizenship of the Roman Republic, to the individual freedom of the Protestant Reformation, to the civic freedom of the modern state.

→ World-historical event

**Marxist approaches:** *Stagism* and its non-linear critiques

Temporal lag (*décalage*): Étienne Balibar argues that there are ideological, political, and economic axes of social reproduction. These have distinct temporal rhythms, and there are 'lags' between them.

The 'principle of hope': According to Ernst Bloch, all cultural artefacts attests to an 'untimely' longing for a different world. The present is a temporal multiplicity of a variety of utopian assertions. *Anticipation* is central to Bloch's theory of temporality.

Temporality politicised: 'Lags' between different areas are 'translated' into each other. Antonio Gramsci pairs temporality with hegemony. Leading classes assert their historic *inevitability* and *finality*.

□ 'The personality is strangely composite: it contains Stone Age elements and principles of a more advanced science, prejudices from all past phases of history at the local level and intuitions of a future philosophy which will be that of a human race united the world over'.

□ 'The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory'.

### **'The slow cancellation of the future': Temporality and neoliberalism**

*Futurity*: Reinhardt Koselleck argues that the present moment lacks a *prognostic structure*. The present subsumes the past and the future.

#### **Questions:**

- Do temporalities differ across society? If so, what do they differ on?
- How is the future 'anticipated' in the present?
- How is the past reproduced in the present?
- Was Mark Fisher right that the future is slowly being 'cancelled'?
- Do we all live in the same 'Now'?