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MOBILE ACCELERATED NONPOSTMODERN
CULTURE

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Do we need new thinking for social, political and cultural theory *after* the crash? Or can we simply revive the social and cultural thinkers, and thought, of the past? Will Karl Marx, or Louis Althusser, or Lucio Colletti armed with their scientific anti-humanism (Redhead, 2009b), or the proponents of a sustainable Marxism after post-Marxism (Therborn, 2008), suddenly become fashionable again as we hurtle back to the conditions of the 1930s in what has been described as a 'new depression' (Jacques, 2009a)? The crash can be dated at 9/15, or September 15, 2008, the date of Lehman Brothers investment bank collapse. The 'economic 9/11', as Nick Clegg the leader of the Liberal Democrats in the UK (1) described the spectacular financial collapse at the culmination of the year long global credit crunch occurring on the world's stock markets between August 2007 and October 2008, has, it is proclaimed, effectively ended the neo-liberal era. We should be wary of such a claim but there is to be sure a sense of a 'new era' on the horizon, a shift in the fault lines of modernity, which has been around since at least the 1980s and 1990s.

Logistics of Catastrophe, Trajectories of Collapse

For some commentators the times are indeed a sign of a 'new depression', 'entirely new, tumultuous and dangerous' (Jacques,

2009b). Now, we are, almost overnight, said to be, variously, living in world which is 'post-American', 'post-liberal', 'post-new liberal', 'post-modern' and 'post-free market' – even 'after capitalism' (Mulgan, 2009). Belief in 'Markets' has been described as a faith in 'Gods that Failed' (Atkinson and Elliot, 2009). There are other commentators on the social democratic left (Cruddas and Rutherford, 2009) who, while trumpeting that the end of the neo-liberal era is nigh, and that the world requires a 'new socialism', argue that we are in a new conjuncture and that re-regulated capitalism will have widespread cultural and social effects and consequences for progressive politics. On the other hand, Red Toryism (Blond, 2009) sees opportunities for the right to politicise the ongoing crisis in favour of a new civic conservatism, reviving localism and promoting the distributist state. The bigger picture, however, is actually of 'collapse'; as John Gray (Gray, 2009:14) has put it 'we're in the first phase of the collapse of this type of globalisation, or this phase of globalisation, which will have some features in common with the Thirties but will be different in lots of ways'. Moreover, according to some optimistic commentators, we may have to 'go through a global recession before the digital age truly takes off', before there is a 'sustained, technology driven-upturn' (Mason, 2009: vii).

The trajectories of collapse are, in my argument, what will constitute the 'new era'. Does all this mean we need a new theory of 'the state we're in' (Hutton, 1995, 1997, 2002) now to make sense of it all? It is most certainly cosmopolitan sociology which has dominated the agenda over the last decade. Cosmopolitan sociology has, oddly, given its left-leaning politics, been the theoretical concomitant of the neo-liberal era. But it is in my view claustropolitanism (Redhead, 2009a) which is now pervasive. Any new thinking needs to include claustropolitan perspectives as well as cosmopolitan. After the economic deluge, claustropolitanism, too, has the potential to be the new big idea in the social sciences and humanities worldwide over the coming years. In this sense Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio remain the most significant theorists of catastrophe, as they have, in certain circles, for the past twenty or thirty years.

Paul Virilio, the French urban theorist of speed and catastrophe is responsible (Virilio, 2007b: 68) for the development of the idea of 'claustropolis' (which in his thinking has replaced cosmopolis). Dromomania is Virilio's term for those obsessed with speed and a society where everyone has to keep moving and accelerating – a fitting label for our finance capitalism driven twenty-first century descent into global chaos. Virilio, too, spotted the potential future

‘integral accident’ in globalisation; the linking together of the world’s stock markets in the 1980s. He told Philippe Petit, prophetically, in interview in 1996, twelve years before the 2008 crash:

‘The speed of circulation has supplanted money. The production that resulted from this three-dimensional money is itself eliminated in favour of pure speculation, in other words a pure electronic game. The movement of dematerialisation which I analysed in reference to the city and the neighbour reappears in the case of money. The logic is exactly the same, in other words, the aesthetics of disappearance, and what is disappearing now is production and the money referent. We exceeded the limit of the speed of exchange with the Trading programme that combined the stock markets into one. Wall Street, London, Frankfurt and Tokyo are now just one stock market’. (Virilio with Petit, 1999: 107)

Virilio also told Petit in the same interview that the 1987 stock exchange meltdown was ‘an accident’ waiting to happen (again):

‘With the acceleration following the transportation revolution of the last century, the number of accidents suddenly multiplied and sophisticated procedures had to be invented in order to control air, rail and highway traffic. With the current world-wide revolution in communication and telematics, acceleration has reached its physical limit, the speed of electromagnetic waves. So there is the risk not of a local accident in a particular location, but rather of a global accident that would affect if not the entire planet, then at least the majority of people concerned by these technologies. On this subject, consider the stock market crash of 1987 that resulted from the implementation of the Programme Trading of automatic stock quotations on Wall Street. It is apparent that this new notion of the accident has nothing to do with the Apocalypse, but rather with the imperious necessity to anticipate in a rational way this kind of catastrophe by which the interactivity of telecommunications would reproduce the devastating effects of a poorly managed radioactivity – think about Chernobyl.’ (Virilio and Petit, 1999: 93)

For Virilio ‘the stock market crash’ of 1987 was a ‘sign of what’s to come’ (Virilio and Petit, 1999: 91). In June 2007 he predicted that the

'stock market...is in danger of crashing far more seriously than it did in 1929, since all the stock markets are now interconnected' (Virilio and Lotringer, 2008: 230). Paul Virilio, arguably 'the most provocative French cultural theorist on the contemporary intellectual scene' (Armitage, 2001: 1) has not yet spawned his own online journal of 'Virilio' Studies unlike his compatriot, the late Jean Baudrillard (2). If it ever did exist it is a safe bet that the International Journal of Virilio Studies journal would feature strongly Virilio's idea of the 'accident' and that the notion of 'catastrophe' would be a dominant theme. So would 'bunker archaeology'. In the late 1950s a young Paul Virilio (Armitage, 2000, Armitage, 2001, Redhead, 2004a, Redhead, 2004b) first put pen to paper about the German bunkers he had begun photographing along the Atlantic coast. The work went on until 1965. The bunkers along the Atlantic Wall totalled 15,000 and were designed to repel Allied attack against occupied France. These bunkers had fascinated Virilio since he was a ten year old boy evacuated to Nantes in the Second World War. He always saw himself as a 'blitzkrieg baby' or 'war baby' where he studies at the 'university of disaster' (Virilio, 2009b) and later was himself conscripted into the French army during the Algerian war of independence. Virilio subsequently published the very short piece 'Bunker Archeologie' (see translation in Redhead, 2004a:

11-13) and eventually a book called *Bunker Archeology* (Virilio, 2009a, English translation) following an original French edition and the exhibition of his collection of text and images on the bunkers at the Decorative Arts Museum in Paris in 1975. Sociologist Mike Gane has written, convincingly, of Paul Virilio's 'bunker theorising' (Gane, 2000) and I have proposed a 'bunker anthropology' (Redhead, 2009a). In these twenty-first century media heavy times we have all to some extent or other become historians of Virilio's instant present where immediacy, instantaneity and ubiquity rule. For Virilio it was with globalisation, in the 1990s, through what he refers to as the 'new technologies', that we began to inhabit a world that is 'foreclosed':

'Globalisation is a major catastrophe, it is the catastrophe of catastrophes. In the same way that time, like Aristotle said, is the accident of accidents, geographic globalisation is by essence a major catastrophe. Not because of bad capitalists, but because it is the end, the closing of the world on itself through speed, the velocity of images, the rapidity of transportation. We live in a world of forclusion' (Virilio and Lotringer, 2005: 77)

For Virilio the globe we inhabit is actually what he sees as a world closed off and closed in. In Virilio's self-conscious reflection he has been 'working for some thirty years' on this condition, 'on the shrinking of the world' that is on what he has called 'the world's old age' (Virilio and Depardon, 2008b: 8).

I want to argue that we must move firmly towards an adequate understanding of the 'trajectories of the catastrophic' (3) (Virilio and Lotringer, 2005, Redhead, 2009a) whether or not Virilio or Baudrillard have the answers to the questions we wish to ask, and that any simple return to an already constructed Marxism, or other pre-existing social and cultural theory which is left-leaning such as cosmopolitan sociology, will not suffice. The era after the crash *is* a watershed in the trajectories of the catastrophic. The 'catastrophic', or what Paul Virilio calls 'claustropolis' (Virilio and Lotringer, 2008), which in his view has replaced 'cosmopolis', is a vital part, conceptually, of what Virilio has to offer a reconstructed social and cultural theory of modernity. In his book *The Original Accident*, Paul Virilio poses the important, cryptic question:

'CLAUSTROPOLIS or COSMOPOLIS? A society of enforced seclusion, as once upon a time, or a society of forcible control?.'
(Virilio, 2007b: 68)

Unfortunately for would-be Virilians it is cosmopolis (Boyne, 2001) rather than claustropolis which has proved to be the basis for social and political theory after the 'postmodern' turn. We now have calls for a deployment of a 'cosmopolitan imagination' and a 'critical cosmopolitanism' (Delanty, 2006). Further, Ulrich Beck, a leading figure in the movement towards a cosmopolitan sociology, has coined the terms 'cosmopolitan society', 'cosmopolitan state',

'cosmopolitan perspective' and 'cosmopolitan vision' and indeed a whole cosmopolitan sociological research agenda (Beck, 2000, 2002, 2006). Rather than the cosmopolitan sociology espoused by Beck, Zygmunt Bauman, John Urry and others it could be that Paul Virilio's work is the basis, necessary though not sufficient, for a possible claustropolitan sociology, and bunker anthropology. A sociology, and anthropology, moreover which is *after* postmodernity.

Non-Postmodernity

Paul Virilio, although no postmodernist, talks of the 'postmodern period' and the 'atheism of postmodernity' as well as the 'profane art of modernity' (Virilio, 2007a). Followers of Virilio have even suggested a subsequent displacement, or replacement, of the postmodern condition (always already redundant) by a social formation they say is the 'dromocratic condition' based on Virilio's idea of dromocracy; the society of speed or of the 'race' which requires a 'dromoscopy' to apprehend it (Virilio, 2005c, James, 2007: 29-43). A slogan for the start of the third millennium might be 'we have never been postmodern'! Just when you thought the 'end-of-the-century party' (Redhead, 1990) was closed and the 'millennial blues' (Redhead, 1997) were over and done with,

'accelerated culture' (Redhead, 2004b) makes a slight return, illuminated by 'theory at the speed of light' (Redhead, 2004a) in a century of new modernities – creative, fast, mobile, modern, original, cold. 'Alternative modernities', as Lawrence Grossberg has dubbed them, are a product of a contemporary 'struggle over modernity' (Grossberg 2006:12-19). As the fierce conflict over precisely which capitalism will take over the globe develops apace (Gray, 1998) it seems that we are consumed by the question of which modernities we will inhabit in the near future. A fast modernity for Ben Agger's slow modernity and 'fast capitalism' (4)? A cold modernity (Redhead, 2008b) for a world in what Paul Virilio calls a 'cold panic' (Virilio, 2005a, 2005b)? A dangerous modernity (Redhead, 2004b) to go along with the rise of Naomi Klein's 'disaster capitalism' (Klein, 2007), a sign of the sociologies of the future where 'trajectories of the catastrophic' will materialise more and more?

The contention being made here, echoing, ironically, the notion made famous by Bruno Latour (Latour, 1993) that 'we have never been modern' is that we have, indeed, never been postmodern, and that the implications of such a declamation have profound consequences for the contemporary sociological imagination. The

battle for modernity actually comes after postmodernity not before. The postmodern is not an era after modernity in a teleological, linear fashion but always already within modernity. However, this claim that we have never been postmodern is no paean to the idea that there is no modernity. In a sense the argument here is that modernity is all that there is. For Paul Virilio, a Christian since he was 18 years old, 'God' and 'spirituality' fill in the gaps. His humanism is a major drawback to his work. For non-believers modernity is profoundly different – a secular modernity. Bruno Latour (Latour, 1993) has written, also, of 'non-modernity' and there have been the beginnings, more generally, of a non-modern sociology. Opposing this idea, in keeping with the playful (but serious) taking up of Latour's notions, it is possible to conceive instead of 'non-postmodernity' (Redhead, 2008a) or the non-postmodern condition. In other words, in this argument, there is only what can be called 'the modern condition' or post post-modernity. Jean Baudrillard, Paul Virilio's much more well known countryman, is a case in point (Redhead, 2008a). Baudrillard was perhaps the most controversial theorist of all global intellectuals in the past quarter of a century. He was known for his trenchant analyses of media and technological communication but few commentators have actually read exactly what he wrote and taken

into account when he wrote it. To some extent the conflict over Jean Baudrillard's legacy stems largely from the fact that a comprehensive selection of his writings had, until recently, to be properly translated from the original French. People tended to read only 'fragments' of his often fragmentary, aphoristic, cryptic work, or else quote his myriad interpreters who usually had a large axe to grind. Belonging to the now passed on generation of radical French thinkers that included Gilles Deleuze, Louis Althusser and Michel Foucault, as well as his long time friend Paul Virilio who survives him, Baudrillard has often been savagely vilified by his detractors, but the lasting influence of his work on critical thought, cultural politics, war studies, media events and pop culture is impossible to deny. Baudrillard's central idea was that 'the real' has become transformed in such a way that as the virtual takes over, the real, in its simulation, has scooped up its own images; for Baudrillard the real can no longer be thought separately from the image. In what might be called a commitment to a critical poetics of the modern object, Jean Baudrillard consistently strived to produce a radically uncertain picture of the modern world. But this is a modernity that has changed over the years he has been writing about it since the early 1950s. A couple of years before he died Baudrillard insisted 'what I am, I don't know. I am the

simulacrum of myself'. Jean Baudrillard, the simulacrum, is certainly a singular object. As he himself emphasised 'you must create your underground because now there's no more underground, no more avant-garde, no more marginality. You can create your personal underground, your own black hole, your own singularity' (see Redhead, 2008a: 1). To place Jean Baudrillard in any theoretical or political pigeon hole has always been difficult. It remains so today, even after his death in March 2007 with the tantalising publication of 'very late' Baudrillard texts (Baudrillard, 2009). Although Baudrillard was influenced by Marxists like Jean-Paul Sartre, Herbert Marcuse and Henri Lefebvre his work has always born a tangential relationship to any brand of Marxism, neo- or otherwise. Philosophical antecedents of Baudrillard's work are complex and for sure Marx and Engels are present but so too is Mani, the Persian Gnostic prophet who wrote one thousand eight hundred years ago. Although slated by many critics for being 'postmodernist' the moral relativism often connected to postmodernism is actually nowhere to be seen in Baudrillard. Nevertheless, from the 1970s onwards Baudrillard became associated with terms like postmodernism, postmodern sociology/art/architecture, and the general issues surrounding media and screen culture and virtual cyberspace which seem,

inevitably, to attract the label postmodern. It should be said that this process of linking Baudrillard with the idea of the 'post' was mainly through dubious labelling by others and not through Baudrillard's own words. Partly it has been a consequence of commentators using the term postmodern to cover anything recent especially in the rapidly changing world of new media. In some ways, in any case, Baudrillard is a quite perverse choice of theorist of the new media technologies, or commentator on their future potential. He was stubbornly old media. He admitted, in 1996, that he did 'not know much about this subject. I haven't gone beyond the fax and the automatic answering machine. I have a very hard time getting down to work on the screen because all I see there is a text in the form of an image which I have a hard time entering. With my typewriter, the text is at a distance. With the screen, it's different...That scares me a little and cyberspace is not of great use to me personally' (see Redhead, 2008a: 9). Baudrillard also always preferred photography, especially his own still photographs, to digital video. The idea that Baudrillard was essentially a 'postmodern sociologist' is still pervasive, stemming from orthodox 1970s and 1980s readings of Baudrillard, but it is, in the last instance, an unhelpful notion. Politically as well as intellectually such fixed perspectives have done no favours to

Baudrillard or, ultimately, his readers. For instance, from the early 1960s Baudrillard and his friend Felix Guattari were regarded, confusingly, as Maoists. Later Baudrillard himself wrote books debating strands of Marxist theory in the early 1970s but his relationship to Marx and Marxism is certainly complex. Further, the period Baudrillard spent around the influential *Utopie* journal in France beginning in the mid 1960s and continuing until the late 1970s, was undoubtedly evidence of his involvement in ultra-leftist politics in France. But Baudrillard clearly broke with much European 'leftism' in the late 1970s and 1980s for being insufficiently radical. His future thinking was a perspective some way 'beyond' Marx. Baudrillard was present, as a lecturer, at the Nanterre university campus in France when it became the spark for May 68. However, Baudrillard was never a paid up member of left organisations and ploughed a very individual furrow throughout his life. Still the mislabelling persisted. Situationist? Though sympathetic to the situationists he was never a member of the Situationist International, or ever even met Guy Debord. New Philosopher? In the 1970s the Nouveaux Philosophes movement of Andre Glucksmann and Bernard-Henri Levy (former leftists who publicly renounced leftism) left Baudrillard untouched but he became guilty by association in the minds of some Trotskyists

when he later published with Grasset, Bernard-Henri Levy's publishing house, and wrote in journals in France in the 1980s that were regarded as on the 'new right'.

There is, still, then a possible position in contemporary social and cultural theory which could claim that there is only modernity, and nothing after it or beyond it, but which reflexively is able to take into account the debates about postmodernism, postmodernity and the 'post' as a cultural condition. Jean-Francois Lyotard (Lyotard, 1984) in the 1970s and 1980s promulgated the idea that there had, sometime in the late twentieth century, been taking place a transition to what he labelled a 'postmodern condition'. Many other contemporary social theorists involved in the movement towards a cosmopolitan sociology however have turned away from their erstwhile interests in the postmodern in the 1980s and 1990s. Scott Lash, for instance, has acknowledged that he does not 'particularly like the term' postmodern (Lash interviewed in Gane, 2004) and one time guru of postmodernity (Bauman, 1991, 1993, 1995) Zygmunt Bauman has conceded that for some time he has been distancing himself from the concept (Blackshaw, 2005, Bauman and Tester, 2001), preferring his own original idea of 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2007a, Gane, 2004) and committing

himself to a thorough going sociological rethinking of the modern (Bauman, 2001, 2002, 2004a, 2004b, 2007b). Bauman's 'liquid modernity' is seen to be 'characterised by social forms based on transience, uncertainty, anxieties and insecurity and resulting in new freedoms that come at the price of individual responsibility and without the traditional support of social institutions'. In this sense, for cosmopolitan sociologists such as Bauman, 'postmodernism...has not displaced modernity but opens the concept up to cosmopolitan possibilities' (Delanty, 2006: 34). Increasingly the term 'late modernity' is fashionable again for those wishing to see a reconstructed critical social theory (Delanty, 2006: 27, Young, 2007) though the lonely hour of the last instance of 'late modernity' never seems to come. In addition, 'supermodern' (Auge, 1995) and 'hypermodern' (Armitage, 2000, Armitage, 2001) have also been offered as alternative terms for those who are not any longer satisfied by the idea of postmodernity just as concepts like 'hypercapitalism' (Rifkin, 2000) have displaced the term capitalism, or 'capitalisms' (Gray, 1998). This reconceptualisation of modernity and modernisation is reflected in contemporary debates about 'what it means to be modern' as has been argued in relation to modern terror groups such as Al Qaeda whose origins are for a writer like John Gray (Gray, 2003, 2007) squarely in modernity rather than

'tradition'. Further, the question has become what it is to experience 'demodernisation' (say in post-war Iraq) or how 'remodernisation' can take place in the case of what Francis Fukuyama (Fukuyama, 2004, 2006) and other neo-conservatives call state building in 'failed states' (such as Rwanda and Sudan).

New Modernities, New Catastrophes: Mobile Accelerated Culture

Eric Hobsbawm has argued in writing about globalisation, democracy and terrorism that coming after the era he has labelled the 'age of extremes' in 'the short twentieth century' there is a 'new era which has emerged from the old' (Hobsbawm, 2007:1). But what precisely is this 'new era' of modernity and when did it begin? Jonathan Rutherford (Rutherford, 2008: 8) has said, in looking at contemporary changes in the practices and cultures of capitalism, that:

'We are living through an age of transition. The new co-exists with the old. We can identify political, economic and cultural elements of this change, but we do not yet have a way of describing the kind of society we are living in. The great explanatory frameworks of political economy and sociology inherited from the industrial modernity of the nineteenth century leave too much unsaid. Theories of the moment tend to skip from one modern phenomenon to another. They are like stones skimming across the surface of water. We lack a story of these times.'

What would a better 'story of these times' look like? Bunker anthropology and claustropolitan sociology are challenged to provide such a story by the lack of fit in cosmopolitan sociology or by

unreconstructed leftist thought. That is not to say that cosmopolitan sociology, and other perspectives in political and cultural theory have not tried to tell the story of transition, of the theory of a new era. Many attempts have been made at capturing such a story in the last decade or so. In the 1990s Anthony Giddens also claimed that we were in a 'period of evident transition' and offered the view that we were now 'living in a post-traditional society' (Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1998: 56-109) a notion embraced by much of cosmopolitan sociology. This new era has also been characterised variously as the 'age of greed' (Mason, 2009), the 'age of fallibility' (Soros, 2006), the 'age of access' (Rifkin, 2000), 'the age of uncertainty' (Bauman, 2007a), the 'age of insecurity' (Atkinson and Elliot, 1998) and the 'age of turbulence' (Greenspan, 2007) and there is no let up today in the rush to characterise in a pithy, poignant, pregnant phrase, the culture of the present period – the 'new depression' (Jacques, 2009a) being the latest to be posted after the global economic meltdown. Paul Virilio himself has speculated that 'our Age will be looked back on tomorrow as that of subliminal blindness, the "Age of Darkness"' (Virilio and Depardon, 2008a). So for some time there has been an urgent need for a rethinking of modernity; and for rethinking the 'future of social theory' (Gane, 2004). Notions of conditions after modernity are, however, not ultimately persuasive. What can be argued

further, from the perspective of an emerging claustropolitan sociology, is that there are only modernities, conflicting and overlapping. 'New' modernities sit alongside 'old' modernities.

As part of the rethinking of the future of social theory and new modernities cosmopolitan sociology has shunned the term 'society' for new mobilities. A 'new mobilities paradigm' (5) (Urry, 2000, 2002, 2003, 2007) threatens to shake up sociology itself as a modernist project, though colleagues and critics within cosmopolitan sociology argue that 'too much explanatory power is given to global mobilities and hyper chaotic phenomena' (Delanty, 2006: 32). Modernities, and their mobility, certainly provide the conceptual key to looking at the contemporary condition afresh but they look different depending on whether 'claustropolis' or 'cosmopolis', in Virilio's terms, is being presumed. There are, it is being increasingly recognised, different modernities, different ways of being modern. Anthony Giddens, an enthusiast for the term 'late modernity', conceives of what 'other people call the post-modern' as the 'radicalising of modernity' (Giddens and Pierson, 1998: 116). Ulrich Beck, who has talked of the 'modernisation of modernity' (Beck interviewed in Gane, 2004), has suggested that there are not only different paths to modernity but also different

modernities, and that we live in an 'age of entangled modernities'. Global modernities had been identified in social and cultural theory in emerging cosmopolitanism in the 1990s but in the twenty-first century they are in need of a radical reconceptualisation. The sociology of society, of modernity, has threatened to become the sociology of mobility. These contemporary modernities are mobile. The city cultures, for instance, of the twenty-first century are mobile city cultures (6). These are modern mobilities. Modernity, is always, it appears on the point of arriving.

The periodisation of transition within modernity has been fraught with difficulty as has the periodisation of the process from tradition to modernity. Early to late modernity, old to new modernity, heavy to light modernity, solid to liquid modernity, first to second modernity, condensed to diffuse modernity, systemic to network-like modernity, original modernity to reflexive modernity, and modernity to present day modernity are just some of the myriad conceptualisations of the transitions within modernity which have been suggested in recent contemporary social theory. On top of that there is the much hinted at transition from modernity to postmodernity. But we are never quite sure when these transitions have taken place. Phases or stages or eras of modernity are being

constantly theorised but the question of when did the new condition appear, when did the 'present' phase or stage or era occur, is left strangely unanswered. Much of social and cultural theory today, innovative and stimulating as it often seems, is speculative sociology without periodisation, an apparently endless reflection on a problem earlier designated as the shift from Fordism to post-Fordism, or old times to New Times, or old (manufacturing) economy to new (knowledge or creative) economy. For instance, Zygmunt Bauman talked at the turn of the millennium of 'the present phase of modernity', what he has christened 'liquid modernity' (Bauman, 2000, 2007a) with its attendant offshoots such as 'liquid love' (Bauman, 2003), 'liquid life' (Bauman, 2005) and 'liquid fear' (Bauman, 2006). In Ulrich Beck's perspective (Boyne, 2001, Beck, Giddens and Lash, 1994, Beck and Beck and Beck-Gernsheim, 2002, Beck and Wilms, 2004, Beck, 1992, 1999, 2005, 2006) the idea of 'first' to 'second modernity' has become a strongly argued, and widely supported theme. But as readers of such theoretical speculation in cosmopolitan sociology we remain unsure when it was that the move from the earlier phase actually happened, indeed if it ever did. What Bauman saw as 'solid modernity' must have metamorphosed into liquid modernity at some point for the

argument to work. Was solid modernity the state we were in during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s? Or even the 1870s, 1880s, 1890s? Bauman, to give him his due, does recognise, significantly, that all modernity is that which 'melts into air' as Marx and Engels, exemplary theorists of modernity in many ways, though flawed theorists of capitalism, put it over a century and a half ago when writing *The Communist Manifesto*. 'All that is solid melts into air' is always the main definition of the modern condition. The 'melting of solids' is not just a phase of modernity, it is the constant, permanent present, what can be seen as fast modernity or accelerated culture. As has been succinctly pointed out 'there is a basic self-understanding of modernity' as a condition where 'there are no secure foundations for identity, meaning and memory' (Delanty, 2006: 38). The problems in contemporary humanities and social science debates often lie in the lack of periodisation and a rigorous theory of transformation from one period to another. The open access, user generated content movement, open source or Web 2.0 as it is also called, which includes the 'knowledge economy' of My Space, You Tube, Facebook and Wikipedia, has been interpreted as signalling a media revolution – from passive consumerism to mass creativity in one fell swoop (Leadbeater, 1999, 2002, 2009). The flattening of expertise and authority, the attack on professionalism and

the rise of the cult of the amateur that these changes herald has often been seen as an example of the onset of postmodernism and postmodernity. In fact it is more a sign of anti-statist libertarianism, of the right and left, as much as it is evidence of a transition to the postmodern.

The 1990s was a decade, supposedly, of globalisation, modernisation and mobility. In the twenty first century, especially after the crash, these processes seem to be on the verge of being reversed: we have elements of de-globalisation, lack of mobility and demodernisation. Accelerated culture (Redhead, 2004a, Redhead, 2004b) seems to have, overnight, somehow become decelerated culture. However, this assumes that tradition moved to modernity, and the nation state moved to globalisation. We need to rethink the processes of the 'modernising', and 'remodernising' and 'demodernising', of society in an era which has spawned interesting if inconclusive debates about modernity and postmodernity. The problems in these debates often lie in the lack of periodisation and a rigorous theory of transformation from one period to another. It is often assumed that we have moved, already, for example, from modernity to postmodernity or from 'linear', 'first phase' modernisation to 'reflexive modernisation', or from 'solid' to 'liquid' modernity. But when

did these transformations occur? And are they inevitable? Could they not be reversed? What would this look like? The problem becomes one of binary divides which need to be deconstructed. We need to consider a different way of conceiving 'modernities', which are overlapping and competing, not simply 'before' or 'after'.

Claustropolitan sociology and bunker anthropology are in no way directly readable from the work of Paul Virilio, or for that matter Jean Baudrillard, but a theory of claustropolitanism is urgently necessary (Redhead, 2009a). I have warned many times elsewhere (Redhead, 2005, 2006) about the dangers of not contextualising the chronology of what, say, Virilio or Baudrillard (Redhead, 2004a, 2004b, 2008a) have written and exactly when they wrote it. Virilio, despite his humanistic anarcho-christianity and all the theoretical problems this engenders, is a useful starting point in producing a claustropolitan sociology and bunker anthropology which gives the feel of being from within the claustropolis, a position of 'polar inertia' (Virilio, 2000) whilst everything passes by at 'the speed of light' (Redhead, 2007, Virilio, 2002). Virilio has suffered personally from claustrophobia (7) and perhaps that has helped him develop some of the elements of such a perspective, giving the idea of a world foreclosed, closed off and closed in. Virilio and Baudrillard's countryman Jean-Francois

Lyotard, inventor of the term 'the postmodern condition' (Lyotard, 1984), was a member in the 1960s of an ultra-leftist group called, in English, Socialism or Barbarism (8). Now, today, the rhetorical question has become more a case of Capitalism or Barbarism, even after the Credit Crunch and the global Stock Market Crash. In Jean Baudrillard's case, the work helps us to understand the political importance of the question 'what is to be done'. With interest in Baudrillard at an all time high, new political and intellectual debates around his work will be provoked in the wake of his death. 'Fragments' is an oft used label for Baudrillard's work, employed twice in English translation of titles of his many books (Redhead, 2008a). What we are left with in his writings are fragments for the immediate future. We ignore them at our peril. 'Claustropolitan sociology', if we can call it that, must not be committed to the linear view of history which cosmopolitan sociology has embraced. The 'story of these times', where accident and catastrophe predominate, can be provided by a focus on Mobile Accelerated Nonpostmodern Culture (9). Such a focus is a more appropriate resolution to the problems caused by the search for a postmodern sociology which permeated the 1980s and 1990s than that offered by cosmopolitan sociology.

NOTES

1. Vince Cable (Cable, 2009) of the UK Liberal Democrat Party has been described in England as 'the undisputed heavyweight champion of the credit crunch in parliament'.

2. See the open access online journal, edited by Gerry Coulter, at <http://www.ubishops.ca/BaudrillardStudies>

3. 'Trajectories of the Catastrophic' as a phrase comes from the title of a symposium held at City Lights Bookstore and the San Francisco Art Institute, San Francisco, in October 2008 to look at the work of Paul Virilio, especially bunker archaeology, speed politics and the logistics of catastrophe. See the live website for the Trajectories of the Catastrophic symposium at http://www.citylights.com/info/?fa=event&event_id=402

The symposium incorporated a 'Bunker Tour' of the military bunkers of Marin Headlands`, Fort Chronkhite, Marin County.

4. See the open access online journal Fast Capitalism, edited by Ben Agger, at <http://www.fastcapitalism.com>.

5. CeMoRe (Centre for Mobilities Research Centre) at the University of Lancaster, UK, directed by John Urry, has pioneered work on cosmopolitan sociology and mobilities – in other words, ‘cosmobilities’ research. The work of the Centre can be viewed at <http://www.lancs.ac.uk/fass/sociology/cemore..>

6. On example of mobile city cultures is that after the Mumbai and Lahore attacks on the sub-continent in late 2008 and early 2009 the global media-driven cricket corporation the Indian Premier League (IPL) relocated the 2009 Twenty20 cricket tournament to South Africa, effectively transporting the 8 city cultures around the Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and other Indian city based teams to South African cities instead. Effectively, the IPL could be held anywhere in the world in the future.

7. Uploaded on YouTube there is a freely available 7 minute 48 second video of Paul Virilio giving a lecture in French, in 2007, entitled ‘Dromology and Claustrophobia’. This public video lecture was originally for faculty and students in the Department of Media and Communication Studies at the European Graduate School in Switzerland, where Virilio is a Visiting Professor.

8. Lyotard has been described, rather ungenerously, as a 'disillusioned former member of the grouplet *Socialisme ou Barbarie*' (Therborn, 2009: 30).

9. Or, in acronym, MANC. 'Manc' is slang for Mancunian, a resident of Manchester, England.

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