

All We Have Is Time

Time is another major way we orient ourselves. What does it mean to be on time, out of time, or in time? This chapter discusses different cultural notions of time, the development of measuring time and clocks, the construction of the Western calendar and its rootedness in a sacred worldview, and birthdays and other markers of time.

All We Have Is Time

"Time is money."

With that simple statement Benjamin Franklin captured the spirit that would transform America. The quotation is a very condensed summary of what has been called the "Protestant Ethic." This ethic, according to Max Weber, is what really fueled the beginnings of capitalism in the sixteenth century. In *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*, Weber characterized the ethic as "this-worldly asceticism" in contrast to the more typical kind of asceticism that focuses on the next world. It was ascetic because it frowned upon luxury and consumption and encouraged thrift and saving in order to build up capital; the accumulation of wealth for its own sake should not be the motive, "but the attainment of it as a fruit of labour in a calling was a sign of God's blessing" (Weber [1904-5] 1958: 172). Today, this ethic, in an age of consumption and prodigal spending, seems very distant, especially its religious underpinnings, but it set the stage for widespread transformation of the way our lives would be conducted and our time used.

The Protestant ethic became more entrenched with the industrial revolution in Europe and the United States in the nineteenth century. While seemingly unrelated to Protestantism or to ethics, time was, nevertheless, part of both. People had to change their perception and relation to time. Time became a commodity to be used (well) rather than the medium in which life is lived. It had to be used for work, not pleasure; and any time spent not working meant less money. Work began to be strictly plotted against the clock so that workers were paid by the hour; thenceforth each hour became equivalent to a specific amount of money. So much is the equivalence taken for granted that the language we use for time is the same that we use

86,400 Seconds Per Day

Imagine there is a bank that credits your account each morning with \$86,400. It carries over no balance from day to day. Every evening it deletes whatever part of the balance you failed to use during the day. What would you do? Draw out every cent, of course! Each of us has such a bank. Its name is TIME. Every morning, it credits you with 86,400 seconds. Every night it writes off, as lost, whatever of this you have failed to invest to good purpose. It carries over no balance. It allows no overdraft. Each day it opens a new account for you. Each night it burns the remains of the day. If you fail to use the day's deposits, the loss is yours. There is no going back. There is no drawing against "tomorrow." You must live in the present on today's deposits. Invest it so as to get from it the utmost in health, happiness, and success! The clock is running. Make the most of today.

To realize the value of ONE YEAR, ask a student who failed a grade.

To realize the value of ONE MONTH, ask a mother who gave birth to a premature baby.

To realize the value of ONE WEEK, ask the editor of a weekly newspaper.

To realize the value of ONE HOUR, ask the lovers who are waiting to meet.

To realize the value of ONE MINUTE, ask a person who missed the train.

To realize the value of ONE SECOND, ask a person who just avoided an accident.

To realize the value of ONE MILLISECOND, ask the person who won a silver medal in the Olympics.

Treasure every moment that you have. And treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time. And remember that time waits for no one. Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is mystery. Today is a gift. That's why it is called the present!

for money: we save it, we spend it, we borrow it, we waste it, and we budget it. This notion of time now seems so natural that it is difficult for most of us to imagine other ways of thinking about it. The idea that time is money also implies that it comes in different quantities, not nickels, dimes, quarters, but seconds, minutes, and hours. Time, thus imagined, is also like a ruler (in both senses of the term); not only does it reign over us, but it is calibrated like inches, feet, yards. Each of the time-segments is equal to all others in the same category; that is, each second is equal to every other second. Time is imagined as something outside of ourselves against which we measure our work and days. But what if time was considered a

gift? What different metaphors of time affect you?

Cosmological Time

Time, like space, is one of the most basic concepts we have. Although we talk about it in many different ways, it is granted. Time and space, however, are not the same. Time, for example, is universal. While true, it is not the same. Benjamin Lee Whorf (1936)

Are our concepts of time formed by experience to some extent? What is the role of language and culture in this process?

Is the *experience* the same for all cultures? Time is experienced differently due to local customs and culture. This chapter is an attempt to explore the philosophical aspects of time – the nature of time, that is, the meaning of time.

Relativity of time

Ever since Einstein, we have had to understand his theories. Time is not only constitutive; nor is it the theory of relativity in itself. Time, even a child becomes a child when she tries to call a grandpa

Still, this is a different way of thinking. Time is not only constitutive; nor is it the theory of relativity in itself. Time, even a child becomes a child when she tries to call a grandpa

What notions of time are there? What is the role of language and culture in this process?

gift? What different metaphors would describe it? How might such a different conception of time affect your daily life?

Cosmological Time

Time, like space, is one of the major ways we orient ourselves in the world. Although we talk about it all the time, it is also something we take very much for granted. Time and space, we assume, are given in the human condition and, therefore, universal. While true, we must ask a further question. Paraphrasing linguist Benjamin Lee Whorf (1956: 138):

Are our concepts of time and space and matter given in substantially the same form by experience to all people? Or are they conditioned by the particularities of language and culture?

Is the *experience* the same worldwide and then conceptually warped or channeled differently due to local custom? Or, is the very experience itself shaped and molded by culture? This chapter is not intended to provide answers but rather to raise awareness of the issues involved. In this first part, we will consider the widest, cosmological aspects of time – clocks and calendars. In the second part, we focus more on lived time, that is, the myriad ways time forms the context and parameters of our lives.

Relativity of time

Ever since Einstein, we have been taught that time is relative even if we do not understand his theories. Time is relative to space, neither is absolute, they are mutually constitutive; nor is there any independent standpoint for measurement. While the theory of relativity involves sophisticated mathematical knowledge and calculations, even a child becomes aware that time is relative to space as soon as he or she tries to call a grandparent living in another time zone.

Still, this is a different sense of the relativity of time from what I am getting at, namely that the concepts and experience of time are also relative. Surely even in your own lives you are aware of different experiences of time – sometimes it flies by, and at other times it drags and seems to stand still. We remember our childhoods as slow and seemingly endless; as we enter our forties and fifties time seems to speed up, the years begin to flip over very fast. Our clocks and calendars are unable to represent even this common experience.

What notions of time does Octavio Paz, the Mexican poet, capture in this excerpt from his poem “Hymn among the Ruins”?

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Day, Round day
luminous orange in 24 sections
all filled with the same sunny sweetness . . .

Clearly, he had the roundness of the earth, the roundness of the sun, and the roundness of a clock dial in mind. Between them, he seems to say, a homology exists. The poem was obviously composed before the invention of "digital" clocks. Although the word "digital" refers to fingers, and thus evokes a "hand," making all clocks "digital," it has come to refer to a very specific kind of clock or watch invented in July of 1970. Digital clocks and watches became affordable and widespread in the 1980s. Until then clocks and watches were most commonly in the form of a circle with hours 1–12 set around the dial. Two hands, one for the hour and one for the minutes (and occasionally a third one to mark the seconds) moved "clockwise" around the dial. On digital clocks and watches the exact time, for example 3:23,

flashes in the window. The of hours, as on a clock face

Today when I ask some than I want so that I have have a mental model of the "it's ten past four," not "4 linear in the extreme and ca up not only with a much m moment. They are also be of television, for they quic they don't know how to tel are also being trained earl against which to coordina effects of this on their lives

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Time before clocks

Time – the time that invented.

Encyclopedia E

Most of us think about tim is difficult to think of life w



Figure 3.1 Worldly Wit cartoon by Mike Scott © 1989 Cartoonists and Writers Syndicate.

flashes in the window. The numbers are alone, not set in the context of the round of hours, as on a clock face.

Today when I ask someone what time it is, I usually get an answer more exact than I want so that I have to pause to figure it out according to my time frame. I have a mental model of the round clock face and am used to hearing someone say "it's ten past four," not "4:11," or "quarter to six," not "5:48." Time has become linear in the extreme and calibrated to the second. Children today are being brought up not only with a much more linear view of time but also one timed to the precise moment. They are also being made more aware of time at an earlier age because of television, for they quickly learn that they will miss their favorite programs if they don't know how to tell time. Not only are they learning how to tell time, they are also being trained early to think of it as something external – as something against which to coordinate their activities. We do not yet know the long-term effects of this on their lives.

Some people think of time as a *RIVER* – it flows on and on – and Heraclitus, an ancient Greek philosopher, made the comment that you can never step into the same river twice. Other people think of time as a *PENDULUM* – back and forth, tick-tock, representing the alternation of night and day. Still others think of time as *CYCLICAL*, that it goes round and round, with the continual return of the seasons.

Our view of time is that it marches on relentlessly and impersonally. We live with a mechanical sense of time because our culture is so dominated by machines – the "clockwork universe." Yet there are other models of time. One former student imagined the following possibilities: agriculturalists and peasants, he thought, must live with a seasonal view of time, and people in fishing societies live with a tidal view of time. No doubt, surfers do too!

But these are not the only alternatives; some groups live by flower time – the Australian aborigines, who traditionally were hunters and gatherers, kept time by the type of flower in bloom and, thus, when to expect honey and certain kinds of fruit. And in *Return to Laughter* (see chapter 1), Bowen says something similar: "there was the season of yams, of guinea corn, and of millet" (1964: 69). Your grandparents surely had some sense of this because of the seasons when certain fruits and vegetables would be available, for example, spinach, Brussels sprouts, blueberries, tomatoes, grapefruit, and oranges. Do you know what seasons they traditionally appeared in? While it is wonderful to have all things available all the time (from someplace), do we lose that sense of anticipation? Is it possible our senses get blunted?

Time before clocks

Time – the time that we know through clocks and calendars – was invented.

Encyclopedia Britannica (www.britannica.com/clockworks/article.html)

Most of us think about time in terms of clocks; they are so pervasive in our lives it is difficult to think of life without them. But many people live and have lived their

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Nike Scott

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entire lives without clocks. They lived by the diurnal rhythms of the sun and the alternation of the seasons. Elenore Bowen (Laura Bohannon) well captured her own struggle with the time sense among the people she studied in Africa. After only 10 weeks "in the field," she said:

already time had taken on a more individualistic and yet more seasonable aspect than I had been used to. Already the days of the week and the month were no more than a heading printed on my diary pages. I did try to keep count; old habit made me feel I ought to know the date. Yet, in July, when I went back to the station for supplies, I found I had lost three days. (1964: 68)

She went on to say that it was easier to give up the idea of "right time of day" and instead went on her own time zone. In order to maintain some kind of schedule, she decided that "dark and seven by the clock were to coincide. Every few weeks for the rest of my stay in the bush, I readjusted the clock."

I learned to forget months and to live by moons: to anticipate the full moon for its dances and storytelling; to fear the dark of the moon when witches were abroad.

Cutting through the moons was, for me, a complicated combination of weeks. First there was the cook's seven-day curry week, highlighting Saturdays. Then there was the five-day cycle of markets by which everyone made engagements. Finally there was the seven-day-beer-brewing week. . . . There was no year, merely a succession of seasons and agricultural activities uncorrelated with moons or markets. The rains began when it began to rain; when it began to rain people started to plant. One could say that a man had done his planting late, but not that the rains had come late. (p. 69)

Evans-Pritchard, a well-known British anthropologist, said something similar about the Nuer, a different African group he studied.

The Nuer have no expression equivalent to "time" in our language, and they cannot, therefore, as we can, speak of time as though it were something actual, which passes, can be wasted, can be saved, and so forth. I do not think that they ever experience the same feeling of fighting against time or of having to co-ordinate activities with an abstract passage of time because their points of reference are mainly the activities themselves, which are generally of a leisurely character. Events follow a logical order, but they are not controlled by an abstract system, there being no autonomous points of reference to which activities have to conform with precision. ([1940] 1976: 103)

The Nuer, he concludes, are fortunate. For us time is the enemy, we are always fighting against it. Ultimately, of course, it is a battle we will lose. Might our conception of time have anything to do with the frantic pace and anxiety that have come to characterize our lives? Perhaps this anxiety is related to the current interest in

Eastern philosophies and to practices, in the West, are to cosmology that produced the

Time's beginning and end

Where or when does time begin? I discussed in chapter 2, also time for the alarm clocks responded to that choice. By predicating it on Greenwich clocks and watches of the how that was a political act when it was an Empire over in every time zone.

Clocks were introduced were primarily installed in *matins* and *vespers* – morning and people continued to eighteenth, and nineteenth clocks at high noon. The in a Canadian, Sanford Fleming

Actually, the clocks of time. Since 1972 we have gone by the atomic clock(s) at time by the motion of the earth rare, soft, bluish-grey metal the measure of a *second* is determined by the difference nucleus and outer electron (167). There are officially 8 every now and again "leap the atomic clock and the earth.

In accordance with the but depend on the gravitation also varies with the latitude the earth from the sun, to be calculated and allowed (411)

Suitable for whom? Fortunately according to nanoseconds and watches.

Eastern philosophies and techniques of relaxation and meditation. However, these practices, in the West, are taken out of context, unhinged from the worldview or cosmology that produced them.

Time's beginning and end

Where or when does time start and where or when will it end? Ali Mazrui, whom I discussed in chapter 2, also asked why it is that Greenwich in Britain is "the mean time for the alarm clocks of the human race. The clocks of the world have responded to that choice. Even when we say 'universal standard time' we are really predicating it on Greenwich mean time. A spot on the British Isles has changed the clocks and watches of the world" (quoted in *Dial*, September 1986: 21). He noted how that was a political act. It had to do with Britain's domination of the world, when it was an Empire over which the sun never set, that is, when it had a colony in every time zone.

Clocks were introduced beginning in the fourteenth century; at that time they were primarily installed in church towers and were used to ring out the time of *matins* and *vespers* – morning and evening prayers. But clocks were not very accurate and people continued to use sundials, even to set the clocks, in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries. Most towns ran on their own time, setting the clocks at high noon. The impetus for a *standard* for time was the railroad, and it was a Canadian, Sanford Fleming, who came up with the idea.¹

Actually, the clocks of the world are no longer set according to Greenwich mean time. Since 1972 we have gone onto UTC (Coordinated Universal Time) calculated by the atomic clock(s) at the US Naval Observatory. Time is no longer "measured by the motion of the earth in space but by the oscillations at the atomic level of a rare, soft, bluish-grey metal called *cesium*" (Duncan 1998: 290). And it is based on the measure of a *second* rather than minutes, hours, or days. "Our second is now determined by the difference in energy state of the cesium-133 atom when its nucleus and outer electron spin in the same or opposite direction" (Barnett 1998: 167). There are officially 86,400 seconds in each day (see box on p. 80); however, every now and again "leap seconds" have to be added because there is a gap between the atomic clock and the earth's rotation! It is too perfect for this wobbly and flawed earth.

In accordance with the theory of relativity, atomic clocks do not keep uniform time, but depend on the gravitational field where they happen to be placed. Their running also varies with the latitude of the place, the height above sea level, the distance of the earth from the sun, the distance of the moon, etc. But all of these variations can be calculated and allowed for, thus arriving at a suitable scale of time. (Fraser 1966: 411)

Suitable for whom? Fortunately, most of us do not yet need to calculate our lives according to nanoseconds or picoseconds but can get by with conventional clocks and watches.

The International Dateline

The idea for the international dateline came about when Greenwich mean time was accepted as the universal prime meridian, that is, the point from which longitude was calculated and world time was set. This was decided in 1884 at a conference in Washington, DC, attended by representatives of 25 nations but, at that time, was accepted by only 22. The international dateline, which set the time zones of the planet, was to be halfway round the world, at 180 degrees, in the mid-Pacific. Not all countries accepted this at first; the last two nations were Saudi Arabia, 1962, and Liberia, 1972.

Calendars

The word "calendar" comes from *calends*, the beginning of the month when religious leaders would announce that month's festal days.

Calendars, like clocks, help us keep track of time – they mark not the minutes and the hours but the days, weeks, months, and years. Most of us have calendars not only on our walls or on our desks and in our computers but also in our purses, bookbags, and briefcases – whether they are filofaxes or palm pilots. We carry them with us so we can schedule appointments and keep track of our activities. Calendars also help us to situate ourselves in the world and history, for we plot world events according to the calendar. We characterize history in terms of decades and centuries – the sixties, for example, or the nineteenth century. We know we are living in the twenty-first century and are poised to compare it with centuries past.

But our calendar, itself, relates to a specific history. The Western calendar, which for all intents and purposes has become the world calendar (more on that later), dates from the year of Christ's birth. It is – insert current year – AD (*Anno Domini* – in the year of Our Lord).² Some people have begun to use CE (common era) instead of AD as a more "politically correct" form. But just whose common era? Jews preceded Christians by at least a millennium and the two religions have surely not merged despite the hyphen in Judeo-Christian. I find CE a euphemism because the common era still begins with Christ's birth and, thus, conceals the political implications. For is it not a way that Jews are incorporated into the Christian time system and into their history?

Jews have their own calendar; at the Christian year 2000, the Jewish calendar recorded 5,760 years since the world began. The traditional Chinese calendar was lunar and the year 2000 was, for the Chinese, 4698. When Mao Zedong accepted the Gregorian calendar in 1949, the Chinese people lost 2,649 years! However, they continue with their 12-year cycles of animals (the year 2000 was the year of the Dragon). Muslims also have their own calendar. I will describe it in somewhat more detail since I know a little more about it and because it is unfamiliar to non-Muslim Westerners.

The Muslim calendar

Although Islam is one of the founding stories of Abraham, its calendar is different from the world as is the Jewish calendar as the Christian calendar celebrates a specific event that unites the community. The Muslim calendar marks the journey from Mecca to Medina that occurred in the year of the Hijra).

The Muslim calendar is a lunar calendar. Unlike the West is a solar calendar. Because the lunar year is about 10 days shorter than the solar year, it is out of about 10 days; thus determining the date of the year involves a complicated calculation that results in a discrepancy over the years. The year is divided into 12 lunar months. The first month is the month of the new moon, an important event for all Muslim nations.

A lunar calendar has little fixed dates. The holidays rotate around the year. For example, Easter for Christians or Yom Kippur for Jews fall about 10 days earlier each year. The complete circuit every 33 years. The year will begin 10 days earlier than the previous year (when you can distinguish the new moon at dawn). During the time of the Hijra, the month of August and July respectively. The year drank nothing – for up to the year of the Hijra.

This movement of the holidays is a result of their lack of attachment to the earth. Their lack of attachment to the earth distinguishes them from the ability and transitoriness of the divine realm. Thus the calendar has a spiritual significance.

So, too, does the call to prayer. The call to prayer is a day from a minaret, the specific name and the interval between the ones between the last of the year between that *ezan* and the first of the year from summer to winter six hours of daylight. The interval is five times a day. Regardless, five times a day, the point on the horizon – the destination. The call to prayer is spiritually.

The Muslim calendar

Although Islam is one of the Abrahamic religions – because it goes back to the founding story of Abraham – and shares much with both Judaism and Christianity, its calendar is different from both. It is not dated from the beginning of the world as is the Jewish calendar, nor does it begin with the birth of Muhammad as the Christian calendar begins with the birth of Jesus. The calendar commemorates a specific event that was critical for the establishment of the new Muslim community. The Muslim calendar dates from Muhammad's migration (*Hijra*) from Mecca to Medina that occurred in the AD year 622; that was year 1 AH (After the *Hijra*).

The Muslim calendar is a lunar calendar whereas the calendar that dominates the West is a solar calendar. Between the two types of calendars there is a discrepancy of about 10 days; thus determining the Muslim year in relation to the Christian year involves a complicated calculation that takes into account that accumulated discrepancy over the years. The Muslim or lunar year consists of 354 or 355 days divided into 12 lunar months of alternately 29 and 30 days. Each month begins with the new moon, an important symbol of Islam, which is why it is found on the flags of Muslim nations.

A lunar calendar has little relation to seasons. Therefore the important Muslim holidays rotate around the seasonal year. This is in stark contrast to Christmas and Easter for Christians or Yom Kippur and Passover for Jews. Every year Muslim holidays fall about 10 days earlier than the previous year. The entire cycle makes a complete circuit every 33 years. For example, Ramazan/Ramadan, the month of fasting, will begin 10 days earlier this year than it did last year. One is supposed to fast from dawn (when you can distinguish a white thread from a black) to about an hour after sunset. During the time I was in Turkey, Ramazan fell at the worst possible times, August and July respectively – which meant that people fasted – ate nothing and drank nothing – for up to 18 hours every day.

This movement of the festivals through the year communicates a subtle message. Their lack of attachment to earthly seasons points *beyond them* to emphasize the distinction between the earthly and divine realms. It also helps to highlight the mutability and transitoriness of earthly life and the immutability and eternity of the divine realm. Thus the calendar, itself, incorporates meanings of cosmological and spiritual significance.

So, too, does the call to prayer (*ezan* in Turkish), which is intoned five times a day from a minaret, the slender tower adjacent to a mosque. Each *ezan* has a specific name and the intervals between them are not equal. The longest intervals are the ones between the late-night *ezan* and the one when first light appears, and between that *ezan* and the one at midday. In addition, the daily schedule changes from summer to winter since the timing and therefore the intervals depend on the hours of daylight. The intervals are shorter in winter and longer in summer. Regardless, five times a day Muslims are oriented toward Mecca – an unseen point on the horizon – which is the earthly symbol of their original and final destination. The call to prayer orients Muslims both temporally, spatially, and spiritually.

Greenwich mean time
point from which lon-
gitudes are measured
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the dateline, which set the
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time – they mark not the
months, and years. Most of
them are on our desks and in our
briefcases – whether
we live with us so we can sched-
ule. Calendars also help us
to plot world events
over decades and centuries
to know we are living in the
centuries past.

The Western calendar, which
is solar (more on that later),
dates the year – AD (*Anno Domini* –
in the common era) instead
of before common era? Jews pre-
fer to use Hebrew religions have surely not
a euphemism because the
calendar conceals the political implic-
ation of the Christian time system

In 2000, the Jewish calendar
and the Chinese calendar was
when Mao Zedong accepted
his 82,649 years! However, they
said 2000 was the year of the
millennium in somewhat more
familiar to non-Muslim

Calendar changes

We think of the calendar as a neutral kind of chronological record-keeping mechanism, but it is actually a highly political institution. For example, after the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Atatürk changed the country's calendar to coincide with that of the West. This was meant as a secularizing, modernizing, and Westernizing reform but it is, of course, also the Christian calendar. Not surprisingly, a number of devout Turks resent this change for, to them, it means living by the time of the infidels. However, Atatürk was not the first to change his country's calendar.

French revolutionary calendar

After the French Revolution, a new calendar was instituted. "The count of the years would begin with 1792; and the New Year's Day would be 22 September – the equinox" (Aveni 1989: 144). Anthony Aveni, an astronomer who became fascinated with anthropology, wrote a splendid book, *Empires of Time: Calendars, Clocks, and Cultures*, which gives a brief account of the French revolutionary calendar. It was to be very "rational" and designed to counteract the "irrational" elements inherent in religion, specifically to break the hold of Christianity over the people. The new calendar consisted of a 10-day week with three weeks to a month. Each day had 10 hours of 100 minutes each and each minute had 100 seconds. Each day was named numerically rather than after celestial bodies and the Norse gods that represented them, as are the English days: Sun day is obvious; Moon day = Monday; Tiw's day = Tuesday; Woden's day = Wednesday; Thor's day = Thursday; Fria's day = Friday; and Saturn day = Saturday. In the French revolutionary calendar, months were named after the kinds of weather characteristic of the time, for example, mist, frost, snow. The year had 360 days and the five or six extra were given special names and became days of festivity. Most of the people hated the new calendar because, after a while, it became difficult to know what day was Sunday and, thus, what day to go to church, make confession, take the sacrament, and receive blessing. It lasted only 14 years; the old (Gregorian) calendar was reinstated after Napoleon took power.

Soviet Union revolutionary calendar

Another attempt to change the calendar was made by Russian revolutionaries. In 1929 the Soviet Union embarked on a five-day continuous production week – four days for work and the fifth was free. There were six weeks in a month and, although the Gregorian names of the months were retained, the days of the week were numbered. Each worker was assigned to a particular day and each day had a particular color. Some people would begin their work-week on day one and work for four days then have a day off, others would begin on day two, work for four days and have a day off, still others would begin on day three, and so forth. That is what made it a *continuous production week*, but the social consequences were significant. First, only one-fifth of the population was off on any given day. It became very difficult to

remember when various festivals coincide with yours? Would more than a fifth of the population be off? It is difficult for people to mobilize clearly, a measure of social cohesion, "the opiate of the people," the revolutionary calendar before the people. A number of countries when the Soviets, too, returned

The Gregorian calendar

The Gregorian calendar is the one that preceded it. The motivation was with the solar year and so wrong times. So, "in 1582, the year was 365.2422 day days" (<http://www.britannica.com>)

The week

So many of us take the seven-day week as "natural." Yet the Roman calendar consisted of 3 to 10 days along just fine with days, not weeks. It claims that people need to have a rhythm to their lives.

We talk of measuring time, but in fact we *create time* and there is no time to be measured.

Knowing what day it is is one thing, but we do different things on different days. As has written a fascinating book, *Day Circle* (1985). Ordinary "profane" time, one day is a day, a day of rest breaks into different days; you have sports on different mornings. Knowing what day it is and participating – at least in the world" (Zerubavel 1985: 2). Friday afternoons, for example (except if you happen to be

remember when various friends and relatives had their day off. Would their day off coincide with yours? Would you ever be able to go on an outing together? Since no more than a fifth of the population would be free at the same time, it became difficult for people to mobilize for protests and demonstrations. The calendar was, clearly, a measure of social control, but it, too, was implemented expressly to destroy "the opiate of the people," that is, their addiction to religion. Like the French revolutionary calendar before it, the Soviet version also faced strong resistance from the people. A number of changes were made but it was finally abandoned in 1940 when the Soviets, too, returned to the Gregorian calendar.

The Gregorian calendar

The Gregorian calendar itself marked a significant change from the Julian calendar that preceded it. The motive for change was that the Julian calendar was out of sync with the solar year and so Easter and other religious holy days were falling at the wrong times. So, "in 1582, Pope Gregory XIII officially revised the accepted length of the year to 365.2422 days, adjusted the leap-year rule, and lopped off the 10 extra days" (<http://www.britannica.com/clockworks/article2.html>)!

The week

So many of us take the seven-day week for granted that we probably assume it is "natural." Yet the Romans had an eight-day week, and other peoples have had "weeks" consisting of 3 to 10 days. But why bother with weeks? Couldn't we get along just fine with days, months, and years? British anthropologist Edmund Leach claims that people need to punctuate the seamless flow of time, to give order and rhythm to their lives.

We talk of measuring time, as if time were a concrete thing waiting to be measured; but in fact we *create time* by creating intervals in social life. Until we have done this there is no time to be measured. (Leach 1961: 135)

Knowing what day it is is often the first thing we think of when we get up, because we do different things on different days. So says Eviatar Zerubavel, a sociologist who has written a fascinating book on the history and meaning of the week, *The Seven Day Circle* (1985). Ordinarily, there is an alternation between "sacred" time and "profane" time, one day is a holy day (holiday) or festival day or, as in the Soviet calendar, a day of rest breaking up the week of labor. You have different classes on different days; you have sports practice on Mondays, say, or theater group on Thursday mornings. Knowing what day it is is "indispensable for transcending our subjectivity and participating – at least mentally – in a social, rather than a merely personal world" (Zerubavel 1985: 2). Each day of the week also has its own distinct "feel." Friday afternoons, for example, have a very different feel than do Monday mornings (except if you happen to be a museum employee, since museums are usually closed

on Mondays). Weekends, for most of us, are completely different from the work-week – a time for relaxation, for shopping, for sports, for a movie, or church. The differing meanings of the days become apparent to those who do not have a Saturday night date or, at least, some alternative plan.

Some of you may never have thought about where our week comes from; others are probably well aware that it is intimately related to religion. It is the legacy of Genesis, the first book of the Bible, common to both Jews and Christians. In Genesis it is stated that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh day. Our work-week, then, is a dim reflection of the work of Creation. This rhythm of days has been going on since the times of the ancient Hebrews:

Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work – thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days, the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. (Exodus 20: 8–11)

Even for non-believers, or for believers of other faiths, each week reenacts the biblical event. For those of you who think that religion is something private, a personal individual decision, it is important to realize how a religious tradition creates world-views and influences attitudes, values, and even notions of time and space that affect everyone regardless of their private, personal beliefs. We don't use the calendar we do because it is better. The use of a specific calendar is deeply political – the result of battles, of power and politics, and of the domination by one particular segment of the world's population.

Clearly, calendars can be changed – after all, they are arbitrary – but it is very difficult because they have important meanings that people become very attached to and are conditioned by. The secular calendars have been resisted for a number of reasons, but the primary one was because they were seen as sacrilegious, they transgressed the sacred rhythm of days ordained by God and laid down in Genesis, at the beginning.

The year, as well as the week, also has a religious foundation – not from Genesis but from Christianity. What of the recent millennium? Whose millennium is it? It signifies 2,000 years of Christianity. What about people who do not or did not have a seven-day week or the same calendar? Do you think they should adopt it because the Christian calendar is better? More accurate? Or, do you think they have been forced to adopt it because of political domination? In my opinion, the millennium offered an opportunity to begin again. For, despite its Christian roots, the entire world did acknowledge and celebrate it. We could have started with year 0 to avoid the problems the Christian calendar created because it began with year 1. We could have called it Global Calendar or gc for short. Even though it would be built on the Christian calendar, it would quickly become separate from it since Christians could continue with their own calendar just as Jews, Muslims, Hindus, Chinese, and others already do, but a Global Calendar might gain worldwide consent as long as it was separate and distinct and used for secular, communicative, and business purposes.

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Our notions of time, not just calendars, also have religious roots that are entangled with the concept of Creation. While this discussion may challenge or even offend those who believe strongly in the monotheistic God of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam, it is important to think about. Stephen Hawking, perhaps the most famous contemporary physicist-cosmologist, is well aware of the relation between religious concepts and time. In his book *A Brief History of Time* he said:

So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a Creator. But if the universe is really completely self-contained, having no boundary or edge, it would have neither beginning nor end; it would simply be. What place, then, for a Creator? (1988: 140-1)

While all peoples have myths of origin, not all stories of origin are stories of creation and, thus, not all have a notion of a creator. Some origin myths recount transformations of one thing into another, or describe emergences from underground, or even portray the world as dream or illusion. Some peoples may have a variety of origin myths to explain and account for the variety of phenomena. A culture influenced by monotheism has a tendency to search for monocausal explanations – for example, the current search by physicists for a “grand unified theory” – one theory to explain how the universe (and everything in it) came into being.

We tend to think of time as linear, universal, and quantifiable, yet we know this view is not universal. Our notion of time incorporates a specific teleology – the idea that there is a purpose, goal, or reason inherent in it; but that idea, itself, derives from a particular *mythos*, a legacy from the Judeo-Christian worldview. I quote Johannes Fabian, a Dutch anthropologist, from his book *Time and the Other*:

In the Judeo-Christian tradition [and I would add Islamic tradition], Time has been conceived as the medium of a sacred history. Time was thought, but more often celebrated, as a sequence of specific events that befell a chosen people. Much has been said about the linear character of that conception as opposed to pagan, cyclical views of Time as an *eternal retour*. Yet such spatial metaphors of temporal thought tend to obscure something of more immediate significance. . . . Faith in a covenant between a Divinity and one people, trust in divine providence as it unfolds in a history of salvation centered on one Savior, make for sacred conceptions of Time. They stress the specificity of Time, its realization in a given cultural ecology – the Eastern Mediterranean, first, and the circum-Mediterranean with Rome at its hub, later. [For Muslims it is Mecca, and for all three religions, Jerusalem is a sacred city they fight over.] (Fabian 1983: 2; my remarks in square brackets)

Fabian continues:

Decisive steps toward modernity, those that permitted the emergence of anthropological discourse, must be sought not in the invention of a linear conception, but in a succession of attempts to *secularize* Judeo-Christian Time by generalizing and universalizing it. (p. 2; my italics)

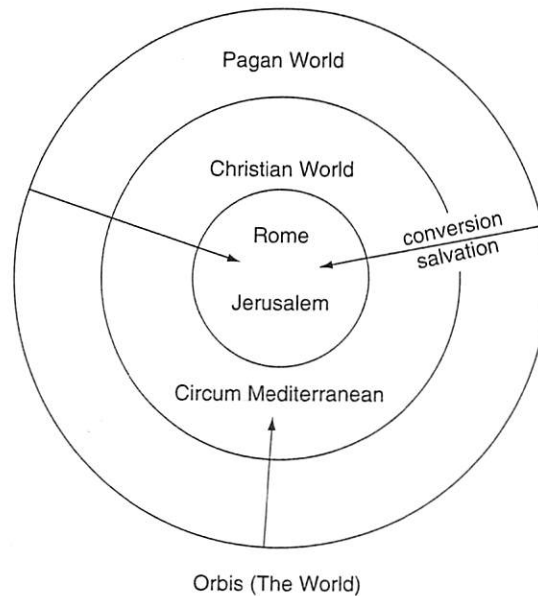


Figure 3.2 Premodern time/space: incorporation (Fabian 1983).

What he is saying is that *our* (Western) time became the time of all others. On the surface that sounds inclusive but, in fact, it denies or effaces other people's senses of time. Because of political power, our sense of time has become the truth and the way for understanding others.

The notion of Creation implies a beginning – not just of the universe but of time – symbolized in the Bible by the “Fall” when Adam and Eve left the Garden of Eden. We might easily imagine that the scientific theory of the “big bang” origin of the universe is a *secularization* of the notion of Creation at a specific moment, though cosmologists might take exception. The notion of a *beginning* to time also affects ideas about history which recounts events that unfold in time, and are not repeatable. This, too, is a legacy from a specific religious tradition.

The early Christian writers stressed the importance of individual historical events that would not be repeated. History, they said, did not move in cycles. On the contrary, there had been a Creation at a particular point in time. Christ had died on the Cross but once, and had been resurrected from the dead on but one occasion. Finally, at some point in the future, God's plan would be completed, and He would – once and for all – bring the world to an end. (Morris 1984: 11)

From this perspective, one could not imagine, as some cultures do, time as a deep-layered phenomenon in which the present moment was not just the end result of all that preceded it but also contained all of what went before. “Past,” in that view, is “co-present”; whereas for us past is past, over and done with. We are oriented toward the future. So much so that we send “time capsules” into the future so that

Civilization
England

Figure 3.3 Modern time.

those who come after us each year at graduation, stone in the main quad 100 years hence. At the same time, we have been made elsewhere even 5,000, years.

The linear view of time and progress, and also of creation and collapse (entropy), and of theories and interpretation when the issue of human origins is at stake, has divided us into two camps. *Monogenists* stress a single origin. This basically reduces history to a single address. *Polygenists*, on the other hand, stress multiple origins for the different races encountered might not be so simple. It also has racist implications encountered “primitive” peoples. The origins of an earlier, more advanced civilization are still debated. The positions are still

Cultures inspired by even theistic do not, though, have a variety of things. They have a history, and the course of

The assumption of a linear history which is, at the same time, the particular Christian history accomplished in the nine centuries calculation, based on the year 4004 BC, and its replacement of the nineteenth

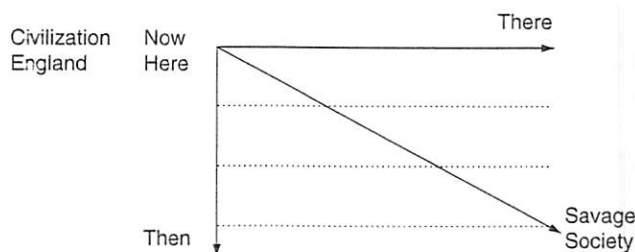


Figure 3.3 Modern time/space: distancing (Fabian 1983).

those who come after us might get some sense of what we were like. For example, each year at graduation, Stanford students place a time capsule under a pavement stone in the main quad that has the year's date engraved on it; it will be opened 100 years hence. At the same time, they dig one up from 100 years ago. Time capsules have been made elsewhere in the country, some intended to come due in 1,000, or even 5,000, years.

The linear view of time permitted the rise of notions of advancement and progress, and also of evolution. But it can also imply degeneration and collapse (entropy), and these ideas have figured prominently in theories and interpretations of human culture. In the nineteenth century when the issue of human evolution was first raised, theorists divided into two camps. *Monogenists* believed that modern humans all have the same origin. This basically recapitulates the Adam and Eve story in scientific dress. *Polygenists*, on the other hand, believed that there were different origins for the different races. According to this view, some of the peoples encountered might not be quite human. But the monogenist position also has racist implications. For, when theorists of monogenist persuasion encountered "primitives," they assumed they had degenerated from an earlier, more advanced, state and thus had to be recivilized.³ Variants of these positions are still circulating.

Cultures inspired by religious traditions that are not monotheistic or even theistic do not, then, have a Creator god or gods who create the variety of things. They would have very different notions of time, of history, and the course and meaning of life.

The assumption of a general, universal, and secular time underpinned, and continues to underpin, the project to create a universal history which is, at the same time, imagined as a *natural history* rather than the particular Christian history of salvation. This was, in part, accomplished in the nineteenth century by the demise of Bishop Ussher's calculation, based on the genealogies in Genesis, that the world began in 4004 BC, and its replacement by theories of geological time. In the middle of the nineteenth century, according to anthropologist Thomas

There are other cultural implications from the notion of Creator-Creation. In the monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) there is a great gulf between the Creator and his Creation. It is not a monistic worldview such as that of certain Native American groups and Hindus. Instead, God and Creation are separate. Thus the very notion of *Nature* and the natural world is conditioned by its place in a cosmological/religious system. Such notions cannot, therefore, be universal (see chapter 2, p. 38). Even though Creator and Creation are separate, these entities are not equal; it is not a dualistic system but a hierarchical one and this has had enormous implications for the Western view of nature and gender.

Trautman, the bottom "door" of time dropped out, that is, it extended backwards not just by thousands but by millions of years. This radical transformation of Western notions of time and the rupture in the context of people's lives has hardly been appreciated. No longer was history divided into just ancient, medieval, and modern but a new category, "prehistory," was invented.

Prehistory came *before* ancient history; prehistory also implies non-literate. When Europeans encountered peoples without written texts, they dubbed them "pre-literate" and, therefore, "primitive," and placed them at the bottom of the evolutionary scale – implying that there is a teleology to literacy. These peoples were relegated to the rim of civilized space and the dawn of history. We refer to some of them as "Stone-Age peoples," and imply by such a term that they are like people who existed long *before* us in the very distant past. "Stone-tool peoples," focusing on their technology and way of life, is a better way of describing such people who are our contemporaries. We have imagined ourselves at the (advanced) center, they are at the edge, that is, earlier in time and peripheral in space. Time was not only naturalized, generalized, and secularized, it was also spatialized. People living *far* from the center of "civilization" were *lower* on the evolutionary ladder. The closer to the beginning, the *lower* on the evolutionary scale. No wonder we call them aborigines, from *ab origine* meaning at the origin. We have thought that these ways of looking at others are scientific, but perhaps we have not really understood the mythical foundation of some of our basic scientific concepts.

The notion of progress (perhaps the secular version of salvation) and the naturalization and secularization of time were essential for the emergence of theories of evolution. Social evolutionary theories, meaning that some people are more advanced than others, had been around long before Darwin, and it is important to remember that his theory is primarily about *biological* evolution. What happened, however, was that the theory of biological evolution became allied with theories of social evolution and their combination resulted in some very dangerous beliefs and projects, for example the eugenics movement in the early twentieth century and, more recently, sociobiology – both of these theories place emphasis on genetic endowment at the expense of culture and environment. Unlike Darwin, proponents of these theories give *natural selection* agency and a teleology. I believe this concept is a secularization of the Calvinist notion of "divine election" (Yanagisako and Delaney 1995: 5); in either case, the agency is imagined as beyond human control.

The transformation in time sense is also intimately related to the emergence of the academic disciplines of geology, archaeology, history, anthropology, economics, comparative religion, and probably others. They could not exist without these linear notions of time. My intention is not to disparage these intellectual accomplishments but to make you more aware that they have been achieved *within* the frame of a specific temporal-cosmological view. They have come with certain costs, most notably an inability to imagine otherwise. For example, we do not know what other theories and accomplishments might be made with different worldviews. This inability promotes a tendency to assume our way is the only way and is both right and true.

Lived Time

The American author Si

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In other words, the experience, gender, age, class, thing individual but also in a particular culture with the cosmological concept and clocks, and their context in which we live particular understandings of dreams and possibilities.

Think again about you that you have spent time necessary for admission. I ago. You gave up some your future depended college education. Some ing money or to help su put you at a disadvantage of young people from a they might be able to go

Class, then, affects how think about it. For example that youth in the inner but also because they are nificantly different from young people who join t people tend to see and is. In the United States, the statistics are correlated "Moments in America" the other "moments" at seconds an infant is born a mother who received the first year of life; and 1992: ix). Others do time the overwhelming major inherent in them that p

Lived Time

The American author Sinclair Lewis said in his novel *Main Street* (1920):

The greatest mystery about a human being is not his reaction to sex or praise, but the manner in which he contrives to put in twenty-four hours a day. It is this which puzzles the longshoreman about the banker, and the Londoner about the bushman [and no doubt your professor about you, and vice versa!].

In other words, the experience of time is related to a particular form of life – occupation, gender, age, class, and race. That particular form, however, is not just something individual but also cultural – the particular forms are relative to and embedded in a particular culture with its particular history. In the previous section we discussed the cosmological concepts of time – notions of beginnings and endings, calendars and clocks, and their religious underpinnings. These notions form the widest context in which we live our lives. In this section we will focus on the ways particular understandings of time affect our daily lives – our work and leisure and our dreams and possibilities.

Think again about your time. The fact that you are in college or university means that you have spent time in the past studying so that you would get the grades necessary for admission. Decisions about how you spent your time were made long ago. You gave up some of your free time because you thought, or were told, that your future depended on it, that you could not get the job you want without a college education. Some of you may also have worked at odd jobs to earn spending money or to help support your family. That cut down on your study time and put you at a disadvantage to someone who did not have to work. Of course, a lot of young people from affluent families don't spend their time studying either, but they might be able to get a private tutor when it is necessary.

Class, then, affects how we are able to spend our time. It also affects how we think about it. For example, it affects how we think about our future. It is claimed that youth in the inner city get into so much trouble not just because of poverty but also because they do not have (an idea of) a *future*, a future that would be significantly different from their present. Similar statements have been made about young people who join terrorist groups. Without a sense of, and hope for, the future, people tend to see and use each day as if it might be their last, and for too many it is. In the United States, a 15- to 19-year-old is murdered every 5 hours (note how the statistics are correlated with time). This terrible statistic was part of a list of "Moments in America" published in 1991 by the Children's Defense Fund. Some of the other "moments" are: Every 35 seconds an infant is born into poverty; every 64 seconds an infant is born to a teenage mother; every 2 minutes an infant is born to a mother who received late or no prenatal care; every 14 minutes an infant dies in the first year of life; and every 14 hours a child younger than 5 is murdered (Sidel 1992: ix). Others *do time* – in jail. What exactly does that mean? Why do you think the overwhelming majority of them are minorities? Do you think there is something inherent in them that predisposes them to criminal activity? Or, do you think their

rate of incarceration has to do with cultural assumptions about race, and the political and economic arrangements that reinforce them? What are some of the ways that class and race affect how you spend your time?

Family time

Another area in which the use of time is rapidly changing concerns the amount of time parents spend with their children. Most, if not all, children in the United States – whether rich or poor – have less time with their parents than did children in the past. Of course, wealthy parents can provide substitutes in the form of nannies and private tutors and time-filling activities such as piano (and other) lessons, while children of poor parents are often left alone, or with inadequate supervision, or on the streets. British pediatrician Penelope Leach says that parent-child time has decreased by 40 percent since 1975. Part of this can be attributed to the fact that in many families today, both parents are working – some because they cannot support a family on just one income, and others because both parents also want to engage in a fulfilling career. At the same time, the number of one-parent families is growing. In that case the parent, normally the mother, is doing the job of two, and too often she is working long hours at low wages with few, if any, benefits. With so many parents working, a likely time to spend with family would be dinner times. But that is not the case: in the United States, families eat together “one-third less often than in the mid-1970s” (*San Francisco Chronicle*, September 24, 2000). Many families never have the evening meal together; instead each family member is off doing his or her “own thing.” How often did you (or do you) eat dinner with your family?

One of the students who helped me with some of the research for this book spent the year between high school and college in France. Living with a French family, she became very aware of different cultural patterns and values. One of the things she cherished about that experience was that the whole family (which at that time included her) ate dinner together every night. When she came back home she tried to institute it with her own family, but it was not possible. Everyone had his or her own schedule.

The decrease in the amount of time parents spend with their children is a social change that signifies a major change in values. In *Children First* (1994), Penelope Leach has written eloquently on the need for changing our priorities so that we might begin to change the way we work and care for children. Children are suffering from this lack of time with their parents. To make up for this deficit, psychologists introduced the concept of “quality time.” The amount of time a parent spends with his or her child is held to be not as important as the “quality” or meaningfulness of the interaction. The concept sounds good but there is a major flaw: the time a parent has available may not coincide with the times the child really needs parental attention. Not only that, parents miss the chance to shape the child’s values and leave that job to whoever is with the child most of the day. For values are instilled not just verbally, not just during the moments of “quality time,” but subtly by actions and by modeling of behavior. No doubt the concept of “quality time” has helped to assuage the guilt of many working mothers. But why not of working

fathers? Why is it women’s the way that time is spent is just as true now as ever Arlie Hochschild calls “the full day at the office” (Hoc

Lifetime

Since we are talking about We believe we “have one make the most of it. But the United States, and more dramatically over the past the average for all races is 77.3 years (from US Department of Fact, 2002). Of course but in general, people in other countries there is more value for both genders was 41 has been declining even (http://www.unstats.un.org Third World country, the 2000! The gender disparity in favor of men in the Third this difference?

Anthropologists have a passage we spoke of in childhood for example birth, adolescence relate with notions of a life lifecycle rituals in a separate and in a variety of contexts time. We do not think just of categories: infancy, childhood middle age, and elderly or maybe 40 or so and then its significance to particular days is “sweet sixteen”; in many important ages are 18, when and get legally married, and consider milestones? What In the United States, 65 use ment; but, citing ageism, as they want. Yet, under guilty if they don’t keep v individuals’ hands and wa

fathers? Why is it *women's time* that is at issue? Here we encounter an example of the way that time is gendered. The old adage that "a woman's work is never done" is just as true now as ever, maybe more so as so many women are working what Arlie Hochschild calls "the second shift" of housework and childcare work after a full day at the office (Hochschild 1975).

Lifetime

Since we are talking about lived time, we should back up and start with a *lifetime*. We believe we "have one life to live," as the soap opera says, and thus we want to make the most of it. But how much time do we have and how shall it be filled? In the United States, and most industrialized countries, life expectancy has increased dramatically over the past century, even in the last 50 years. For example, in 1950 the average for all races and both genders was 68.2 years, whereas in 2001 it was 77.3 years (from US Department of Health and Human Services, in *Almanac and Book of Fact*, 2002). Of course, that doesn't mean all of us will reach those ages, but in general, people are living a longer time than in the past. In Third World countries there is more variation: in Kenya, for example, in 1950, life expectancy for both genders was 41 years, then it reached a high of around 60 in 1990, but has been declining ever since, so that in 2000 it was only 49 years (<http://www.unstats.un.org>). Meanwhile, in Turkey, which has been considered a Third World country, the increase has been from 43.6 in 1950 to more than 70 in 2000! The gender disparity is in favor of women in industrialized nations, but shifts in favor of men in the Third World. What, do you think, might be responsible for this difference?

Anthropologists have given considerable attention to lifecycle rituals, the *rites de passage* we spoke of in chapter 1. Such rituals focus on major events in the lifecycle, for example birth, adolescence, marriage, and death, which often, but not always, correlate with notions of a lifetime, for example when a child dies. Rather than discussing lifecycle rituals in a separate chapter or section, I discuss them in different chapters and in a variety of contexts. Instead, this section explores how we think about a lifetime. We do not think just of getting older and older, but break the time into a series of categories: infancy, childhood, youth, adolescence, young adulthood, adulthood, middle age, and elderly or just plain old. We see a lifetime as a curve ascending until maybe 40 or so and then it's "downhill all the way." People everywhere attach certain significance to particular dates (*times*). In the United States, for example, one such date is "sweet sixteen"; in many states, it is also the age at which you can legally drive. Other important ages are 18, when you can vote, buy lottery tickets or a gun, join the army and get legally married, and 21, when you can drink legally. What other ages do you consider milestones? What significance, if any, do you give to turning 30, 40, 50, 60? In the United States, 65 used to hold meaning when it was the mandatory age of retirement; but, citing ageism, the law was repealed and now people can work for as long as they want. Yet, under the aegis of ageism, there are many people who will feel guilty if they don't keep working. Perhaps it was better when the decision was out of individuals' hands and was the same for all.

Birthdays

In South Korea, the first birthday is the most important and is lavishly celebrated with special food and clothes.

Yearly birthday celebrations are especially important to children – it is their special day – and many would feel bereft if they did not have a party. Parties are normally made for children, though adults celebrate certain of them – 60 and 65 being fairly popular. For adults, especially women, each year passed is often not cause for celebration but for depression. Age is differently gendered: in American culture, and many others as well, an older man is still imagined as attractive and vital, but older women are imagined as “old crones,” the butt of jokes, or ignored. Nevertheless, 75 and 100 seem to be birthdays worth celebrating for those who reach them. While we tend to mark and celebrate birthdays, people in many cultures do not. As noted in chapter 1, people in Turkey celebrate and mark death days, perhaps because that is the day a person is born into the next, and better, world. Those who have become westernized have picked up the custom of celebrating birthdays, but many villagers did not know their birthday, only the year in which they were born.

Death, of course, is the end of a lifetime; everywhere it is socially marked even though by some peoples more than others. The way it is conceptualized and dealt with, especially the way the body is disposed of, reveals a lot about cultural beliefs concerning the constitution of the human person. Does anything of the person persist after death? Is there a soul? If so, what happens to it? Americans tend to be in a state of "denial" about death;⁴ as a culture we fear it, do not mention it, and do not set aside a time for mourning as is so common elsewhere. Maybe that is why we have so enthusiastically embraced birthdays.

It is even thought to be a major indication of culture. Some animals seem to have rituals after the death of one of their kind (e.g. elephants), thus raising the question of the origin of culture.

Sex, love, and marriage

Even though we are living longer, the age at which young people today have their first sexual experience is considerably younger than just a generation ago. They are claiming a sexual identity (heterosexual, bisexual, or homosexual) at an age when people of my generation didn't even know what these terms meant. Why is this, and what is the cultural significance? It used to be if you were female and weren't married by the time you were 21 you were "an old maid," and if you were male and still unmarried by the time you were 30 you were clearly a "bachelor." Today many people are choosing not to get married – some to remain single, others to live together. Still others wish they could marry someone of the same sex.

College has become a time to experiment with one's identity, including sexual identity. It is a time when many of you will meet the person with whom you intend to spend the rest of your life. Yet, it can also be a time of romantic disappointments. According to research conducted by Zick Rubin, Charles T. Hill, and Letitia Peplau, romantic relationships between college students tend to break up during May/June, September, or December/January, that is, during times before or after holidays when they might have been separated (<http://www.trinity.edu/~mkearl/time-1.html>).

There seems also to be a seasonal pattern. January is the favored month for divorce in northern countries, tend to end in divorce and, again, the percentage of divorce occurs

School time

In most industrialized countries, we go beyond that. They find all kinds of schools – trade schools, colleges and universities, a technical school, or medical school. You attended infant day care from the time you were born, waiting, a long time waiting, however, premised on a future of preparing, but we often say, “when I enter the re-

Time is a major topic freshmen have told me the most difficult things they encountered in school in the morning, around 3 p.m. Then you're home for you. Even time for homework. No one is monitoring you. You eat your meal, do your homework. You are probably not aware of the time in prison that prisoners can lose. [See *Prisoners' Dictionary*.] You are the only one who can control your priorities? Why? Where do you work eat into your time?

Holidays

Because we are in school to our days that in late signals the end of what, beginning of a new year Day, but I know that I v my colleagues who mu

An important indication, official ones, can be gathered.⁵ Punctuating the A

There seems also to be a season for other major lifetime events. June, for instance, is the favored month for weddings. Births are thought to peak in late summer; deaths in northern countries tend to occur in the winter. More than half of all marriages end in divorce and, again, there seems to be a timing to that also – the highest percentage of divorce occurs before four years have passed.

School time

In most industrialized countries people must go to school until they are 16, but many go beyond that. They finish high school (usually by 18), and then go on to other kinds of schools – trade schools, art/music/dance schools, technical schools, colleges and universities, and then beyond to law school, business school, graduate school, or medical school. Some of you began school before you were 6, having attended infant day care or nursery school. Some of you will have been in school from the time you were 2 or 3 until you are over 30. That is a long time apprenticing, a long time waiting for and preparing for the future; the long apprenticeship is, however, premised on a belief in a long life. Of course we are living while we are preparing, but we often do not think of it that way; we say “when I begin real life” or “when I enter the real world.”

Time is a major topic of thought and conversation among college students. Many freshmen have told me that learning to manage their own time was one of the most difficult things they encountered as college students. Up until then, you went to school in the morning, at 8 a.m. or so, and finished in the afternoon sometime around 3 p.m. Then you either went to work or went home. Time was managed for you. Even time for homework was often decreed by parents. Suddenly, at college, no one is monitoring your time; no one is checking to see if you go to class, do your homework, eat your meals, get enough sleep, or get your papers in on time. (You are probably not aware that the term *deadline* originally meant “a boundary line in prison that prisoners can cross only at the risk of being shot” [*American Heritage Dictionary*].) You are the one who has to decide *how to spend your time*. What are your priorities? Why? Where did they come from? What other activities besides school-work eat into your time? How do you spend your free time?

Holidays

Because we are in school so long, school time lays down a kind of rhythm to our days that in later life is difficult to erase. For me Labor Day still signals the end of what, in June, had seemed an endless summer, and the beginning of a new year. Today, many schools begin school before Labor Day, but I know that I would find that very difficult, and I feel sorry for my colleagues who must begin then.

An important indication of a nation’s meaningful events, at least the official ones, can be gleaned from a study of its ritual or holiday calendar.⁵ Punctuating the American year, for example, is a series of holidays

Labor Day is an American holiday that commemorates working people. It is celebrated on the first Monday in September (which makes a long weekend); traditionally the school year would begin on Wednesday of that week.

that provide the intervals between "sacred" and "profane" time (see Edmund Leach, above), yet not all are days off from school. Could it be that the most sacred days are truly holidays (holy days) that you have off from school and/or work? Beginning with the school year, the first holiday used to be Columbus Day (a federal holiday but not necessarily a public holiday); Veterans' Day is similar – it is a federal holiday but is not observed in certain businesses and schools – Halloween, then Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day. In the new year, the first noteworthy day is Martin Luther King Day, then Valentine's Day and Washington's birthday, which has been renamed President's Day. Following along is St. Patrick's Day, Easter, Mother's Day, Memorial Day,⁶ Father's Day, and then, in mid-summer, the Fourth of July, Independence Day. Some of these days are religious holidays (Christmas,

Some schools in England celebrate Hindu and Muslim holidays but they are not national holidays and children do not get the day off from school.

Easter) or sacred to the nation (Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and President's Day). New Year's Day seems to be an anomaly; it is a holiday from work and school but seems to be neither religious nor strictly national. Indeed, at the turn of the millennium, it was celebrated worldwide. Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Hanukkah, Passover – religious holidays for Jews – and more recently the African American Kwanza, while often marked on the calendar, are not official holidays. This is a clear sign that the calendar in force in the United States is a Christian-influenced one.

Another way of looking at the cycle of holidays is in terms of social solidarity, according to Caplow and Williamson: "National solidarity is celebrated on Independence Day, Memorial Day, and Washington's birthday; family solidarity on Thanksgiving, Mother's Day, and Father's Day, and (with a special nuance) Valentine's Day; neighborhood solidarity on Halloween and New Year's; and civic solidarity on Memorial Day" (1980: 222–3). Religious solidarity is implied by Christmas and Easter, though they argued that both holidays have considerable secular aspects. What is behind the more recent trend to name days, weeks, and months for certain causes such as World Peace Day, National Cheese Day, Women's History Month, Aids Awareness Day etc.? What social forces must be mobilized to steer these through legislation?

Work vs. leisure

We have yet to talk about one of the major distinctions of lived time – that is, the distinction between work and leisure. Most of us assume we will have to spend a certain amount of *time* working, a certain amount of our *lifetime* at work. The distinction between work and leisure is also spatialized; normally we work in one place and take our leisure in another place. But were these distinctions always like this? If not, how did they come about?

Anthropologists have long been puzzled over why hunters and gatherers would ever switch to agriculture since the former work, at most, about 20 hours a week to supply all their needs. In his article "The Original Affluent Society" (1972), Marshall Sahlins, a well-known anthropologist at the University of Chicago, turns upside down the conventional view that also drives Western economic theory. That view assumes that in "primitive" society there are scarce resources so the people must be

working all the time just in case. It shows that they worked few hours, spent in leisure, social activity, and in proportion to their ability to express in their behavior. They were generous, even profuse, and missionaries who came in proportion to our ability to create every day. This imbalance

Agricultural labor is arduous and control over their time and work is episodic, that is, there are times of great leisure (generally noted that "[T]he work pattern of idleness, wherever men we go on to say that this 'pattern' of small farmers, and perhaps more 'natural human work' in the Turkish village for thousands of years, although neither of these is a new activity.

In addition, "for an academic like Lawrence Rosen, overtaking himself to painting a way to get the money to support others devote many, many time is often not felt as work, more organically and manfully than the work-rhythm most of

Some people, of course, work from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and then have leisure. But we need to ask the question – why should anyone work so hard? What are we working for?

People in our modern industrial societies are working longer hours. According to a report released at the United Nations on 12 October today than 10 years ago; in other industrialized nations elsewhere. Just in the decade of the 1990s. And that seems to be the case. Labor Organization, American Bureau of Labor Statistics, 350 hours – nine weeks – a year. *New York Times*, April 12, 2003)

"time" (see Edmund Leach, that the most sacred days school and/or work? Beginning Columbus Day (a federal holiday is similar – it is a federal holiday – Halloween, then every year, the first noteworthy and Washington's birthday, and St. Patrick's Day, Easter, and a mid-summer, the Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas, are religious holidays (Christmas, Fourth of July, Thanksgiving, and Christmas are to be an anomaly; it is a neither religious nor strictly secular, it was celebrated worldwide, Passover – religious holiday, American Kwanza, while holidays. This is a clear sign of a Christian-influenced one. In terms of social solidarity, solidarity is celebrated on Independence Day; family solidarity on Valentine's Day (a special nuance) Valentine's Day, New Year's; and civic solidarity is implied by Christmas and considerable secular aspects. Weeks, and months for certain Women's History Month, mobilized to steer these

of lived time – that is, the time we will have to spend a lifetime at work. The disjuncture we work in one place and in other places always like this? If

hunters and gatherers would work, about 20 hours a week. The "Inventive Society" (1972), Mary Kay Vaughan, turns upside down economic theory. That view requires so the people must be

working all the time just in order to survive. That was never the case; instead Sahlin's work shows that they worked fewer than 2–3 hours a day and that most of their time was spent in leisure, social activity, and ceremonies. He explains that affluence is a relation between wants and the means to satisfy them; hunter-gatherer wants were in proportion to their ability to satisfy them, thus they could feel affluent, and this was expressed in their behavior. Rather than hoarding goods because of scarcity, people were generous, even profligate. This behavior continually mystified the explorers and missionaries who came in contact with them. In contrast, our wants are out of proportion to our ability to satisfy them; they are unlimited and new ones are created every day. This imbalance intensifies the feeling of scarcity.

Agricultural labor is arduous, time-consuming, and risky, yet people still retain control over their time and the products of their labor. Agricultural work is also episodic, that is, there are times of intense labor (normally in the summer) and times of great leisure (generally in the winter). British social theorist E. P. Thompson noted that "[T]he work pattern was one of alternate bouts of intense labour and of idleness, wherever men were in control of their own working lives" (1967: 73). He goes on to say that this "pattern persists among some self-employed – artists, writers, small farmers, and perhaps also with students" and wonders if this is not a more "natural human work-rhythm." This was certainly my experience living in the Turkish village for two years (see p. 105), and as a student and professor, although neither of these have periods of idleness, instead just other non-academic activities.

In addition, "for an academic or artist, money is time," claimed anthropologist Lawrence Rosen, overturning the epithet that opened this chapter. In order to devote oneself to painting or writing one needs time, lots of it. The trick is to find a way to get the money to provide that time. Although artists and writers and some others devote many, many hours to their work and struggle over it, the time is often not *felt* as work. Not only that, work and leisure alternate more organically and many do not *go out* to work. This is definitely not the work-rhythm most of us experience.

Some people, of course, may prefer working outside the home from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and then have the rest of the time for themselves, for leisure. But we need to ask if this kind of work schedule is really necessary – why should anyone have to work like that? Why should life be so sliced up? What are we working for, and for whom?

People in our modern industrialized and post-industrial capitalist societies are working longer hours than ever before in human history. According to a report released by the International Labor Organization at the United Nations on Labor Day, 2001, Americans are working more today than 10 years ago; indeed, they are working more than people in other industrialized nations and have fewer vacation days than anywhere else. Just in the decade of the 1990s they have added an extra week of work. And that seems to have escalated: "According to the International Labor Organization, Americans now work 1,978 hours annually, a full 350 hours – nine weeks – more than Western Europeans" (de Graaf, *New York Times*, April 12, 2003). To point this out dramatically, John de Graaf

Germans, for example, get many more vacation days, at least a month, than Americans. In addition, most stores close at noon on Saturday and remain closed all day Sunday. The idea is to encourage more family time. However, it also assumes a stay-at-home housewife or, if she works, it puts an added burden on her since she would have to do the shopping during lunch hours or after work. The French, too, as of January 2000, have a 35-hour work-week and more than a month of holiday time.

has coordinated the national "Take Back Your Time Day" scheduled for October 24, 2003, exactly nine weeks before the end of the year!

Although the official hours of work each day and week have decreased over the past century, many people today are working more than the standard 8 hours per day. This is as true of professionals as it is of lower-income people working *overtime* or working two jobs (*New York Times*, September 3, 2001). With so-called "progress," shouldn't we be working less? What happened? How did we come to have the kind of work time we do?

E. P. Thompson claims that "the transition to mature industrial society entailed a severe restructuring of working habits" (1967: 57), which in turn involved a change in notions of time. Once clocks became available to individuals, not just churches and government offices, employers were able to use them to *discipline* workers, not in the sense of punishment but in the sense of regimentation. In order to get paid, workers had to check in *on time*; their work was *timed* according to the clock, and they were released at a specific *time*. Their time was no longer their own, it belonged to the employer. If they wanted to keep their jobs they had to conform to employers' schedules, they had to perform in relation to the external measure – the clock. It did not take much intelligence to realize that "time is money."

The industrial revolution in the nineteenth century changed the way we work. One of the biggest social consequences was the separation of work from home. No longer was work just part of sustaining the family as in farming communities, nor piecework taken into the home and paid for by the piece, nor a family business attached to the home. Instead, one went out to work for a certain period of time and then returned home for "leisure" time. Work and home became antinomies, opposites. And they were gendered. "Work" became identified with men and the "home" with women. Men were paid a "family wage" in order to be able to keep their wives at home to attend to children and housework. Not only did this rhetoric disguise the fact that many women did go out to work, thus ignoring the issues of race and class, it also made women's work in the home invisible.

But in middle-class families women became more and more confined to the home, where they were expected to provide the rest and respite from the working world their men went out to battle each day. Despite all the work women were actually doing, it was no longer conceptualized as work that contributed to the gross national product (see Folbre 1991 for fuller discussion), yet without it the whole edifice would collapse. Furthermore, they were no longer imagined as "helpmates" in keeping the household going. Is it any wonder that women have been rebelling ever since? The "cult of domesticity" or the "cult of true womanhood," as the phenomenon has been called, reemerged in full force in the 1950s after World War II but, at that time, women had even more problems. They had been out working while the men were at war,⁷ and increasing numbers of them had also received college educations and wanted to do something more with their lives than housework or child care. Isolated in their new suburban homes for most of the day, with all the so-called "time-saving" devices, they were bored, and they became ill with "the problem that has no name," as Betty Friedan called it in *The Feminine Mystique*. The second wave of the women's movement, launched in the early 1960s, was

The first wave, for those who do not know, really took off at the Seneca Falls convention of 1848, where women gathered to protest slavery as well as marriage which, given the laws at the time, they theorized as another form of slavery.

the outcome. Time-savvy at least the advertisement or did they "merely allow us with full schedules and dedicated columnist Ellen (

The latest "time-savvy" than any human could ever speeded up. Can we ever information to process a now each of us is expected typing. This means hunched, articles, books, but, someone else has lost the deceptive nature of machines yet made have light Marx added that they make

Now, more and more but a major problem has the sick, and the aged? Thenor to create even more and nursing homes, but to One place to begin involving

A career is a profession against time. It is believed relatively early in life. But you have to put in a lot of "geniuses" there are, or the way in which time has article "Inside the Clock" examines the gendered time career, the same holds to academic career is cut to additional wife" (1975: 49). a full professor one day, ate school possible, you waste time, and make you too much time to finish. spend what remains of your articles and books, given known, getting tenure. If you can be advanced to full written a quarter of a century What are some of the problems

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the outcome. Time-saving devices lulled women into their new roles for a time, or at least the advertisements made it seem so. But, did these machines really save time or did they "merely allow us to do more in the same number of minutes, leaving us with full schedules and the need to find more ways to save time"? So asks syndicated columnist Ellen Goodman in "Time is for Savoring" (October 1977).

The latest "time-saving" device is the computer. It does everything so much faster than any human could ever do. It is supposed to save us time, but everything has speeded up. Can we ever keep up? Because of the computer we simply have more information to process and respond to. Not so long ago professors had secretaries; now each of us is expected to do all of our own correspondence and manuscript typing. This means hundreds of letters of recommendation in addition to our lectures, articles, books, book reviews, tenure evaluations, and so forth. More important, someone else has lost a job. Quite presciently, John Stuart Mill understood the deceptiveness of machines: "It is questionable," he said, "if all the mechanical inventions yet made have lightened the day's toil of any human being" ([1848] 1985: 90). Marx added that they may have lightened the toil of the rich.

Now, more and more women are working outside the home than ever before, but a major problem has not been resolved – who is going to care for the children, the sick, and the aged? The answer, it seems to me, is not to send women back home, nor to create even more institutionalized care such as day care centers, hospitals, and nursing homes, but to begin to change our notions of time, work, and life goals. One place to begin involves the very notion of a "career."

A career is a profession or occupation that has a trajectory that is measured against time. It is believed that intellectual achievements, like athletic ones, come relatively early in life. But they do not just happen; in order to achieve, you have to put in a lot of time. When people comment how few women "geniuses" there are, or composers, or artists, or whatever, they ignore the way in which time has been, and continues to be, gendered. In her article "Inside the Clock-Work of Male Careers" (1975), Arlie Hochschild examines the gendered timetable. Although her example is an academic career, the same holds true for most others. "The classic profile of the academic career is cut to the image of the traditional man with his traditional wife" (1975: 49). What she means is that if you want to become a full professor one day, you must begin by getting into the best graduate school possible, you must choose a topic early so that you do not waste time, and make your work your top priority so that you do not take too much time to finish. You must take the best job you can get, then spend what remains of your twenties and definitely your thirties writing articles and books, giving papers at conferences, getting your name known, getting tenure. Then you must write more articles and books so you can be advanced to full professor. Although Hochschild's article was written a quarter of a century ago, it rings (almost) as true today as then. What are some of the problems with this scenario?

To concentrate on your work with the zeal required, it surely helps if you have someone taking care of the housework, the cooking, the shopping, the laundry, and the cleaning, not to mention the children. Already

To be fair I must admit that my own case is an anomaly. I was 36 when I went to graduate school in 1976, the oldest person the department had ever admitted. Not only that, I had a child and was on welfare. I was told that the program was very rigorous, and was asked what I intended to do with my child while I was studying. I was also told that by the time I finished I would be ready to retire! Clearly, older students, especially women, were not taken very seriously. The burden to prove them wrong was heavy, and so it was with great glee I informed them about my job at Stanford.

you can see why this typical pattern, designed with men's lifetimes in mind, disadvantages women before they even start. In the past, women used to be told that if they wanted a career they better not marry. Today, instead, we hear women say: "I need a wife."

Hochschild concludes that "the very clockwork of a career system . . . seems to eliminate women not so much through malevolent disobedience to good rules, but through the making up rules to suit half the population in the first place" (p. 59). But why shouldn't we all have the opportunity to pursue a career and also enjoy the benefits of love, marriage, and children if we want? Why shouldn't everyone be required to spend part of their time caring for others – whether children, the sick, or the elderly, and regardless of whether they are one's own relatives or not? After all, we have all been cared for by others.

Some people see salvation in the computer for it enables more and more people to work at home and thus offers the possibility of, once again, combining work and leisure into a more organic life rhythm. Personally, I am doubtful; it seems more likely that home will be turned more and more into a work place, and work will begin to take over other times. What, then, will happen to social relations? Nevertheless, one of the interesting phenomena brought about by computers and the Internet/World Wide Web is what some analysts call "time-space compression." That is, for some purposes, time and space have collapsed; communication is instantaneous around the globe. Perhaps a totally new and unexpected sense of time – equivalent to "cyberspace" – will emerge. Then we might come close to experiencing Mark Twain's enigmatic statement: "Time is nature's way of preventing everything from happening all at once."

Village time

In the village, time was the most difficult thing for me to get accustomed to. I am not sure I ever got the hang of it. I could not incorporate (literally, to bring into my body, corpus) their tempo and daily rhythms, and that affected my speech, my behavior, and my style of movement. My *sense of timing* was off, I could feel my rough edges, and my gait was all wrong. One does not rush in the village, it is undignified.

Sometimes I would ask when we were going to do something and the answer would be: *şimdi* – which means now. But *now* could mean anywhere from immediately to a few minutes to a few hours, and sometimes was simply a way of letting the matter drop eventually. I could never really tell when something was going to start – a wedding, for example. For us such a major event is announced well in advance and the date and time are specified on the invitation. If you are late you will miss it completely. In the village, even when a wedding was announced formally (invitations were newly being introduced and had become a kind of status symbol) and the day and time specified, that information did not have much meaning. The wedding would begin when enough people had gathered. How many is enough? I don't know, and the number varied for each occasion. But on each occasion at a certain magical moment, everything would begin.

Visiting forms one of primary virtue. Unlike Ar mean it (cf. Varenne 1980) and did drop in anytime expected to drop whatever "I am really busy now, considering that someone (a woman) to refresh them.

In the village, work was pace; there was no hurry their work was hard, I had because of all the rushing and tasks to be done, but work alone; there are always

When I went to work I consider – whether an urban we were involved in back it was getting hard, it was to the fields, including a job out the day was leisurely in other parts of Turkey tions I had.

Villagers kept complaining too much. You're spending or wastes, but oneself! Time commodity. Instead, the anthropologist Pierre Bourdieuian Peasant Toward Time

Inwardly felt, as the village cannot be dissociated from activity takes place. Duration of a concrete task; e.g. a piece of land. (1963: 4)

In Turkey the term *time* measurement, but it derives to work in a day, that is Space and time were not a specific activity. This is son, has three major qualities of labour"; (2) there is "the siders who work under (1967: 60), all of which

While villagers complained in town talked of how r

Visiting forms one of the major components of village life and hospitality is a primary virtue. Unlike Americans who often say "drop in anytime" but really don't mean it (cf. Varenne 1986), Turks would say its equivalent and *mean* it. People can and did drop in anytime. You are *honored* by a visit – at any time – and you are expected to drop whatever you are doing and welcome your guests. You cannot say, "I am really busy now, could you come back later?" Social life in the village presumes that someone (a woman) will be at home to receive visitors and to prepare the tea to refresh them.

In the village, work was integrated into daily activities and took place at a *leisurely* pace; there was no hurry and no time clock. Although the villagers complained that their work was hard, I had a difficult time trying to explain that for us it is also hard because of all the rushing and the pressure – determined not by our own rhythms and tasks to be done, but by external demands and external clocks. People do not work alone; there are always household members, friends, or relatives to help.

When I went to work in the fields, I always had the impression that if an outsider – whether an urban Turk or a foreigner – should see us, he or she would think we were involved in backbreaking peasant labor. It wasn't so. Just when I thought it was getting hard, it was time for a tea break (all the tea implements were carried to the fields, including a portable gas burner, glasses, and sugar). The work throughout the day was leisurely. I don't assume it was always like this or that it is like this in other parts of Turkey – but it did give me pause to reconsider certain assumptions I had.

Villagers kept commenting to me: "*Çok harcayorsun*" – you're exerting yourself too much. You're spending yourself, you're wasting energy. It is not *time* one spends or wastes, but *oneself*! Time had not yet been objectified, it had not yet become a commodity. Instead, the village experience of time was much more like what French anthropologist Pierre Bourdieu described in his article, "The Attitude of the Algerian Peasant Toward Time":

Inwardly felt, as the very movement of life rather than as a constraining limit, time cannot be dissociated from the experience of activity and of the space in which that activity takes place. Duration and space are described by reference to the performance of a concrete task; e.g. the unit of duration is the time one needs to do a job, to work a piece of land. (1963: 60)

In Turkey the term that describes a parcel of land is a *dönem*. Today it is a specific measurement, but it derives from the amount of land a man was thought to be able to work in a day, that is, before tractors and mechanical plows were introduced. Space and time were not only related but equivalent and both were dimensions of a specific activity. This is called "task orientation," which, according to E. P. Thompson, has three major qualities: (1) "it is more humanly comprehensible than timed labour"; (2) there is "the least demarcation between 'work' and 'life'"; and (3) to outsiders who work under the clock, it "appears to be wasteful and lacking in urgency" (1967: 60), all of which fit my experience in the village.

While villagers complained about the heavy work, some who had tried working in town talked of how monotonous and boring most of it was. All day long one had

to do the same kind of thing, whereas in the village they do many different kinds of tasks and see them through the whole process – such as building a house, which begins with gathering stones for the foundation and making mud bricks; caring for the fields and fruit trees, which involves planting, harvesting, and preserving their own food; and caring for animals and processing their meat, their milk, and their wool or (goat) hair.

Work in the village was an occasion for social activity and people were not alienated from their labor, that is, they saw the process from beginning to end and benefited from the end products. Many of you might not find this kind of life appealing because you want to develop and use other talents and capacities. But you should also keep in mind that in our industrial and post-industrial world, it is the fortunate few who are really able to work in a non-alienated way. You may not end up working in a factory (though millions do), but you may end up spending all day at an office at a desk in front of a computer.

Peasant labor is changed radically when work is no longer primarily for subsistence but is geared toward production for the market. Given villagers' attitude to life and to work, it is not difficult to imagine the *ambivalence* generated by the shift from subsistence to production for the market. Machines have reduced the arduousness of some of the work and greatly increased the amount of land under cultivation. The extra cultivated land is not necessary for their own needs but is intended to produce the food to feed the urban population. The cash income generated from the surplus food nevertheless makes them indebted, especially for the machines but also for the additional seeds and fertilizer. They end up working more and their sociability is being destroyed. How do you think villagers were convinced to produce for the market? What forces might have been exerted? In what ways do you think their sense of time changed?

In Islam there is a belief that your lifetime is already determined at your birth but only God knows its length. While there were some fairly old people in the village, the average life expectancy was much lower than in the United States. They remarked on my age and the fact that although I had a child, I was still in school; "here we just keep having children, and then we die." It is very important to have children; that is what establishes you as an adult. Sons are especially important because it is through them that the family line will continue. But it is also important to have children because they are expected to take care of you in your old age in return for the care you gave them when they were young. As a person grows from child to adult there is a kind of backward look, toward the parents, whereas in the United States children are pointed always toward the future. Most Turks, rural or urban, frowned on the American habit of putting their parents in retirement homes or nursing homes.

Although there is a backward look to a life span, the goal is toward the "other world," which is your original, true, and final home. Mecca, believed to be the place where the first land appeared upon the waters, is felt to be the closest to the "other world" one can get in this life; it is the *axis mundi* (the navel of the world). Making the *hajj* (pilgrimage) to Mecca at least once in a lifetime, if at all possible, is incumbent upon Muslims. But rather than a going forth as exemplified in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*, this pilgrimage is a return, back to the source. This, too, I believe,

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A common wall hang
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3 See Stocking (1968) and
4 A scathing account w
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gives a very different feeling to time (and space) and a lifetime from that of people raised in a country dominated by Christianity.

A common wall hanging in villagers' homes included a saying attributed to the medieval Muslim scholar al-Ghazali. It went like this:

What are you? Where do you come from? Where are you going? Whether your life span be short or long, the world is but a brief lodging (a guesthouse), so take care to make provisions for the eternal home.

Unlike the Protestant ethic with its focus on "this-worldly" asceticism, the Muslim ethic, at least in this saying, encourages an asceticism that focuses on the "other world." For while the reward in both cases is Heaven, Protestants were also encouraged to save in this world so that they could launch a thousand ships, gain capital for business, and bequeath the riches to their children. This does not mean that villagers went around in a pious state all the time, but they made a big distinction between "this world" and the "other world," and the "other world" was very real. For example, they would say "I have three children in this world, and two in the other world," meaning two children had died. Villagers were very much involved with life in this world and curious about material things. But there was also a sense in which they were not so identified with their things; they did not seem to depend on them as much as we do. With so few material possessions, you would think they would be more, not less, concerned about them, but that was not the case at all. They were very generous in sharing whatever they had and giving away a treasured possession was not uncommon. They also seemed to possess a sense of humor about the vicissitudes of life that I found unusual and refreshing (cf. Sahlins 1972) – perhaps because they were confident about the rewards awaiting them. Death, for the villagers, was the means to the second birth, not baptism as in Christianity. And the next life, especially for men, who will have anywhere from 7 to 70 *hours* (virginal maidens) waiting on them, is expected to be a life of ease and comfort.

Notes

- 1 For those interested in the story, I recommend Clark Blaise's *Time Lord: Sir Sanford Fleming and the Creation of Standard Time* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2001).
- 2 For an accessible investigation of the calendar see David Ewing Duncan's book, *Calendar: Humanity's Epic Struggle to Determine a True and Accurate Year*. He claims that the AD dating system was devised by Dionysius Exiguus ("Little Dennis") in the year AD 531, although how Dionysius decided that he was living 531 years after the birth of Christ is a mystery, especially since the date of "Christ's birth is unknown and a matter of immense controversy even today" (Duncan 1998: 91–2).
- 3 See Stocking (1968) and Gould (1981).
- 4 A scathing account was published by Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death* (1963).
- 5 For example, see Caplow and Williamson (1980).
- 6 For a classic analysis of Memorial Day, see Warner (1953).
- 7 See, for example, the film *Rosie the Riveter* (1980).