

## **‘We’re leaving tomorrow’**

### **A Time for Every Thing<sup>1</sup>**

#### ***Per Otnes***

#### **Summary**

Briefly, this is the story of my trying to make sense of an experience of **rupture**, of time – social time – coming close to taking a break or pause. The text starts with that experience, plus my intuitive ideas of it as a non-homogeneous social time, and space likewise. Following is a prolonged search for more solid theoretical or conceptual bases in for such intuitions, Lakoff, Fabian, Husserl, Bergson, Bachelard, Halbwachs, Forty, Becker etc.

Most discussions of Time seem to take for granted that it is a homogeneous, continuous, even flow, an external ‘dimension’ in which we all, men, living creatures and material objects, are somehow ‘positioned’. Bergson’s *durée* provides a start for alternative views, soon found not entirely satisfactory. In Bachelard and Halbwachs are found conceptual bases for conceiving social time as immanent, not transcendent, internal, not external, concrete, not abstract, discrete, not invariably continuous, i.e. rhythmic but not always an even rhythm. Some consequences for social research are outlined.

All those named have rich authorships. Although I hope to have grasped essential points, there is no doubt much more to be found, on time and space and on other subjects. Full respect to all; criticism does not imply rejection, nor does praise imply accept all.

## I. Rupture

### Experiences

Mais à l'instant même où la gorgée mêlée des miettes du gâteau touchait mon palais, je tressaillis, attentive à ce que se passait d'extraordinaire en moi.

Proust

This quote is famous as an expression of the totally unexpected shock you can get following what seems an insignificant event. In the case of Proust's *conteur* it was the taste of sponge-cake dipped in lime-blossom tea which, in an eidetic flash revived vivid, distant memories, giving rise to volumes of recall and narration, and in the end, *le temps retrouvé* as literary creativity.

A similar event/narration gave rise not (only) to literature (and theatre) but to philosophical creativity, a scene from Sartre's *Nausée* (1965/38:22):

Maintenant je vois; je me rappelle mieux ce que j'ai senti, l'autre jour, au bord de la mer, quand je tenais ce galet. C'était une espèce d'écoeurement douceâtre. Que c'était donc désagréable! Et cela venait du galet, j'en suis sûr, cela passait du galet dans mes mains. Oui, c'est cela: une sorte de nausée dans les mains.

Two on the face of it insignificant events, both permanently changing lives, thinking, writing. But why invoke famous precedents instead of stating my own experience of rupture right away? Such events are only too easily ridiculed. Why, even *La Nausée* was rejected for publication on the first try. And Gide thought Proust a high bourgeois dilettante at his debut.

Although I draw liberally on texts by philosophers, well or less well known, in what follows, I insist that my own analysis is sociological, not philosophical<sup>2</sup>. I share Bourdieu's views on the relative academic positions and worth of these two disciplines, and for once his view finds support in what he saw as a predecessor firmly opposed – Sartre once again:

Husserl a pu parler sans trop de difficulté d'évidence apodictique mais c'est se qu'il tenait sur le terrain de la pure conscience formelle s'atteignant elle-même

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dans sa formalité: il faut trouver notre expérience apodictique dans le monde concret de l'Histoire (Sartre 1960:131).

Philosophy is at disadvantage when it attempts to model itself after the formal sciences, mathematics etc. Not all, perhaps not even many, philosophical problems can be solved entirely in the general and abstract, in the formal *Denkarbeit* of single minds, however brilliant. There is room for sociological elaborations, in the long run perhaps even for an 'experimental philosophy', inspired for example by experimental archaeology.

This paper's departure point is similar, a strong, sudden and should I say total experience of *time as rupture*, of discontinuity. No doubt there can be other, more shocking, disruptive events than mine – anticipating the return from a vacation – for example psychiatry's euphemistic 'life events', the sudden loss of close ones, job, health, dwelling etc. But the very strength of such major shocks can numb reflection, the experience being so engulfing as to make the mind pause. In the beautiful phrase of Gaston Bachelard (to whose work we will return):

(L)e deuil le plus cruel, c'est la conscience de l'avenir trahi quand survient l'instant déchirant où un être cher ferme les yeux, immédiatement on sent avec quelle nouveauté hostile l'instant suivant "asaille" notre cœur" (1931:15).

It involves facing *le néant*, the *nothingness* following, and preceding, in principle every single present instant, according to Bachelard.

In my case it must have happened without fuss or notice dozens, even hundreds of times before. Asking why it occurred in the afternoon of April 11<sup>th</sup> 2006 is to no avail; it simply happened.<sup>3</sup> My shock awoke nothing eidetic but a landslide of reflections – I saw Time itself moving, or rather pausing, caught it in the act, making its presence, or rather its absence, felt through the stage setting and anticipated change of scene. 'We're leaving tomorrow' – what less memorable phrase in this mobile age! This time though it opened up layer after layer of reflection – and months of writer's block when I tried to start writing about it. In retrospect, I can see that that was due to my realising clearly for the first time how Time itself emerges out of our actions, our refraining from action or being acted on, aided by the material sites, objects, tools and other artefacts that we surround ourselves with, that we're acting with or by means of – Latour's *actants*, or *plecads*, conjects as I've tried to call them (Otnes 1997).

In outline the course of my argument is as follows: First contrasting time as rupture, *repos* (rest or pause), rhythm, with common habitual views, next my

experience of rupture in some detail. Further time, notably calendar, as a cultural creation yet linked in part to environmental or **macro** rhythms, plus a short refutation of Lakoff's idea of time as an entirely human creation, leading into a broader discussion of the time of philosophers, first Bergson whose work and life are followed up in some detail. Then an anthropologist's views on time (Fabian), introducing a second philosopher, an opponent of Bergson's, Bachelard, also followed up in some detail as a major proponent of time as dialectics, rupture, **micro** rhythms. Next, the sociologist Halbwachs, whose theory of memory – **social** memory – introduces time as intersubjective, communal, not (mainly) inherent in individual minds or external nature. Memory is of course linked to forgetting, so I discuss the views of Forty and associates, and Riegl, one of their models. Now turning to contemporary sociology follows a brief discussion of the work of Hägerstrand, whose staunch if non-dialectical materialist ideas form bases both for Harvey's Marx-inspired work and for the non-materialist eclecticism of Giddens. Finally I outline consequences for revising future sociologies, mainly based on the **career** concept (Becker, Hughes). And finally finally there is of course exit, individual death – 'time must have a stop' (Hotspur) – our fear and (mis)conceptions thereof.

All of which may perhaps seem rhapsodic, but what can you expect of an analysis of Time which emphasises ruptures?

## II. Intuitions

Le temps ne demande pas à être vu, mais  
vécu (Bergson Œ:126<sup>4</sup>)

### Habitual time

Unreflecting habit tends to see Time as continuous, unruptured, a homogeneous abstract, a general misty kind of 'dimension' in which we all are vaguely but irredeemably 'immersed'. Less mystically but as or more abstract, time may be seen as a mathematical line with a point, 'the now', moving from left to right without stop. Exaggerated, even mistaken, as many have held. There is nothing even, smooth or steady in Time as we live it; it passes sometimes fast, sometimes slow, sometimes even comes close to taking a break, repose, 'take five', 'time-out', cf. above. On time's stream 'events' occur – or rather, the stream itself takes shape

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by the events, some of them portentous, some hardly noticeable, by fits and starts, only rarely an even flow. Immanent time, time is in things, not things in time. Clocks and watches may have made us think otherwise (Eriksen 1999), and perhaps even more the idea of an absolute, a mathematical, perfect mechanical or physical Time. Not even physics is perfect, though: "Formerly measurement of time was based on the Earth's rotation, but this was found to be irregular" *Hutchinson's encyclopaedia* 1988:1154). Badly behaved indeed our dear Earth, moving with unscientific irregularity, on a daily basis at that. It is only since 1956 that science proper instituted a smooth, even, perfectly regular Universal Time (UT), since 1986 known as UTC, C for coordinated.

'Time in things' yet not quite literally. Should a chemist or physicist analyse a thing, any thing, s/he would find no more Time in it than s/he would find Value in a Commodity, pace Marx. There is an all-important relational element, well expressed by Mead: "The hand is responsible for what I call physical things ..." (1974/1937:184)<sup>5</sup>. No hand, no human agent, no thing – what I call 'the inclusive We', **worked matter** such as we ourselves are, our implements or *membres détachables* (Ponge), our surroundings and the uses we make of them, cf. below. And of course, 'hand' too should not be taken entirely literally. When we climb a mount, walk a desert, till the soil, or touch a keyboard, these are things as much as any more handy or manipulable type of things: hammers, nails, sandwiches on a table, pebbles on a shore etc.

Next, with agency, with the relational, languages enter scene too. Sometimes we work or act in silence, a silence which cannot, however, last long. Quoth Merleau-Ponty:

Nous pouvons parler plusieurs langues, mais l'une d'elle reste toujours celle dans laquelle nous vivons. Pour assimiler complètement une langue, il faudrait assumer le monde qu'elle exprime et l'on n'appartient jamais à deux mondes à la fois. (1945 :118)

A bit on the pessimistic side, perhaps, for of course, bilingualism and polyglots do exist, and as obviously, beginner's childish or broken language. Yet to become really and truly familiar with a foreign life-world requires ideally a full life spent in it. Our languages express our socio-material world which in turn constitutes languages. To which should be added the insight of Bourdieu, adapted from Bachelard (cf. later), that 'natives' regularly hide or gloss over aspects of their life-worlds, giving them a 'doxic' tinge: 'People shuddered over such nonsense; they had thought as much for themselves' (Duun).

### **‘We’re leaving tomorrow’**

When I said to my partner on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 2006, ‘we’re leaving tomorrow’, it was nothing like a command or decision, only making explicit what has been agreed between us for some days. We had been away from home but now, resolved to return to base (it could well have been vice versa).

This statement, or the situation<sup>6</sup> it grows out of, changes the nature of lived Time entirely. With that project set for the near future Time itself changes. We are about to leave from one type of external Life-world to a distinct, more or less distant other. Hence our actions within the first lose sense, because we know, we have decided so as to not be able to follow up on our local projects, except perhaps much later if we envision going back some time in the future. Simultaneously, action in the second external Life-world, that which we are heading for, is impossible, until some time tomorrow or later, dependent on distance and travel time. We are not yet there, simply, just expecting to head for it, ‘get there’.

A sudden double loss of actions’ sense then; **we are stuck between (now) unfinished and (yet) impossible actions**. Our present project overrules both, our project of change, voyage, short-lived and fleeting however possibly eventful in itself. The fact that we may try to finish as much as possible before we leave, and prepare as much as possible in advance for after arrival does not change the other, more basic fact that distant projects are mainly out of reach<sup>7</sup>, inoperable, the while.

Sometimes a feeling of chagrin, of anticipating loss, will set in when ‘we’re leaving tomorrow’, returning from a holiday for example. We may bring souvenirs, photos or bemoan that we may be unlikely ever to return. At other times, however, relief or even happy anticipation may be the dominant feeling; we are fed up with present routines and eager for change, no matter for what or how near or far, well-known or foreign.

Some will hold that extensive travel is ‘modern’, i.e. comparatively new; true but well known also in traditional societies e.g. as transhumance<sup>8</sup>. “Nomads move a lot yet they never travel” (Karakayali 1994, following Deleuze 1980), i.e. they carry their life-world with them on the move.

Others might object that my ‘we’re leaving’-situation be typical of the relaxed lifestyle of an intellectual couple bordering on retirement age. Agreed but not entirely; one could hold that the time-pressed lifestyle of young families with (small) children is entirely packed with ‘now unfinished’ and ‘yet impossible’ actions, at home, work, school or kindergarten, as well as while commuting, in

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shops or malls, entertainment, activities in the 'civil society' etc. (cf. on Hochschild 1997 below). The main difference may reduce to finding some time to *reflect* on own time use for the less pressed, little time for like reflections for the pressed; it's 'do and survive, don't think!'

An additional, possibly contrasting case: The agenda of a leading politician or TNC top manager is probably different, packed to the rim with appointments, some of which are not at all routine (at least not for newcomers in said positions). But such agendas are likely to be as full of 'now unfinished' and 'yet impossible' projects as any. The major difference, however, is that such myriad projects, great or little, are followed up by agendas of longer terms<sup>9</sup>: the week, month, year, election period, next bottom line, end of term of years etc. Such agendas however are regularly subject to change. – Even the routine lives of some 'commoners' are likely to have at least fragments of longer-term agendas, real, wished or dreamt<sup>10</sup>.

## **Time, environment and culture**

Of course, if we can bring our human consciousnesses into conceiving of a world where no human consciousness yet existed, we will probably soon realise that all forms of Time do not disappear, for all that. The **macro** rhythms<sup>11</sup> of day and night, of moon phases and tides, of the year's seasons were probably still there, as were the even slower rhythms, or irregular movements, of changing glacial and tropical ages, or the slow movements of the great continental tectonic plates floating on the red-hot sea of magma<sup>12</sup>. The latter two are, from the point of view of human consciousness, inferences, not experiences. And there is a great leap between the year's seasons as experienced by an unreflecting animal, and that of human societies' calendars. Here, cultural elements enter full force. For example, most humans will recognise even without (much) reflection, a total eclipse, certainly, or winter, or a monsoon, and with reflection, perhaps an equinox or solstice. And even lower animals can discern a rainy from a sunny, a hot from a cold day etc. But among the 6.7 billion of humanity, most do not know what is a Sunday, not even mentioning an Easter, Christmas, Thanksgiving etc. Or they may have heard of such ideas or institutions yet have no direct experience of them.

So calendar is a cultural invention, clear from the fact that several exist, i.e. are in current use (orthodox Easter, Chinese new year, Ramadan, Holi etc.) and that more have become desuet, ancient Rome's e.g. Even 'our own', the dominant<sup>13</sup> Western calendar has had to be re-invented, or at least refurbished, during the centuries (Julian, Gregorian etc. calendars).

An old, leading theological journal in Norway is called *Kirken og Tiden*, The Church and Time. Very apt, since the present Church's forbears in a sense usurped Time, so that today, even a western Atheist cannot well think about time with no reference to Christian theological (based in parts on astronomic<sup>14</sup>) conceptions. Evidently clear under European feudalism, *l'ancien regime*, where the waking day was divided by church-bells sounding prayer times such as angelus, less strict but in roughly the same pattern as in the monasteries. This and more is well expounded in Agnes Heller's treatise *Everyday life*<sup>15</sup> (1984), cf. also Zerubavel (1985). Present 'everydays' however would seem to be structured at least as much by the influences of Politics and Business: Election days, Parliament openings, National Days, seasonal Sales, Father's, Mother's Days, Valentines, Halloween, 'Bank Holiday' etc. And proclaimed 'international days' or 'years' abound, such as International Potato Day, Water Day, Childrens' Year, Ibsen centennial Year and no end of other memorial years, – all no doubt celebrating worthy causes<sup>16</sup>.

Cultural calendars, then, yet not entirely cultural, for the rhythms of changing seasons, climate, weather, crop or cattle tending etc. do have their more or less direct influence on humans as well as on all living creatures. The influences are, however, in a sense mutual, not perhaps on the cycles of days, weeks and months (pace ever new Potato days etc.) but on their contents; harvest-time for example is changed by new technologies time and again in recent decades; the advent of generalised tourism has changed summer and vacationing, etc.

### III. Theses

'We create ... time'  
Lakoff & Johnson

#### Time and metaphor

Lakoff and Johnson's great *Philosophy in the flesh* (1999) advances alongside much else their theory of time, largely warning us of being misled by the metaphors of time. But they also state "we create the concept of time" (1999:167), indicating probably their belief that in a world without humans, time, or its concept(s), would not exist at all. This statement is derived from their great faith in an 'empirical cognitive science', capable, they hold, of substituting millennia of 'a priori philosophising'<sup>17</sup>. Quite a bit on the temerarious side an outspoken sci-

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entism I think, and others such as a reviewer, O'Donovan-Anderson (2000). On the other hand, few would refuse their book's opening statement "The mind is inherently embodied" – I certainly would not. The problem though seems to lie in the fact that the bodies which our minds inhabit do so much more than just think, cognise, vocalise, write, metaphorise etc. Our bodies depend totally on their environment – "die Natur ist *der unorganische Leib* des Menschen, said Marx (1844). He should have added that *organic* non-human nature plays an even greater part in securing our survival and wellbeing, cognitive as well as corporeal. And since our environing nature has its own, inherent and fairly stable or permanent rhythms – days and nights, seasons, 'a time to plant and a time to pluck up' etc. (Eccl. 3:1-2), our embodied minds will somehow have to cope with that. Should they never sleep, eat, excrete, dwell, indeed 'plant and pluck up' or depend on others doing it in their place, even the minds of cognitive scientists would not be able to make statements such as "we create the concept of time". The cultural side of it, yes, even if it is not a single and stable set of concepts, and a collective, rarely an individual issue. The nature or environment side of it, however, definitely not, i.e. human projects certainly transform our environment yet not quite all of it; luckily, some basic rhythms are largely out of human reach. I mean, we can change the climate, or cannot help our changing it, but basic planetary movements etc. cannot be changed by human effort, only predicted<sup>18</sup>. So, 'we create time', the *concept* with our minds but working in conflicting unison within what we know as culture; the *contents* with our bodies, our organised work, in interplay with environmental macro rhythms.

The idea of placing linguistics at the head of social science is a powerful one, no doubt very applicable in numerous contexts. But we should remember that something similar has been – and still is – being tried: The so-called 'lingual or semantic turn' in social science, basic for much of structuralism as well. Still very applicable, agreed, yet not quite capable of filling the role of leader science single-handed. For after years of successful work, Roland Barthes' sad conclusion was that 'semiology was a promise which did not hold true'.

A detail only is the fact that the term 'literal', which they use throughout as contrast or antithesis to their 'metaphor', is itself a metaphor, meaning 'by the letter'. No end of metaphors; every word has an etymology, as even Saussure realised<sup>19</sup>.

## Philosophers and Time

Husserl's concepts of *retention* and *protention*, or recall and anticipation, come to mind. Important as they are, it was only late in his career that he opened his system for inter-subjective, shared Time;<sup>20</sup> earlier his subject was mainly *die innere Zeitbewusstheit* (Husserl 2000/1928, cf. also Krogh 2006), how for example a melody takes shape in individual minds both by recalling and by trying to anticipate its constituent single notes and rhythms, very much a case of 'la pure conscience formelle'<sup>21</sup>. We'll return however to similar ideas of time as intentional projects, up against facticity – only in the collective, not in the individual sense.

More substantial than is Bergson's *durée*, the idea that time as lived by humans is a time of continuity, duration. Seeing time as divisible, even infinitely so, is a misconception according to Bergson; it mistakes the divisibility of Space<sup>22</sup> with that of an altogether other dimension, Time, 'the duration'. Time is mainly a human state or feeling, psychological, continuous, not divisible, and furthermore, an invention, a cultural creation, not somehow external, untouchable.

Bergson's ideas of lived human time were first exposed in his *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* of 1888, and *Matière et mémoire* of 1896. Here is where our example, 'we're leaving tomorrow' returns to scene: Human time, as *durée* or otherwise, is impossible without memory, evident for example in the very idea of a 'returning', or even a simple 'leaving': No memory, no return, i.e. no recall of an earlier visit, of sites, settings, persons, artefacts left etc. And notably, this does not imply that memory has to be exact or perfect, only that some aspects of earlier, distant events will have to be recalled<sup>23</sup>.

But as obviously, human time is impossible without *projet*, project, willed (attempts of) change. **By dialectical necessity, *durée* presupposes *rupture***, even if Bergson refused the idea<sup>24</sup>. The rupture of individual Death of course (cf. Bachelard above), but numerous minor others as well (sometimes as ominous or surprising), not perhaps final or total ruptures yet abrupt turns, *Wendungen*, in *la durée*: 'We're leaving tomorrow', 'I'm about to reach retirement age', 'a third grandchild is about to arrive', 'a colleague is taken fatally ill'. Turning points, vicissitudes, pivots, peripeteias; lived lives, however often dull and dreary, are known not to be devoid of them.

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## Bergson up closer

Some hold that the statement '*durée* presupposes *rupture* by dialectical necessity' is unfair to Bergson, even mistaken:

*Unfair* because he took exception to dialectics, especially in its abstract Hegelian form of thesis, antithesis, synthesis. His contrast – *not* a contradiction in the dialectical sense – is between *durée*, continuous yet creative time, versus *temps*, everyday time, the repetitive time of chores. Replacing contrast for contradiction may seem similar to other anti-dialecticians such as Nietzsche, Heidegger, and lately Deleuze (1968) who prefers *difference et répétition* to antithesis and thesis. Further, Bergson was a materialist, if at all, only in a very special sense which makes both matter and memory *images*<sup>25</sup> – *plus qu'une représentation ... moins qu'une chose* (CE: 161). He seems curiously uninterested in the social questions of his day; remarkable for a boy who was left by his family at ten, in 1869, to experience the horrors of war, the commune and its bloody repression, as a *boursier* boarding-school pupil<sup>26</sup>. Later, he was friendly but not close to radical Jaurès, a fellow *normalien*, and a lasting harsh opponent of another, Durkheim (cf. footnote 26), who was profoundly shocked by such events as permanent signs of social tensions which were to be resolved. Bergson was politically inactive excepting that he did not object to the syndicalist Sorel's (*Réflexions sur la violence*) naming him as a major inspiration. Later in life, however, he was for long active as a French diplomat<sup>27</sup> on the international scene, e.g. as an activist in what became decades after the UNESCO.

Possibly *mistaken*, because Bergson conceives of time in terms of his theory of action:

Le temps<sup>28</sup> est pour moi ce qu'il a de plus réel et de plus nécessaire; c'est la condition fondamentale de l'action; – que dis-je? c'est l'action même; et l'obligation où je suis de le vivre, l'impossibilité de jamais enjamber l'intervalle de temps à venir, suffirait à me démontrer – si j'en avais pas le sentiment immédiate – que l'avenir est réellement ouvert, imprévisible, indéterminé (M: 200<sup>29</sup>).

His *durée* is taken to be continuous without being determined or contingent, it is a *pénétration mutuelle*; a linking together without rupture, the basic condition of human free will, – nay, it is freedom itself; time is action:

Ainsi, qu'on l'envisage dans le temps ou dans l'espace, la liberté paraît pousser dans la nécessité des racines profondes et s'organiser intimement avec elle.

L'esprit emprunte à la matière les perceptions d'où il tire sa nourriture, et les lui rend sous forme de mouvement, où il a imprimé sa liberté (CE: 378)<sup>30</sup>.

I gladly endorse this theory of liberty, akin to and probably adapted by Sartre from Bergson. There is however another form of freedom, that of rupture or negation, of which Bergson disapproved (CE: 728ff). And his *durée* invariably lapses back into *temps*, freedom into necessity: "... les actes libres sont rares..." (CE:110), "nous ne sommes pas si souvent libres" (Bergson cited by Benrubi 1942). Freedom is vital, yet a rare occurrence, a view which changed in his later works, cf. below. Speaking of Sartre, his concepts of *série*, *sérialité* seem closely related to Bergson's *temps*. On the other hand, there seems to be no parallel in Bergson to Sartre's *groupe en fusion*, spontaneous, collective, *social* creativity initiating change, acting in liberty *together*.

For Bergson's theory of time and action is definitely not a theory of *social* action; it is individual and psychological rather. A rare exception is when he notes towards the end of the *Essai*: "... nous "sommes agis" plutôt que nous n'agissons nous-mêmes" (CE:151). And curiously, he conceives of psychological associationism as a type of *determinism* earlier in the same text. It is not easy to see why free associations do not 'penetrate each other' in the manner of his *durée*<sup>31</sup>. The *durée* even gets a tinge of elitism, e.g. when he writes "Agir librement, c'est reprendre possession de soi, c'est se replacer dans la pure durée" (ibid.). Only for the learned, gifted or creative to master? Anyhow, Bergson's ideas of *action* seem close to Sartre et al.'s *projet*, project, intentionality.

His lack of interest for the social, the collective is expressed also in his repeated statement or ideal: "la production de soi *par* soi", the self-production of the self<sup>32</sup>. That indeed may have been his very impressive personal achievement as a boarding-school boy with no family near. Lesser spirits would probably have succumbed in similar circumstances. But details of this story will probably never be known, his weekly correspondence with his mother from the age of ten was destructed as he wished in his will.

I think further that Bergson tends to underrate the forms and frequencies of creativity hiding under his *temps*, the everyday chores such as going shopping or preparing a meal, painting a wall, gardening etc. – reasonably, for a Parisian professor of *la belle époque* could hardly ever take part in such activities. He is known to have led a frugal life though; a visitor (Benrubi, his German translator) complains of being frozen to the bone after a few hours with the master in his study.

Speaking of the relation between Bergson and Sartre evokes the idea of the relation to a much later French thinker, CdF colleague Bourdieu. I've found rare

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references to Bergson in Bourdieu's works, with a single exception not positive: In his last published book *Les structures sociales de l'économie* (2000:9) he honours him with a motto<sup>33</sup>. But the same words feature also, as text, not motto in *Méditations pascaliennes* (1997:190), holding that it is *paradoxical* that it is to Bergson this insight is due.

So in sum, I have no objection to the concept of *durée* and the freedom it expresses. But there are alternatives, and the concept is clearly fragile, not a permanent state of mind or otherwise; permanent only as an abstract concept. Whether then to call the absences of *durée*, *rupture*, or the milder *temps*, or with Bachelard *repos* (cf. below) would seem to be less than crucial, in essence perhaps a question of one's attitude to dialectics, to negation, antithesis, *le néant* (Worms ed. 2008). Bergson disapproved, others still approve.

Worms' short but perceptive contribution to his anthology depicts Bachelard and Roupnel as sort of an interim generation between Bergson and Sartre, Merleau-Ponty etc. in French philosophy. Continuities exist, with the ruptures however (cf. p. 97ff) more visible: The first generation did not manage, or try, to conceptualise the *néant*, nothingness. Introduced for a start by the interim, this became a very central conception of the third generation. The historical fact that triggered their *néant* concept was of course the emergence of the Soviet Union in its heroic years c. 1917-1947, a veritable *néant nié* – the expropriators expropriated – materialising on the world scene. In this view Bourdieu figures as a fourth generation, rejecting Sartre and his bases, reviving Bachelard and his contemporaries<sup>34</sup>. As we shall see, Bachelard too was lastingly impressed by events of 1917 – only a 'revolution' of quite another order than that of the Bolsheviks, the publication of Einstein's theory of relativity, which he endorsed ever after.

## Fabian's Time

Johannes Fabian's concise and erudite *Time and the Other* (1983) may lamentably be not very well known. This brilliant work, subtitled *How anthropology makes its Object*, introduces two linked concepts, *Coevalness* versus *Allochronism*<sup>35</sup>. Fabian's thesis is that anthropology establishes its object, foreign or other little-known groups, tribes, ethnies or peoples, as if existing in another Time than that of the scientific fieldworkers; allochronism: The anthropologists' 'home time' is somehow taken to be the true or dominant Time whereas that of the foreign etc. groups etc. is taken to be somehow 'past', 'distant' or peculiar, not fully 'real', or at least local, bounded, not general (Greek *allos* means different, and *chronos* of course time).

Coevalness as the opposite seems to be based mainly on an idea taken from the phenomenology of Alfred Schütz, that of ‘the We-relationship’; two persons sharing a project, neither dominating nor dominated, “the reciprocal sharing of the Other’s flux of experiences in inner time” (Schütz, quoted by Fabian 1983:170). One of Schütz’ examples is ‘making music together’, the title of a paper of his. Coevalness in this sense is taken to be the main basis of all culture, all society, as ‘lived’ by participants and no less as ‘observed’ by ‘outsiders’ who will have to find their ways into the bona fide We-relationships in question<sup>36</sup>.

However admirable I find Fabian’s analyses a few points would seem less than clear: Isn’t the concept of the Other somehow bipartite; on one hand the *Close Others* we all depend on, on the long road of becoming a Person, typically parent and child, less typically teacher and pupil, senior and junior colleague; the Other as Indispensable Resource of personal growth, and lamentably, sometimes also of bonding or repression? Mead’s (or rather Blumer’s) concept of the ‘Significant Other’ would seem to me as something of a poorly based generalisation. But be that as it may, on the other hand there are the *Foreign Others*, unknown, distant – perhaps threatening, competitive, aggressive, or again, perhaps friendly and cooperative, capable of becoming future Close Others. Fabian is concerned with the second type – the unknown, possible threat, possible resource – not (much) with the first<sup>37</sup>.

That given I find the idea of allochronism strikingly brilliant, capable of valid extension into sociology and other social and human sciences. Most fieldwork, in fact probably all analyses of the Works of Others, in the humanities too, should stop taking for granted that the Field, the Work, is somehow belonging to a distant, ‘foreign time’. Such stands are fundamentally problematic, not to be taken for granted. In gerontology for example, few accounts deal with ‘We, the Old’, most with ‘The problems of Age’, something distant from the analysts’. Or poverty studies similarly, ‘We, the Poor’ sometimes occurs, i.e. analyses of lives in poverty seen from within, yet the general case is ‘Poverty as a Social Problem’ for the rest of us (granting that present readers and writer cannot well be classified as ‘poor’). ‘Deviance studies’ perhaps even more, ‘The Gang’, ‘Street Corner Society’ etc. Even consumption studies seem to be more focusing on ‘poor, mislead, common shoppers’, not much on ‘us, the discerning and enlightened researchers’. In fact, most social science studies deal with problems not, or not mainly, of the analysts’ own. For many research founders, *Herrschaftswissen* is what’s in demand, akin perhaps to Sulkunen’s (2007) *hexicology*, analyses of states or dispositions without regard for their place in any holistic or comprehensive social order.

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A second insecure base: Schütz appears to have conceived of 'the We-relationship' as something rather ephemeral, frail and fragile, not (often) an enduring, a permanent state. When joint music making ends with applause (or scandal), the We-relationship enters a phase of latency, at best; or it takes a pause, possibly never to return.

Of course, such ephemera might yet be the very essence of a life truly social. And of course, despite Schütz, Fabian is free to conceive of coevalness as something enduring, something important yet almost banal for those really familiar with their own culture, being so 'obvious' viewed from within. Still the concept of allochronism would seem to be more soundly based than that of coevalness.

Fabian quotes Bachelard<sup>38</sup>: "All knowledge, taken at the moment of its constitution, is polemical knowledge" (cf. later). Here taken from a less known text (Bachelard 1936/50:14) the idea is better known from Bachelard *La philosophie du non* (1940): Science advances only by realising and disclosing its own mistakes or errors, correcting them until future fresh errors are found hiding even under former advances. In the reading of Bourdieu et al., in full conformance with Bachelard's idea, this becomes the idea of a *phase of rupture*, in *The Craft of Sociology* (1973). The field, any field, however coeval (a term I've not found in Bourdieu), is not only regularly in conflict with itself, i.e. containing contradictions, it will also contain repressions (almost in the Freudian sense), traits or practices so unacceptable as to elude all explicit mention or discussion. Or a somehow 'milder' form; acceptable traits etc. only so obvious, so entirely routine as to never become subjects of overt discussion. Why discuss 'the entirely obvious', the *doxa*? Our craft becomes a difficult one indeed; we both have to intrude and to disclose, to join and to break, hopefully in understanding both with colleagues and fields.

Fabian's dichotomy is strictly concerned with time as conceived by anthropologists, not by ordinary people in their diverse cultures – etic, not emic. Taking allochronism for granted – that the researchers' time is without mention or doubt taken to be superior to that of their fields of study – is very nearly reverting to anthropology as the handmaid of colonial regimes (including neo- and perhaps post- colonial). The practice of coevalness on the other hand risks being elusive and passing, not only difficult, which identifying 'the true interests' of any field must be. Yet it is not uncommon for social research to give "...credence, in a serious way, to the perspective of the subordinate group in some hierarchical relationship" (Becker 1967/2006:3). Or in the words of Spivak<sup>39</sup>, expressly 'non-post-colonial', she supports "globalisation as redistribution but not as accumulation". So in the end Fabian's dichotomy should remind us of how conceptions of time,

no matter whose, can enhance or reduce social inequality on local or global scenes. Here, Becker's 'Whose side are we on?' is as relevant as ever (cf. p. 113ff).

Mainstream anthropologist may be wont to label Fabian something of a maverick, advocating instead works such as Gell (1992), a much more 'normal science' analysis of Time. Overlap there is between Gell and Fabian although not very much, Gell much of the time falling into Fabian's allochrone category.

#### IV. Antitheses

Le fil du temps est couvert de nœuds  
Bachelard

#### Bachelard's rupture

We mentioned Bachelard's book on time. He authored in fact two such books, one on the instant (1931), another on the dialectics of *la durée* (1950/36). The first is Bachelard's devoted attempt to make sense of an earlier work, *Siloë*, by Gaston Roupnel (1927). The stand of the latter is a definite, almost extreme opposite of Bergson's:

Le Temps n'a qu'une réalité, celle de l'Instant ... (L)e temps est une réalité suspendue entre deux néants... L'intuition temporelle de M. Roupnel affirme: 1. le caractère absolument discontinu du temps; 2. le caractère absolument ponctiforme de l'instant (Bachelard 1931:13, 38)<sup>40</sup>.

In Roupnel's own terms (1927) time becomes *l'instant temps* – instantly replaced with *l'instant vie*, whereas space becomes *l'instant point*.

Roupnel, best known as a historian of agriculture, also active as a novelist, was a colleague of Bachelard's while both were professors in Dijon<sup>41</sup>. His work on time and space is charming and personal yet partly on the borders of the tenable, which Bachelard realised but made efforts to remedy. *Siloë*, it appears, was (or is?) a fountain of spring water for pilgrims to purify themselves before entering Jerusalem's temple. Roupnel's book ends with an eulogy to "l'Être Supreme", in the religious, not in the revolutionary sense. Bachelard's respect for such stands is largely tacit, supporting the idea of *Siloë* mainly in the figurative – approxi-

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mately, for all of us to find, or to create, our mission in life. But he does remember his friend's teachings:

(Sa) doctrine vivante, (est) enseignée le long des chemins de Bourgogne, au coin des vignes. Devant cette campagne humanisée, M. Gaston Roupnel nous a fait comprendre le lent ajustage des choses et des temps, l'action de l'espace sur le temps et la réaction du temps sur l'espace. La plaine labourée nous peint des figures de durée aussi clairement que les figures de l'espace ; elle nous montre le rythme des efforts humains. Le sillon est l'axe temporel du travail et le repos du soir est la borne du champ. Comme une durée coulant d'un flot continu et régulier exprimerait mal ces moules temporels! Combien plus réelle, comme base de l'efficacité temporelle, doit apparaître la notion du rythme ! (1936/50 :viii).

To which Bachelard's conclusion, or thesis: (*L*)a continuité psychique est, non pas une donnée, mais une œuvre (original italics p. viii). Agreed, *la durée n'est pas donnée* ; it is not given, it's in our making, our (co-)creation. And further it is, not (often) discontinuous or discrete, perhaps, but it must be *rythmée*, rhythmic, of variable intensities, sometimes regular, sometimes not, like any *œuvre* or labour<sup>42</sup>. Time and Space are properties of Matter, as we traverse it, on foot or with vehicles such as the plough, the car, airplane or space shuttle, all five very material. More closely, more intimately, Time and Space are largely *matière ouvrée*, worked matter. In Sartre's words:

À quelque moment de l'Histoire que l'on se place, les choses sont humaines dans la mesure exacte où les hommes sont choses (1960:247).

So the ploughman's work, the furrow, visualises *la durée* while the end of his or her ploughed field visualises *la rupture*; likewise for the working day, as against the recreation and rest of evening, meal, night and sleep. – We'll return to the question whether similar visualisations can be found in today's western societies, where agricultural populations are reduced to millesimal fractions, so that ploughmen's furrows and borders are rarely seen indeed. Yet we all depend on their (and others') continued efforts no less; and yet, present urbanites rarely think about what happened to their food before it was exhibited on our supermarket shelves.

It is interesting to note that neither Roupnel nor Bachelard give attention to the early Bergson's concept of *temps*. They discuss, indeed harshly criticise, only the

other half, or less than half, of his conception, *la durée*, as if that was his only time concept worthy of attention. Reasonably, because late in life, Bergson's concepts changed (cf. footnote 24), *durée* now figuring as the dominant or 'true' time, with *temps* more of a misconception, or just confused everyday thinking. And Bachelard, 25 years Bergson's junior, naturally based his criticisms mostly on his senior's recent publications.

Bachelard held that Bergson's doctrine becomes a prisoner of itself, being nothing outside of a *durée* so profound or total as to make real action impossible: "En particulier, le présent ne peut rien faire" (1950/36:3). And:

En aucune circonstance, l'âme ne peut se détacher du temps; elle est toujours, comme tous les heureux du monde, possédée par ce qu'elle possède (1950/36:2),

which is the closest to a statement with political overtones I've found in Bachelard.

Bachelard (1950/36) starts by introducing its goal, or *but métaphysique*, as a *propédeutique à une philosophie du repos*. Its first chapter labels Bergson's *une philosophie du plein* (p. 1), which finds its expressed basis in Bergson's own words:

La réalité, telle que nous la percevons directement, est du plein qui ne cesse pas de se gonfler, et qui ignore le vide (E:1336)<sup>43</sup>. And further:

Mon état d'âme, en avançant sur la route du temps, s'enfle continuellement de la durée qu'il ramasse; il fait, pour ainsi dire, boule de neige avec lui-même (E:496).

Yet Bachelard's criticism is far from total, he says "du bergsonisme nous acceptons presque tout sauf la continuité" (1950/36:7). So he insists that true ideas of time or *durée* must include lacunas, white spots, repose, pauses, risks, for, he claims, Bergson has written nothing about:

... le risque absolu et total, sur le risque sans but et sans raison, sur ce jeu étrange et émouvant qui nous amène à détruire notre sécurité, notre bonheur, notre amour, sur le vertige qui nous attire vers le danger, vers la nouveauté, vers la mort, vers le néant (1950/36:6)

Perhaps an echo of his soldier years in WW1, but no less valid for all that.

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Bergson's is a philosophy of *le plein*, then – the full, filled or complete, as against Bachelard's, of repose, lacunae, ruptures, loopholes<sup>44</sup>, in sum rhythms of varying intensities<sup>45</sup>. My sympathy is largely with the latter. Bachelard's dialectic conclusion is, like ours, that *durée* without rupture, repose, rhythms, must be misleading, even mistaken. And included in his dialectics of Time is posed *Matter; Space* as well, evident e.g. in his homage of Roupnel cited above. Here Bergson too is in tune; as Deleuze's interpretation of him has it:

(C)e n'est pas la matière, ce n'est pas l'étendue qui est dans l'espace, mais bien le contraire (Deleuze 1996:89).

Or in Bergson's own words:

(Les choses) ne sont pas en (l'espace), c'est lui qui est en elles" (E:1336).

## **Social framing of memory**

Bachelard and Roupnel were certainly not alone opposing Bergson's views. Sociologist Maurice Halbwachs<sup>46</sup>, once an adherent of Durkheim's and an admirer of Bergson changed into an ardent critic of both in his *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* (1994/1925) etc. His main point is that there is no sufficient base for reliable memories 'inside' single individuals' psyches; they depend on the support of social groups, institutions etc. such as families, religions, classes. As for recall he says:

Le passé, en réalité, ne se réparait pas tel quel, que tout semble indiquer qu'il ne se conserve pas, mais qu'on le reconstruit en partant du présent (:VIII).

The *on*, 'one', reconstructing agent here clearly is not an individual alone, but a couple or a group in its material setting of capital, cultural or other. This is clear once you consider a case when your memory becomes uncertain, defective or missing: 'Where did I leave my glasses/umbrella/camera? Where now did I find that precious quote from Weber?' etc. The normal course of action for remedying such losses is most likely to reflect alone first, next search the room, flat, books or library, but if to no avail? Of course, ask a partner, friend, colleague, passer by for assistance.

First among the authors we've detailed here, Halbwachs was indubitably and expressly a radical in the present sense. For him, Marx was a theory, not anathema,

though he did not follow marxism all the way. In his early years, he contributed to Jaurès' *l'Humanité*, his text on the repression of a Berlin strike provoking scandal (Namer 1994:310). His close studies of the (then new, industrial) working classes made him support change of their living conditions, unlike Bergson and Bachelard. As a theorist he was influenced by Bergson, Durkheim, and later Marx, Leibniz, Simiand, Simmel, Veblen, and not least Weber whom he read in German on its publication. In later years he criticised them all, possibly with the exception of Leibniz – and Simiand, another ex-Durkheimian and a close colleague.

He too did WW1 service, administrative, not in the trenches. The war years was a “rupture massive” (Namer p. 313) in French history; though victorious, tensions, rifts and upheavals were numerous, e.g. between war supporters and pacifists; Jaurès, remember was shot because of his pacifism in 1914. Shortly after the war, the French socialist party was split by the Communist secession, and movements of the extreme right surfaced and gained some power, not only in Italy and Germany but in France etc. as well. A time for pessimism in a convinced social democrat, even if the victory of *Le front populaire* in 1936, which he supported with enthusiasm, gave a few years of comfort.

Halbwachs' ideas of memory are notably different from unreflecting common sense. Very briefly, social memory is cast as something of a critical successor of Durkheim's conception *la conscience collective*, which he pictured as a real force, but split rather than harmonious. Hence also the concept of organic solidarity had to be modified: Increasing specialisation and division of labour do not automatically engender the solidarity of mutual dependency or complementarities; it also gives rise to strife and narrow-mindedness, split, conflicting Collective Beliefs or Memories, even within the working class, then recently formed in France, Germany (and Norway, cf. Bull 1972/58). He toyed with the idea of “... proposer un sens général à l'oubli et à la transformation de la mémoire collective” (Namer, p.314). A present reader is reminded of Bourdieu's (1993) famous “Travail du nuit”, from *La misère du monde*, the story (later dramatised) of a young woman in night work sorting post, while dreaming, trying to remember the happier days of her countryside background, forgetting present hardships.

In Namer's analysis, the later Halbwachs turned from conflict class theories to more of what was later known as stratification theory, with everybody striving to improve their position no matter what their class or stratum position. Dissatisfaction with Marxian economism was a main reason; as Namer would have it, he moved in a direction much later made famous by Habermas, a profound belief in the powers of continued dialogue as a basis for a democracy under threat, then and now. Which could not avoid that the poor man, Jew and (ex)

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Marxist, ended in Buchenwald, deported, later succumbing shortly before the end of WW2.

Anyhow, Halbwachs' theory of collective memory has a place for *l'oubli*, the forgotten, even if changing in later years. For as the power of traditional social institutions such as family, religion, class were waning, the question becomes how narrow or wide the social groups or categories supporting memories were, from fellow specialist workers or employees, up to the entire nation. A Norwegian reader is reminded of Halvdan Koht's early work (e.g. Koht 1926) on the working class' increasing maturity, taking eventually a central position in national affairs; social democracy victorious, in principle and the while, in the 30ies when it gained power in France, Spain, the Scandinavian countries and briefly in Britain.

How do we know that we have forgotten?<sup>47</sup> Bergson and Freud agreed that in the final analysis there is no forgetting; all memories, good, bad or neutral, are stored somehow in our minds, capable of recall. Halbwachs disagreed; social uprooting for example implies fading, disfigured or lost memories. They can perhaps be restored or revived, but hardly every detail. We find out that we have forgotten by being reminded by (trustworthy) present institutional companions, helped sometimes by material supports, e.g. memorials: Halbwach's last published work was entitled *La topographie légendaire des évangiles en Terre Sainte*.

The concept of memory is ambiguous in the sense that the word denotes both the ability of recall, at will or spontaneously, and the content recalled. The latter concept comes dangerously close to that of knowledge, perhaps even of mind (noesis). There may be future borders to be drawn, or trespassed here.

### **'The Art of forgetting'**

We find some basis, then, for proposing that **Memory must presuppose Forgetting, by the same dialectical necessity that *durée* presupposes *rupture***. Not everything (pace Freud and Bergson) can be remembered; remembering one thing regularly excludes other memories. Our next aid for addressing the other side of this contradiction is Adrian Forty & Susanne Küchler (eds. 1999), *The art of forgetting*<sup>48</sup>. Both editors are at University College, London, Forty as an historian of architecture, Küchler as an anthropologist, the other seven contributors are mostly in History of Art, cultural history or anthropology. In the words of Forty's introduction

The central problem that the essays in this book have in common is how artefacts constitute part of the process of social forgetting ... (It is surely a feature of memorials – and this is true not only of war memorials but of all commemorative artefacts – that they permit only certain things to be remembered, and by exclusion cause others to be forgotten ... (1999:8-9).

And Forty concludes his intro by citing Walter Benjamin on Proust's *Recherche* (cf. our motto), "a work of forgetting, in which remembrance is the woof and forgetting the warp" (1999:16).

One of Forty's points of departure is a text by Austrian art historian Alois Riegl, *Der Moderne Denkmalskultus* (Riegl 1928/03, cf. Forty 1999:4), who held that "... the quality for which monuments were most venerated was ... their 'age value', their emotional evocation of a general sense of the passage of time, rather than for any special historical knowledge they might contain. ... they became material enactments of the mental decay of images supposed to contain the process of forgetting and, ultimately, oblivion". To which Forty's conclusion is "... there is cause to doubt the general assumption that material objects can take the place of the mental form of memory" (ibid.). Of course, similarly as for the Value not to be found by chemists etc. in *Commodities*, there is no more Memory to be found in a statue, a cherished (near) ruin, items on the UN World Heritage list etc<sup>49</sup>. Somehow, culture, language, discourse etc. will have to intervene, or else a memorial will tend to fade, distort and finally fall into oblivion. Memory is very likely subject to the same processes of *levelling* and *sharpening* of which Allport & Postman (1947) studies of rumour is a *locus classicus*.

So far in Forty's interpretation. Riegl's own text is basically a distinction between three types of valuation of monuments from the past; (1) monuments made with their makers' explicit intention of commemorating an event, person etc. of the past (*gewollte Erinnerungswert*) – the Trajan or Ashoka columns say for still famous examples, and any old tombstone with an inscription still readable for the (mostly) not famous. (2) The second type is *historical value*, where the present recognises the value of a 'typical' work of the past regardless of what the intentions of its makers may have been, such as archaeology's finds. (3) Third, *general age value*, typical or not, the present appreciates an old object simply for its having survived, bearing visible signs of having endured age.

Riegl's view is that the three telescope into each other; the *gewollte* are part of the historic, which in their turn are forms of age value. But contradictions occur, e.g. when refreshing the inscriptions etc. on the first may endanger its age value.

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Largely between the lines is the realisation that all types are vulnerable. At all times, dialectical change may occur, e.g. when the yesterday's venerated church or castle etc. ruins become the quarries of today. Or in Riegl's own instance, today's cherished Baroque paintings were once seen as pitiful decline from Renaissance brilliance.

Halbwachs' *cadres sociaux* often involve material or material-institutional carriers, *matière ouvrée*. Combined or not with Riegl's earlier insights this means that the bases of social memory are enduring much of the time, yet always amenable to change, sometimes drastic. We have cited Namer (1994): Halbwachs' first theoretical problem was "comment expliquer l'oubli social" (:324). The idea that we carry all our past impressions with us forever – Bergson's *boules de neige* (E:496, cf. above) is mistaken<sup>50</sup>.

Attempt to damage or eradicate collective memories by destroying their *Denkmale* are numerous, Saddam's statue in Baghdad, the ups and downs of the Vendôme column and statues, recorded e.g. in Harvey (2000, chap. 18), Stalin and Lenin statues in the ex Eastern Block, Oslo's moved German WW2 cemetery from nice and exposed *Ekeberg* slope to less nice and exposed industrial *Alnabru* etc. etc. In general there seems to be a demand for eradicating or slandering beaten enemies of all sorts, as if the victors cannot help themselves fearing their auratic power even after they are defeated.

An example of unwelcome or contested memories: At least one major fortress built by the Nazi regime on the Norwegian coast as part of their 'Atlantic Wall' is remarkably well preserved more than 60 years after, big guns and all. Recently there has been a minor yet notable popular movement for its celebration, dressing in look-alike Nazi *Wehrmacht* uniforms etc. No support of Neo-Nazism intended, it appears, only admiration for the site, scale and architecture of the fort. Local museum curators' efforts to discourage the movement have been of little effect. Notably, this takes place near a town now rebuilt and thriving yet nearly bombed off the map by the Nazi *Luftwaffe* in 1940. One surmises stories told and retold by grandfathers etc., proud (despite all) Norwegian construction workers on this (despite all) landmark.

Another, more well known example, is Pollak (1986) "La gestion de l'indicible", on the difficulties of interviewing NN-camp survivors who often tried to break off in mid-interview. One reason emerging was that the survival of some implied less or more directly compromising the life of fellow prisoners: One person could hide but not many when the feared parade commands came. And of course it took survival to recognise which commands were fearful and which less so – unpleasant memories indeed for the lucky survivors<sup>51</sup>.

Finally as for disregard, Oslo's *Aftenposten* July 8<sup>th</sup> 2008 features front-page title "Building on and devastating national heritage" – such as Iron age barrows, Bronze age and earlier rock carvings etc.

As for individual memory (pace Halbwachs), consider the historians' slogan *testis unus, testis nullus*: 'one witness is no witness'. Historical sources need to be very carefully sifted and checked; not every contemporary witness is 'willing or able to tell the truth'. An additional difficulty of historical research is that conscious attempts of falsification must be reckoned with, probably no less frequent in common, 'lay' memorising. And less-than-conscious attempts to 'rewrite history', personal or more inclusive, euphemising or dysphemising, are probably as frequent and as misleading. 'The art' of writing CVs is no exception, cf. again Bourdieu's "L'illusion biographique" (footnote 51).

We conclude that Memory, and its counterpart Forgetting, both are collective, social, cultural in character. We may try to base memory in 'hard facts', monuments etc. but the ties are always vulnerable, in need of reviving lest they be permanently forgotten in the end. Why, even Rome's venerable Foro Romano was popularly known as Campo Vaccino, 'the cow-field' and used as such for a millennium.

### **Time in Things, i.e. Space**

Some think of Things, of Matter, as static, inert or inanimate. True, matter cannot literally act on its own, but it certainly can surprise, change unaided – wear being a main process – or in interaction with other elements of matter, even entirely without human intervention: *gutta cavat lapidem, non vi sed saepe cadendo* (Latimer). Nothing is forever, not even diamonds, which have the unpleasant habit of disappearing, by theft, loss, neglect, or mere absentmindedness.

Much more important, though, is the idea of Mead (cf. above) and its ramifications, that 'the Hand', i.e. human action or labour, is responsible for what we call physical things. Not only in the sense that we can pick up, inspect and handle things in nature; for millennia, we and our forbears are *embodied* in much of nature, 'the inclusive We', increasingly so in recent centuries and decades. A materialism that is not dialectical in this sense is untenable.

Etymologically, the word *engineer* derives from Lat. *gigno* or *geno*, meaning originally to beget, including bright ideas, genius. In French they still call such professions *génie civil*, *génie urbain*; their job is to incorporate spirit, that is, human projects or intentions, into matter. And Swedish colleague Johan Fornäs' idea of the present's increasing *culturalisation*<sup>52</sup> seems to hold similar import.

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Of course, the 'spirit' we (and forbears) have incorporated in matter can fade, be forgotten or unintelligible with time. Yet we can, aided if need be by archaeologists etc., still recognise for example the stone axe or flint scrapers of paleolithic men and women, i.e. after millennia.

Monuments, cf. Forty above, some monuments at least, may in this view be special cases, even exceptions. For unlike most tools or other artefacts they are not made with any specific *utility* in mind. Take for example the very numerous monuments of WW1 soldier victims in British towns and cities: They commemorate (great) grandfathers not often remembered today, of course, and as such may be celebrated, rejected, or ignored, seen as indifferent, even worthless. In Norway similar monuments of WW2 victims are put to use on special occasions such as National Day celebrations and speeches, i.e. rarely more than once a year. Their future come decades and centuries can only be guessed at; one fair guess being that use revival attempts will occur should we, mercy forbid, become involved in future great wars.

## **Material time-space**

There has been a revival of interest for different general sociological concepts of time and space in recent decades. Among the best known, Anthony Giddens' (1984) concept of time-space *distanciation*, leans heavily on the work of Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand, as does David Harvey's (1989) work on time-space *compression*. Both adapt, with criticism, versions of Hägerstrand's abstract general model of individual paths through three-dimensional time-space. But this later model of Hägerstrand's is not where the real strength of his research was based. His *Innovation diffusion as a spatial process* (1967/1953) abounds with maps, charts and tables, but yet no general model of time-space like those discussed by Giddens and Harvey. It is very much a down-to-earth study, literally too, featuring prominently the introduction of a series of Material Objects and Object Systems such as bovine TBC control, local postal services, automobiles, telephones and their networks etc., all of which were introduced gradually in a (then) very rural Swedish district, Southern Östergötland, c. 1920-1950. As 'complementary elements' he studied also the introduction of the tractor, automatic binder, milking machine, horse-drawn hoe, plumbing to barns and residences, the refrigerator and electric range. And he deplores that introduction of the radio could not be added since the relevant archive material had been destroyed (1967/53:12-15).

One could hardly conceive of a more staunch and genuine Materialist based study – only Hägerstrand was no way a historical or dialectical Materialist. Yet it seems evident that his data confirms our stand that Time and Space are properties of, or relations between, Material Things and their Users, new or old. Alternatively, this may of course be extended into theories of Time and Space as general abstract dimensions. But it certainly also opens up for more immanent interpretations such as that sketched here.

## V. Rhythmisation

Don't forget your objects!  
Fabian<sup>53</sup>

### **Rhythms of the present?**

Returning now to Bachelard and his *sillons* and *bornes du champ*, are there more or less similar visualisations to be found in present western societies? The most spontaneous suggestion may be motorways and their cars and queues, or other commuting, by underground, tram, train or bus lines, and airports small and large with their crafts and flights.

So much for today's *sillons*, now where are the *bornes* to be found? A first idea takes us to the start and end of voyages, commuting or other, i.e. homes, workshops, schools and kindergartens, shops or malls, assembly halls, cinemas, theatres, restaurants, bars, festivals, *cages aux folles*, and what not; different *Life-worlds* generally. On closer look, what many of these have in common these days is the dependence on *screens* of various types; TV, PC, cinema screens, great festivals using giant screens to blow-up performing 'stars' to visible size for the multitude etc. Even the theatre is occasionally experimenting with a mix of screen and actor shows. And car drivers invariably face a *wind-screen* – a picture more real perhaps but with contents as untouchable as those on any telly screen.

### **Heartbeats: *instants ou durée*?**

About time to start summing up on time, space, and our objects of everyday lives ('the inclusive We'). I suggest that we conceive of time and space not as inde-

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pendent, distinct dimensions, but rather as a dialectical couple, interacting, perhaps competing, each basically dependent on the other, in some conformity with Bachelard's view.

Bergson's *durée* is largely a phenomenon of individual psychology. I suggest its being recast as rhythmic, collective and extended to the world of material phenomena. 'The inclusive We', ourselves and our material life-worlds, have duration too. Things endure, yes but they also begin, end, and transform – slowly, faster, or abruptly. In the words of the scripture "But of that day and hour knoweth no man" (Matt. 24:36)<sup>54</sup>. Bachelard says:

Plutôt que la continuité de la vie, c'est la discontinuité de la naissance qu'il convient d'expliquer. C'est là qu'on peut mesurer la vraie puissance de l'être ... le retour à la liberté du possible (Bachelard cited from Partinaud 1996:87).

And: Le temps pourra sans doute renaître, mais il lui faudra d'abord mourir (Bachelard 1931:13)

Two new, striking expressions, yet an amount of doubt is due: If there is one, literally striking, physiological example of time as an instant, consider a single heartbeat. The preceding beat is no doubt gone forever – *néant*, or, its force remains in the bloodstream for a while, a short-lived hysteresis, sort of. The next beat remains vital, for most of us immediately following, regular and steady, for others too fast, too slow, irregular or troubled. But nevertheless, the very instant before it appears it cannot be taken entirely for granted, not quite yet there. For cardiac arrests do happen, as do unforeseen accidents, and today, who can rest assured that a suicide bomber or mad mass murderer is not just around the next corner?

For any single heart a very first beat may be traceable if not very accurately, from within the womb, so there is a beginning to it. And an end, for we all know that any single beat may be our very last – often but not invariably a minuscule probability. Yet physiological life depends, not only of instants, but also of some continuity, or at least, of each passing instant immediately giving way for a very similar next one.

Fascinating the idea of our passing away and being reborn with each new heartbeat, but mainly perhaps for the true believers such as Roupnel. The rest of us may conclude that organisms have continuity and rhythms, *rhythmic durée*, as well as single moments, each of which may prove decisive – creative, fatal or just regular everyday use, growth and wear. And that goes for material objects, their uses and senses as well ('the inclusive We').

Some will find that applying Bachelard's idea of *durée* as rhythms is unsatisfactory, an unpleasant compromise between the continuous and the discrete. Maybe so, but I think we have to concede that neither idea is viable alone. Take the single heartbeat again; it is real of course, immediately felt yet utterly dependent on a row of predecessors and successors. The rhythm, the flow is what is real, as much as the single elements. This goes for other, **micro**<sup>55</sup>, physiological rhythms as well: breath, metabolism, sleep and the awake state etc. As an idea, the single heartbeat becomes something akin to a ruler consisting of one single millimetre and nothing else. And the pure *durée* a ruler lacking all notches<sup>56</sup>.

### **'Maintenant je vois'**

Returning now at long last to my original experience of rupture, in what way have our understanding improved – the experience of being stuck between now unfinished and yet impossible actions, of Time itself as if taking a pause, or *repos*? Actions first, our projects (*projets*) are closely knit, first to the actions/projects of other actors – social action – second, no less knit to the socio-material life-worlds in which we act, artefacts, tools, implements, raw materials and the senses collectively invested in them.

Bachelard speaks of the necessity "... à nous soumettre au temps, à être un objet parmi les objets" and soon after "... les mouvements nous apparaissent comme des simples conséquences des nos décisions, compte tenu, ce qui est très important, des *difficultés* de réaliser nos décisions" (1950/36:68, original italics): All projects may fail or be delayed, deformed.

The word is not standard French yet readily understood – *l'impensé*, the *not* thought, that which we are not at present able or willing to conceive of. Not even non-standard French is the term, and parallel concept – *l'infait*, the *not done*, that which we should, would or ought to have done but are presently not able or willing to enact, due for example to 'difficulties'. Our 'not dones' are kept as if in separate portfolios of grammar's conditional past (Fr. *conditionnel passé*), *l'infait*, projects envisaged but not yet begun, or begun but only half finished or less. Every one of us carry such portfolios, more or less separate according to the socio-material life worlds in which each belong.

"Le fil du temps est couvert des nœuds" (Bachelard 1950/36:67). The knot or pause in the afternoon of April 11<sup>th</sup> 2006 consisted of portfolio items and their corresponding material facts, first such as two non-refundable air tickets for the

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next evening, a rental contract for returning an automobile a few hours earlier, the remembered experience that some two hours driving is required for taking us to rental and airport etc., which boils down to 'leave by car not much later than 1130 tomorrow'. – About to be left behind is another portfolio of *l'infait*, the unfinished, such as 'we should have finished painting the cottage walls', 'another birch should have been felled, cut and chopped up in order to provide sufficient dry wood fuel for the next stay', 'we should have emptied stove and fireplace of ashes' etc. etc. – The third portfolio waiting at our arrival life-world contains more walls which should have been painted, small or more substantial repairs waiting to be done, shopping required to stock up a home out of use for weeks etc. etc.

All very banal, perhaps, and probably more so for those among us who can afford to hire a painter, woodchopper etc. to handle such jobs even in our absence. My fairly certain guess is, however, that such solutions do not make the portfolios disappear, they only change content: 'what should we do if the Hydro stocks keep falling, we should have sold them long ago, or risk having to do next paintings etc. ourselves'.

In the similar experience of Halbwachs:

(L)orsque quelque événement nous oblige ... à nous transporter dans un nouvel entourage matériel ... nous traversons une période d'incertitude, comme si nous avions laissé derrière nous notre personnalité tout entière: tant il est vrai que les images habituelles du monde extérieur sont inséparables de notre moi (Halbwachs 1997:193).

All socio-material items mentioned (and more) embody space, and duration; *rhythmic* duration, items being dragged in and out of active projects. Some are very short-lived, such as air tickets and rental contract, valueless on return. Others intermediate such as wood fuel, others again such as cottage and home liable to endure (if well tended) for decades. The surrounding landscapes and communities are liable to last even longer, for centuries, even millennia, but mind you, certainly not without changes both natural and socio-material, evident to any observer staying regularly for decades: Old neighbours go, some of their houses decay while others are renovated, trees grow while some are felled, old paths are overgrown, new ones taking other routes. Even some farmland grows over these days, while in urban settings green, waste or 'brown' fields are built over, etc. etc.

In sum then: Time – and of course Space – **in** Things and their interrelations, spontaneous, or dependent on passing rhythmically in and out of periods of human action or projects. Which is of course not to say that we can do away with

conventional, culturally coordinated clock time and calendar – or we would never have caught our plane and returned home. But on a deeper, sociological level, Time as well as Space do reside in interrelated Things; we all come to be, are put to use and start to wear, and, at (long) last, meet our end, leave time and space for good. All things have careers, including things such as we are – ‘the inclusive We’ once again. Many such careers may be thought banal, uninteresting, but that is a superficial view. In the right eyes all lives, all endurance is interesting, even exiting, Beckett’s *Molloy* being only one famous instance.

Schütz (1979, 1984) drawing on Husserl proposes an entirely different basis for understanding similar experiences, less dynamic and not at all materialistic. The *Lebenswelt* or Life world is cast as one and integral, only containing regions of different *Reichweite*, or Reach. But the examples of projects in the life world are with rare exceptions abstract, formal, Sartre’s “pure conscience formelle” once again. Even when Schütz writes in some detail of his woodchopping (1979:151ff) there is no mention of his aims, only means, pleasures and dangers. Did he do it for pleasure, exercise or for heating a room, or for pay? *Zeitstruktur*, *Reichweite*, even *Lebenswelt* etc all become pure thought, abstractions, formal. He quotes Bergson but not his crucial “le temps ne demande pas d’être vu, mais vécu”, cf. above. A lifeless, if not dead ‘Life world’ results. I suspect that a type of alienation is to blame, that of not seeing, not experiencing, not taking active part in life in its concreteness, e.g. metabolism and its demands, providing nourishment, and delight, from nature, indirect or directly<sup>57</sup>. On the one occasion I heard Marcuse in person<sup>58</sup> he stressed that Marx favoured proletarian power, not mainly because they were oppressed and exploited, but because they had direct, up close knowledge of the process of production – they only knew it. Most philosophers will know little about that, but the processes of re-production are open to all, even philosophers.

### **In sum**

I have discussed Time and Space to corroborate a Materialism, a *dynamic* materialism. It was better known as *dialectical* materialism, more exact perhaps but contaminated as an ideology of the Soviet system, today something of the past (that system, not dialectics as a philosophy).

Many think that materialism is a radical, even extreme, leftist position. Wrong, it is rather a ‘many-splendoured thing’. Capitalism itself, or the ‘techno-structure’ (Galbraith), today perhaps even ‘the world society’, is, despite the con-

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trary claims of Weber and a few pious business leaders, without doubt a form of materialism, very dynamic too. One basic weakness is that as a teleological system it remains open at the top (Marcuse): It has no ultimate or superior value or aim, for Economic Growth is cast as a no end process, thus cannot serve as an aim; *forward in all directions*, says Norwegian humorist Otto Jespersen. Let alone that exponential growth will ultimately deplete all resources, and that many are left to suffer in the process. *Welfare* capitalism, or socialism, social democracy, could fare better in the role of an ultimate value, if sincerely enacted from all sides. This is where a consistent dynamic materialism could belong, hopefully.

What place can there be for an 'ultimate aim' in a consistent materialism? Many believe that it must imply a complete rejection of all aims, intention, sense, purpose, idealism, Spirit etc. Wrong again. We have quoted above from Sartre, great both as a dialectician, materialist and phenomenologist: "Things are human precisely to the extent that men are things" – 'the inclusive We'. Products, things **embody** our intentions etc.; there is 'spirit', 'aims' etc. **within** worked matter. And where, these days, are *not* worked, 'virgin' matter to be found? It is a striking paradox that wherever virgin forests, species etc. may be found, it takes today human effort, human intentions to keep it untouched, by what? – yes, by the same human efforts and intentionality, which are exactly what threatens nature parks, wildlife preserves etc.

'Time' as a term figures in lots of quotes, metaphors etc. (cf. on Lakoff above). 'Time flies', 'time goes by', 'time passes', 'time runs on' etc. etc. Wrong once more, it is **we** (the inclusive We above) that fly, take off, land or crash; we come, stay and go by, pass; rest, run on, take five, drop out of the race etc. Briefly, Life itself, we ourselves, our material lives, are what flies, passes etc.

I have written about Time and Space also in the hope, perhaps vain, of disclosing them as euphemisms: Time and space do not exist in themselves, **Matter** exists<sup>59</sup>, rhythmic matter embodying both time and space, **worked matter** such as we ourselves are, our implements or *membres détachables* (Ponge), our surroundings and the uses we make of them, including the senses we ascribe to them, without which they would all be inoperable, useless. And we depend on their continued utility etc., in changed or present forms, for our very survival.

Time, finally, is always contested – 'rife with strife'; conflicts abound, not only over what our future should be, but no less over what past or pasts deserve to be remembered, or to be defamed, forgotten, go tracelessly extinct.

## **VI. Future research**

If I knew where jazz was going  
I would be there already  
H. Lyttleton

### **Careers; a concept for immanent time**

The remaining great question now is: What is the possible import of all this for the practice, or use if you please, of social or sociological research? It is hard to spell out a full answer, but we may single out one very promising concept, perhaps something of a coming paradigm: Hughes/Goffman/Becker's concept of *careers*. We quote (with permission) from Becker "The study of Careers" (unpublished, no date):

This pointed to the idea that everything could have a career, whatever it was. ... This insight led to seeing that there were careers as women and men, as straight and gay, as old or young, and all the other things we are. ... Organizations had careers too, and you could study the career of a medical speciality or a museum or a social movement. Etc.

Finally, objects have careers. Two examples: ... a scientific finding has a career, its fate lying completely in the hands of the people who dealt with it after it was published. ... Similarly, art objects have careers, going from their creation to their preservation or disappearance.

A final feature was the related notion of contingency, in the simple sense of something being dependent on, contingent on, something else happening. ... External ... or Internal contingencies

By now, it's clear that "career" is simply a way of talking about process or history.

I sincerely do admire Becker's work, on par with or indeed above that of Fabian. Yet once again not all points are equally well founded.

(1) History, for a start: It is imperative to study social facts, settings and institutions in the context of time that they embody together, agreed. But it takes but little reading of History, political or other, to realise that the past is not only still with us (as senses and uses, use-animated artefacts including texts etc.). Despite that, it is very pliable too, to past, present and future concerns. The Future simi-

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larly is with us as well, as project, intention, resolution or routine, eu- or dystopia, threat, disaster or 'promised land', all in some accord with present, including historic concerns. Enough said earlier about the views of Halbwachs, Adrian etc.; History, even of single things or careers, is rarely given, indisputable, unchanging fact, cf. once more Bourdieu's 'L'illusion...'

(2) "Objects have careers", 'everything has a career or careers', yes, but that's not all they have; they're *linked* too, they work, they are combined, used *together*. Leibniz cited Hippocrates: *sympnoia panta*, everything links together<sup>60</sup>, valuable as an insight yet not quite literally true. If we take Hippocrates as an excuse to use body metaphors, a body as a physiological system is in a sense fully connected, everything may influence everything else. Yet not all organs are as vital, some may be replaced, some (yet) not, others again may in the future be cultivated, on animals or from stem cells. My suggestion is introducing a concept of *Object Systems*, or rather *Use Provinces*<sup>61</sup>, sub-systems stronger linked intra than inter, in the model of Medical Science and its various specialities: brain; eye or ophthalmo-; ear-nose-throat or oto-rhino-laryngo, etc. all the way down to the pedal extremities, not forgetting comprehensive varieties such as internal medicine.

No intention whatsoever of supporting organismic models of society nor of embracing Parson-Luhman-type models of general functionalism; it's a down-to-earth material model I have in mind. Take a hammer – the 'generalised hammer' as a type – for example: It can be used without, yet regularly links up with nails of different kinds and sizes, with planks, beams, sheathing etc. of many different special types well known by joiners, carpenters and related craftspersons. Object *type* careers are involved too; for major tasks the hammer was nearly replaced by pneumatic nailers recently, and when these again proved too dangerous, rechargeable drills using screws instead of nails are increasingly used<sup>62</sup>. Numerous such use provinces can be identified and analysed, take Bertaux (1981) "Life stories in the bakers trade" as one example.

For a more complex example, critically important, consider private automobiles: Of course *one single specimen* can be analysed as a career, from producer to distributor, agent, salesman, owner 1, service, damage, accidents, repairs, owner 2 – n etc., until its end on the breaker's yard. Similarly for the private automobile as *a general type*<sup>63</sup>, well done for example by Flink (1975) *The car culture*. But this, especially for the type case, involves taking a lot for granted, overlooking all of the automobile's huge infrastructure, its links or Use Provinces. A single car bereft of all such complementary artefacts is useless or nearly; an incomplete object (Otnes 1994). Its use demands garages or parking grounds,

roads and their vast systems, oil and petrol provision and its stations, mechanics, registration system, traffic police, government or local administrations etc., etc. All single items here may be analysed as careers of their own – for example, ethnologists' studies of filling stations do exist. But there is also the more adequate grand view, the career of a *use province as a whole*, and of course not only for hammers and building, cars and road transport.

For Becker too all careers – Fr. *parcours*, *itineraries*, *trajectoires*, Engl. course, even *uncouplings*<sup>64</sup>, Norw. *forløp* – do involve their own props and flats: The pot smoker's pot, pipe or cig, hangout and initiated company; the jazz musician's horn, ensemble, stage or nightclub, written or improvised music; the teacher's schoolhouse, course-books, blackboard, today often ICT screens too; for engineers and asylum inmates similarly, etc.

(3) One final objection: The career concept keeps track of changes but not in any way clearly of changes' *directions*; Becker's careers are scalars, not vectors. They can no doubt be used for studying the production of social equality and inequality, the basic theme of mobility studies, basic also for sociology as a discipline, but with no model studies indicated as yet. In contrast, standard sociological mobility studies are valuable for tracking general social trends yet tends to become too much of C. Wright Mills' "abstracted empiricism". Studies such as Ryan & Sacrey *Strangers in Paradise* (1966), a qualitative case study of non-academic students' troubled careers in academic jobs, are all too rare. But in sum I think this points to promising future studies based on the career concept as applied to (in-)equality studies. And of course, Bourdieu's famous *La distinction* (1979) includes a few brief individual career examples, alongside heaps of solid statistical data. It is as notable in this context, however, for bringing (in-)equality studies back to everyday detail, practices of what he calls the space of lifestyles, details such as liking or not Ravel's piano concerto for the left hand, liking or not bacon or plain red wine etc.

Ideas reminiscent of the career concept were pioneered by C. Wright Mills as early as in 1959, when he wrote:

(T)he overall questions of the social sciences .... (are) the study of biography, of history, and the problems of their intersection within social structure (1959/1970:149).

Yet, Becker's *Outsiders* appeared only four years later, it should be remembered, and Goffman's *Asylums* only two<sup>65</sup>.

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## Possible model studies

Finally, brief mention of a few research studies which apply, or fail to apply entirely, our time-in-things plus careers model.

(1) A text called *Locus fugit*<sup>66</sup> (Andersen ed. 1994) analyses the career of a (once) prestige building in Oslo, The Old Lodge (Norw. *Gamle logen*). Constructed 1836-39 in the small town then called Christiania it was put to use gradually, 1844 being the year of its completion and full splendour. 1200 square metres – double that if basement and attic are included, both still in use (gallery, offices) – may not seem much but it sure was at that particular time and location, the provincial capital's first high society ballroom, without competition. Marginal in European and even in Nordic context, this building's career is interesting for its numerous great leaps or pivots, bordering almost on brinkmanship: Building owners were the Freemasons who moved to more prestigious housing 1894, after mastering a near bankruptcy in 1864. 1894-1940 municipal authorities took over; it became acting Town Hall until the present hall was gradually put to use 1947-50. Then, Oslo Dockers' Union took over, using its Grand Hall as their lunch- and call-room for 20 years, years of rough wear and glory lost, even if it was occasionally used as concert hall much of the way. Then, surprisingly, glory restored, helped by the 80ies boom or yuppie years, etc.

A building's career is analysed:

...as a sequence of stages whose continuity and direction – stable, falling, rising – never can be taken for granted. In such a view the continuous stages of relative immobility may perhaps be less interesting than the ruptures, rifts, *the pivoting or critical points*, separating them ... some of which stand out almost like *voids* or rather as suppressions, a past one would prefer not to accept, better 'forget'; aphasia, willed or spontaneous<sup>67</sup>,

cf. on Forty above. The analysis goes on to distinguish *internal* (such as the near bankruptcy) versus *external* (cf. Becker) pivots, the latter being mainly the many competing, greater, more luxurious or spacious building of a rapidly growing town into city, from some 20 000 to 200 000 inhabitants in the course of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and more than double that today.

Further, general concepts and theories adapted from e.g. Habermas (1962) and Heidegger (1989) are taken into account. The career of a single building proves to link very closely to the *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit*, as the latter took shape locally during nearly two centuries.

(2) Fernando Ortiz (1881-1969) *Contrapunteo Cubano del tabaco y el azucar* (1963) is, lamentably, unlikely to be well known outside of a small circle of Hispanophile ethnologists and anthropologist here in North Europe. It is nevertheless a monumental work, prefaced flatteringly by Bronislaw Malinowski. An analysis of the interplay of the two traditional export products of the Cuban nation through the ages, forming in the end a total or holistic analysis of that entire nation's history. I challenge any colleague of the Nordic countries to try similar analyses:

Norway – stockfish and timber, changing into oil, gas and salmon; Sweden – iron, steel, weaponry, cars; Denmark – meats, cheeses and shipping; Finland – timber, paper changing into mobile phones etc. Even Great Britain was once labelled in half jest, 'a rock of coal in a sea of fish'.

To a contemporary reader Ortiz' volume (540 pp.) is likely to seem curious, erudite yet abounding with detail. On closer reading, however, the details weave together into very real historical counterpoints; Malinowski saw them as functionalistic, but *dialectic* is more apt as a term. The text moves from a dialectic of commodities, geography and climate, through one of symbolism, finally into a political economy, including analyses of slave labour and its revolts, of the big foreign capitalism responsible for the *ingenios*<sup>68</sup> or great sugar mills. Although Ortiz is known as chair, "... as early as 1945, of the Cuban-Soviet Cultural institute" (*Granma* 23.9.1990) the only Marx I've found mentioned in the *Contrapunteo* is one Don Luis Marx, a great Cuban tobacco manufacturer (1963:28). A few examples: Tobacco<sup>69</sup> was a local plant, sugarcane<sup>70</sup> imported, through stages from distant origins (India, Arabia, Egypt). Further:

El tabaco es oscuro, de negro a mulato; el azúcar es clara, de mulata a blanca (:7)

Tobacco workers, especially cigar makers, were something of a workers' aristocracy, while sugar mill workers went from slavery to poorly paid proletarians, many of them seasonal harvest (*zafra*) workers.

Ortiz, born in what was then still a Spanish colony, had a rare understanding of the complexities of Cuba's ethnic composition, including the strong and valuable cultural etc. contributions of its Afro-American population. His coining of the concept *transculturation* is typical: When cultures meet, the usual thing is for each to influence the other, not one-sided 'acculturation' or suppression. His works on ethnomusicology are still celebrated, e.g. *Africanía de la música folklórica de Cuba* of 1965.

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As for his political economy something of a conclusion is found on p. 51, where principal forms of the sugar industry is listed thus:

*Maquinismo, latifundismo, colonismo, trata de braceros, supercapitalismo, ausentismo, extranjerismo, corporativismo, e imperialismo* (orig. itals.).

He was probably more of a radical Cuban nationalist than a leftist of strong convictions; I've not been able ascertain to what extent he supported, or indeed opposed, the revolutionary regime of his later years. His being published in the 60ies speaks for support or at least non-opposition.

(3) Arlie Hochschild (1997) *The Time Bind* is a work of deserved fame. Of course, young working parents of the West experience strict, even forbidding, time budgets. Yet I think that blaming Time, or emphasising Time in its title, may be misleading. Indeed, something of a euphemism, as long as Time is cast as something faceless, abstract, external, not immanent. With Time as sole culprit, no one in particular is responsible for loosening binds, reducing stress, improving parent-child and other family relations etc.<sup>71</sup>

Better then to see the bind as residing in Things, Object Systems or Use Provinces (cf. Cowan 1989): The Bind is very real, yet mediated by material systems, such as the functional division of Western city and suburb zones, its housing types and locations, and likewise for workshops. The patterns of commuting following, massively by private automobiles crowding even the widest motorways during rush hours. Next following, disinvestment in rail and bus services as well as in the co-localisation of homes and workshops in minor centres etc. Mainly to blame, of course, is the conventional accumulation expectations of capitalist firms large or small: 7 %<sup>72</sup> yield for 10 years will double the principal – or firm stock of capital, net assets. Keeping 7 % for the next 10 years then will demand, for a start, doubling the yield, measured as real worth, not as a percentage. How long can this be going on, without employee, resource, etc. pressures increasing exponentially too? Or without protests from employees, from the neighbours of raw material sources, polluting emissions, etc. etc.?

\*

Does this mean that sociologists have to become ethnologists or geographers?

No, because we possess a much richer conceptual and theoretical tradition, closer to philosophy than them, some scant examples of which are mentioned above.

## VII. The impossible epilogue

Time ... must have a stop  
Shakespeare, *Henry IV-1*

### **In the End**

In the end, The End, I think that the founding fact, the archetype as it were, of our 'we're leaving...' -situations is very simply the anticipation of Individual Death, always approaching, how near or far rarely certain or predictable, and if so, certainly a 'once in a lifetime experience'.

There is a lot of confusion surrounding common thinking about Death, to be expected for such a taboo subject. It is for one thing the 'Ultimate Drama', hence capable of staging private, secret dramas, changing routine, dull lives into 'I'm fatally ill' as an imagination toyed with, a superior stage of Hypochondria. For another, this gives rise to near magical, largely private little rites of eluding, softening or fooling the Reaper: elderly people wont to collect tokens like soap heels, rubber bands etc., to loath scrapping food leftovers etc. – they should 'live forever' of course. Then on the graver side it certainly is the business of physicians and their Medical Science and Medical Infrastructure generally, not excluding its Politics and not forgetting final palliative treatment. Still graver, it involves the suffering of those contracting long-lasting, incurable fatal disease – and of their close ones. Not least, untimely, premature, violent etc. deaths; they are the very real tragedies.

But at last, or in The End one final time, individual death once it has occurred is a problem not of the deceased but of his or her survivors: For the Dead can know no problems; it is Us – or a future Them – who are left with the loss or relief, the remains, grief and ceremonial, the heritage if any etc., cf. Otnes (1997:171,188). Quoth Epicur:<sup>73</sup> "Stupide est donc celui qui dit avoir peur de la mort non parce qu'il souffrira en mourant, mais parce qu'il souffre à l'idée qu'elle approche. Ce dont l'existence ne gêne point, c'est vraiment pour rien qu'on souffre de l'attendre! Le plus effrayant de maux, la mort, ne nous est rien, disais-je: quand nous sommes, la mort n'est pas là, et quand la mort est là, c'est nous que ne sommes pas!"

As for 'natural death', the weaknesses of really old age, in my experience (second hand, of course) that process is so very slow that it is not really much to fear; it is a succession of steps of weakening, or a very slow fading rather, its final

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point not rarely relief rather than suffering and grief. A main point would seem to be to learn (second hand again) to celebrate faculties and pleasures left – for some are always left – rather than to bemoan other faculties and pleasures as they inevitably fade or get lost.

Beliefs in afterlives or transmigration abound. Their base is, I think, that while 'I think therefore I am' can and should be criticised (Husserl 1996/36) it remains consistent if not entirely credible. Its counterpart, 'I think that I think not' on the other hand is not only a contradiction but an outright impossibility. Yet human minds struggle with that, seeking relief in such ideas; pious untruths, the best of which can be said that they may have a mission as relief for the survivors of victims of death, when "...on sent avec quelle nouveauté hostile l'instant suivant "asaille" notre cœur" (Bachelard above), eager for comfort and relief highly appreciated.

## **Another Time**

Anthropologist Terje Millerjord's remarkable MA thesis from 2002, Towards a theory of time (Norw. text) came to my notice only after the text above was written. Valuable in its own right Millerjord also cited sources very worthy of discussion such as Barbara Adam: Time and social theory from 1990, George Herbert Mead: The philosophy of the present, 1932 and Helga Nowotny: Entstehungszeit, 1987 plus Bourdieu's out of character chapter on time etc. in Méditations pascaliennes. Excepting Millerjord, however, neither discusses Bachelard (although Mead seems in tune) nor are Fabian, Halbwachs, Lakoff or Forty mentioned. So I feel my text has a message as it stands despite omissions. Changes and additions – perhaps another Time!

## **Notes**

1. Invited introduction to the ESA sociology of consumption conference *Materiality, meaning, power*, Vuoranta, Finland 28.-30.8.08, revised later. Exchanging views with Dale Southerton, Alan Warde and two referees was very helpful.
2. Historian Stewart Gordon, altogether unfamiliar to me, refers to "Scandinavian philosopher Per Otnes" in his *When Asia was the World* (2008:193). Flattering, and written in good faith, trying to apply ideas I have published (Otnes 1997). But I am not a philosopher; I write as a sociologist, then and now.
3. How or whether this squares with Hume's theory of causality is perhaps an interesting

- question, not to be elaborated here. Quoth colleague Tom Johansen: ‘Popper killed Hume! Induction is dead!’
4. Virtually all Bergson’s written works are collected in *Œuvres* (1970, here cited as *Œ*), and *Mélanges* (1972 cited as *M*)
  5. Mead’s next sentence contrasts us to *dogs* in this respect; dogs which ”take their food with the very organs by which (they) masticate it”, i.e. ’no hands’.
  6. ‘Situation’ remains vague as a concept, ‘something in which something else takes place’. Properly speaking perhaps not even a concept: *Omne definitio est negatio*, all definition must exclude something, while anything or almost could belong, or not belong, to a situation.
  7. Of course, some projects or actants are portable, a book or a laptop for example. And having a packed agenda for every day in your office is probably more frequent than anticipating moves. Yet office or workshop days invariably end with commuting to an intimate sphere – restoration. reproduction, rest, relaxation.
  8. From Lat. *trans-* and, *humus*, distant earth or lands, moving between seasonal pastures.
  9. This may approach what Colin Campbell used to call ’the accordion problem’ of (social) action; one doing leading to – or avoiding, excluding – another, figuratively like an accordion bellow’s ins and outs.
  10. The role of *Sorge*, care, in Heidegger’s *Zeit* comes to mind, cf. Bourdieu (1988).
  11. We will return to the **micro** rhythms of physiology etc. later.
  12. With a speed of somewhere between that of the growth of a nail and of a hair, says *Wikipedia*.
  13. Allochrone, cf. on Fabian below.
  14. ’Early’ religions do not distinguish well or at all between priests and astronomers.
  15. The first German edition *Das Alltagsleben* 1978 is by far better and more comprehensive.
  16. In Norway, 2009 is declared ’cultural heritage year’ as well as Hamsun year.
  17. Empirical cognitive science seems to hold that studying our brain neurons involves predicting our conscious impressions and ideas of all kinds. For one, Bergson (cf. later), thoroughly familiar with the brain research of his day, firmly opposed this in his great *Essai* (*Œ*: 97 ff., cf. 842 ff). Further, there need be nothing a priori wrong with a priori reasoning; mathematics, and dependent disciplines such as physics, mechanics, statistics, economics are little else, yet abounding with truths widely held to be evident. Philosophy may be less exact, perhaps, but at least as abstract – somewhat lamentably, cf. above.
  18. Not even that perfectly, the Sun spot cycle is reported to have changed for the unpredictable recently. Generally, whereas Newtonian physics could predict all planetary movement, current astronomy includes phenomena or concepts less or not at all predictable: quasars, pulsars, black holes etc.
  19. A learned linguist, he knew this for sure, and said so in his letters. This, however, contrasts notably with his idea that *signifiant* and *signifié* have only a conventional or random relation – and etymologies, when demonstrable cannot be called random – maybe one reason why he never published his *Cours* himself.
  20. Cf. Zahavi 2001, cf. Habermas 1981:197-8, “dass Husserl das Problem der Intersubjektivität nicht gelöst hat”
  21. René Char’s exchange with Heidegger in 1966, on a nature trail in Vaucluse: ‘Vous arriverait-il de faire, comme nous en ce moment, des promenades dans la nature avec

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- vosre maître Husserl?' Heidegger a un sourire. Il regarde René Char dans les yeux: 'Husserl n'était jamais dans la nature, Husserl était toujours dans la phénoménologie' (*Magazine littéraire* no. 340, 1996:51). And on leafing through Schuhmann's *Husserl-Chronik* from 1977 the impression is certainly that of a life almost entirely spent in theories, untouched or nearly by even the most shocking 'life events', such as the loss of one son and the second badly wounded during WW1, which does not seem to have distracted him much from his phenomenology.
22. Space in itself can hardly be divisible; it reflects only the possibility of mobility, our own and that of others, person or objects. Space without Matter in not an interesting concept; space is Distance between Material entities; the latter, not 'empty space' are (often) divisible. Cf. later.
  23. I owe to Krogh (2006) the insight that Husserl's retention and protention are *not* the same as memory and project. As pictured by Krogh, based on Husserl (2000/1928) etc., retention is more like an echo, an echo of echoes etc., while protention is an expectation, an expectation of expectations etc. In Sartre's words, protentions "... n'ayant en leur être aucun moyen de dépasser la conscience dont elles sont une structure, s'affaïssent piteusement sur elles-mêmes et ressemblent à des mouches qui se cognent le nez à la fenêtre sans pouvoir franchir le carreau" (Sartre 1943:145).
  24. We will return to Bachelard's critical *La dialectique de la durée* (1936/1950), and *L'intuition de l'instant* (1931), based on the modified *durée* concept of Bergson's later work, notably *La pensée et le mouvant* from 1934, a collection of texts composed between 1903-1932.
  25. He claims (E:169) that one such image stands out in the sense of being known both from without and from within, "c'est mon corps". Agreed, with the addition that this knowledge is neither complete nor infallible.
  26. Cf. Soulez&Worms (1997). His mother, father and younger siblings moved to London in 1869, never to return. One surmises a possible scandal (a 'rupture?') provoking this, but if so, nothing is known. Bergson must have been visiting London during school vacations etc., but once more, no details are known. Likewise for his mother's family and its standing: a Parisian Jewess of Irish ancestry, whether she left aunts, uncles or other relatives or friends in Paris to take some care of the boy also seems unknown. He remained close to his mother though; they are said to have written each other, he each Sunday, she each Tuesday all along. How he managed is also not known, yet when he entered the ENS, his manners were those of the upper middle class, an able fencer, retiring, ironic, sometimes jokingly called 'miss Bergson', confident enough to help bully Durkheim, a mere hick from the Vosges, France's 'far east', as '*lévite obstiné*' and '*rocher aride*' etc. (1997:52). A lasting animosity ensued. – His father Michel, Jew of Polish origin, was labelled *homo loquax*, chatterbox, by his son. A composer of little success in France and Switzerland he seems to have returned to the work of a pianist and piano teacher in London, hardly very remunerative.
  27. An ardent French patriot indeed, cf. his 'La force que s'use et celle qui ne s'use pas' (M:1105), published on the outbreak of war in 1914 and again in 1940. Here Germany is said to endorse 'la culte de la force brutale', whereas France holds 'un idéal de justice et de liberté', following which 'ceci tuera cela', 'l'Allemagne succombera'. More just, perhaps, but not much less brutal.
  28. Not excluding *durée* for once, it appears.
  29. From *Durée et simultanéité*, in Bergson (1970), orig. 1922.

30. The final periods of *Matière et mémoire*, cf. Sartre's 'L'alterité vient aux choses par les hommes et retourne des choses vers l'homme'.
31. Our motto from Proust is indeed an instance of a free, non-predictable association. Bergson however seems to read associations as akin to *motives*, making his determinist view on psychological associationism easier to understand. Our associations can be post- but rarely pre-dicted.
32. A sociologist of today may be reminded of Giddens' ideas of 'reflexivity' and 'self-identity'. That Bergson's single daughter, born deaf, with the years learned to talk was used by the father as an instance of 'la production de soi par soi' (she became a sculptor of some reknown).
33. 'Il faut des siècles de culture pour producer un utilitaire comme Stuart Mill' (Bourdieu 2000:9, C:1078).
34. We should remember, though, that Bourdieu, the ardent social critic especially of his later years, was definitely not a materialist, and adherent of dialectics only in the sense of Bachelard and Lobachevsky (Broady 1990:325), not that of Hegel or Marx. Difficult then to see that the allegations of his Marxism have any foundation at all.
35. One term Latin, the other Greek. Coevalness in Greek would spell something like Syn-Aionas.
36. Norwegian philosopher Hans Skjervheim, cited approvingly by Habermas, coined a distinction between the Participant and Observer roles of social scientists, reminiscent of Fabian's couple coeval and allochrone.
37. The two may merge, yet regularly a fragile merger, 'falling in/out of love', 'making/breaking with friends'.
38. Reading Fabian was what first put me on the track of Bachelard's and Roupnel's not at all well known texts on time as rhythmic instants of life and matter, time and space.
39. Oral presentation, Globalisation conference, NTNU university, Trondheim, Aug 4th 2005.
40. Among the rare colleagues I've heard adhering to similar stands are Jonathan Friedman whom I've heard say that 'of course, nothing but the present moment is real'. And perhaps Eriksen (2001) *The Tyranny of the instant*.
41. They were indeed close, lifelong friends; Lescure (1983) speaks of Roupnel, although 14 years his senior, as 'l'ami inoubliable' of Bachelard. Their backgrounds were notably different from Bergson's, Roupnel son of a *chef de gare*, Bachelard of a cobbler turned owner, with his wife, of a *tabac*. Both families owned vineyards and other land, and both boys grew up in minor or provincial towns, *la France rurale*, Champagne and Bourgogne, entirely different from Bergson's urban background. Bachelard himself started as a postman, planned to study engineering, but was stopped by three years' soldiering in WW1. About the same time he married, had a daughter Suzanne for whom he remained a conscientious single father after his wife died in 1920. A brilliant mind he is best known for his work in the history and theory of (natural) science, his professorate at the Sorbonne 1940-54. Like Bergson he was an accomplished mathematician, but unlike him, never dreamt of trying to refute Einstein and his theory of relativity (though he was not entirely uncritical, cf. Tiles 1987). As a public figure very down to earth, in striking contrast to Bergson's very Parisian *belle époque* professor. He was a 'tableau sans âge de malice paysanne endimanchée' (Quillet 1964:16), and besides, a living refutation of theories of 'post-traumatic stress', never mentioning his WW1 experiences. – A dialectician and materialist of sorts but

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definitely not in the political sense, for which he was reproached (Partinaud 1996:chap.15), it seems also by Sartre. He was a non-conformist rather than a radical, even in his scientific work. Later in life he wrote beautifully on aesthetics, especially poetry. These works of his count as having aesthetic value as texts too. Adorno claimed as much for his aesthetics with less evident reason.

42. A crucial statement (1931:79): "l'habitude est la volonté de *commencer à se répéter soi-même*" is revealing, if somewhat forced. – We'll return to the question to what extent past moments, continuous or discrete, are really immutable: We cannot revive the dead, but we certainly can reinterpret, even rewrite their biographies. Or rename the still living; Oslo was Christiania, St.Petersburg Leningrad, Ho Chi Minh City Saigon etc.
43. Taken from *La pensée et le mouvant*, a famous chapter originally published in 1903 as *Introduction à la métaphysique*. – Appeals to 'reality' (cf. also Krogh 2006) tends to assume that it is one and consistent, which is true but not entirely, not even in physics or other sciences; controversies persist as knowledge and agreement increases. Even more so in social science and the humanities: we agree on some results, hopefully basic, yet conflict remains abundant – will we ever agree on 'what really happened', in society or in history?
44. Perhaps even the 'wormholes' of Finnish colleague Taina Rajanti (2008).
45. A highly skilled physicist, he read this all the way into the core of Matter – the rhythmic movements of electrons within the atoms. He stuck to relativity, even after he overheard a student speaking of his "univers pasteurisé", whereupon "...je courus aux poètes et me mis à l'école de l'imgaination" (Quillet 1964:21).
46. Curiously, Halbwachs and Husserl do not seem to refer to each other, whether from disregard or obvious ignorance I do not know. Bachelard (1931:34, 106) curiously speaks first of 'le beau livre de M. Halbwachs' (Les cadres...) but later about 'briser les cadres sociaux de la durée'. Then the latter derives from a separate publication (1939), only later included in *L'intuition...*, its topic now being how to really tune in to poetry.
47. A question related to Socrates' classic How can we seek Truth? No need for that if we have it, and if not, why seek? (Plato: *Meno* 80e). His answer: We all have Truth somehow within us, which with effort can be recalled; another *philosophie du plein*, then. As for memory the plain answer is we that we need to be reminded by others, persons, institutions, artefacts, events, only always *reconstruit en partant du present*, hence fallible (cf. above).
48. Misztal (2003) is another, a scholarly overview of theories of social remembering and forgetting.
49. And by extension, no more 'place' to be found in 'space', in the current terms of Human Geography.
50. Paradoxically, everyday near automated routines are among those most easily forgotten, cf. the fact that pill dispensers are widely used: seven rows with five etc. cells containing a week's doses. Keeping pills in separate boxes instead risks forgetting after swallowing pill n whether you have (not) taken an earlier pill, which may be fatal.
51. This study is among the bases for Bourdeu's (1986) "L'illusion biographique", hotly contested by among others Daniel Bertaux (oral presentation, ESA Murcia congress 2005, cf. Bertaux 1981).
52. Oral presentation May 23rd 2008, Norw. Research council conference *Critical culture research*, Oslo. Fornäs even speaks of our age as an era (Sw. *tidsålder*) of culturalisation.

53. Johannes Fabian's oral presentation to consumption sociologists, Amsterdam conference, September 1993.
54. In the original referring to doomsday, yet often given as 'No Man knoweth his day and hour'.
55. Cf. earlier on *macro* rhythms (day and night, seasons etc.) influencing our existence, both shaping real, *environmental* as well as *embodied* time within objects such as we are.
56. Today, we have to be sure laser measurers, which give the exact figure for distance (or square, cube, cone), no mention of in-between figures. Whether *durée* or *rupture* is hard to tell.
57. My one 'encounter' with Bachelard was a TV program back in 1991, produced some decades before. An elderly man, generous white hair and beard, smiling, laughing and talking while he was busily preparing his hot meal. Pictures (Partinaud) show him busily shopping in greengrocery markets; hence a non-alienated exception.
58. Dialectics of liberation conference, London July 1967.
59. No room here for discussion of Aristotle and Leibniz who supported similar stands; as for the latter Futch (2008) gives an excellent up to date overview.
60. Cf. ex-primer Brundtland's "everything connects".
61. By c. 1931 Husserl seems to have conceived of this, curiously, as "unendlichen Regress des Erwerbens" (Husserl 2008:444). As for Becker, by developing his concept of contingency, use provinces would be covered.
62. In symbolic use as well: no more 'hammer and sickle', today it is nailer and combine harvester, matter changing metaphors.
63. There is a very evocative museum in Mulhouse, France, where cars right from the beginning can be seen striving to gradually approach to the form we find typical today. Continued strivings for changing forms are likely to go on, no less so should emission and climate problems eventually demand restrictions, i.e. decreasing private car use.
64. I.e. couple careers on the rocky road to possible divorce (Vaughan 1987).
65. Alan Warde's very interesting "Promoting qualities", unpublished presentation to the Vuoranta conference (footnote 1), mentioned here with permission, is based on Karpik's (2000) career type study of *Le guide rouge Michelin* and Warde's own study of *The good food guide* but goes on to apply such insights to the conventions theory or 'micro-micro'-economics of John Wilkinson, for example on how to market graded but general quality.
66. Original in Norwegian, an English translation is not yet published, to be included in an anthology provisionally entitled *Thinking Things Through*, to appear next year (I've said that for years).
67. Quote from the translation, cf. previous footnote.
68. 'Genius' in thing systems once again.
69. A Cuban indigene Indian Taino word.
70. Ortiz mentions that sugar is a word of Arabian roots, al sucar.
71. Lilleaas & Widerberg (2001) extend laudably on Hochschild's work, notably their concept of breakers, employees who manage to resist, dodge or deceive the trap, or as they see it, the tiredness resulting from it.
72. 7.2 % is the exact figure.
73. I know his letter to *Ménécée* only in French translation. – Epicur, we should remem-

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ber, is said not to have been an 'epicurean' in practice, he led a frugal life, suffered from poor health etc.

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