

Dr. Hiebert:

He is talking here about universality + particularity in both time space. For me, there are tremendous implications for understanding the possible effects that the missionaries' presence itself inevitably has upon primal societies and others who are not fully "modern".

Ted.

both itself and that universe as an integral part of that process.

This is a model of reflexivity, but not one in which there is a parallel track between the accumulation of sociological knowledge on the one side and the steadily more extensive control of social development on the other. Sociology (and the other social sciences which deal with extant human beings) does not develop cumulative knowledge in the same way as the natural sciences might be said to do. Per contra, the "feed-in" of sociological notions or knowledge claims into the social world is not a process that can be readily channeled, either by those who propose them or even by powerful groups or governmental agencies. Yet the practical impact of social science and sociological theories is enormous, and sociological concepts and findings are constitutively involved in what modernity is. I shall develop the significance of this point in some detail below.

If we are adequately to grasp the nature of modernity, I want to argue, we have to break away from existing sociological perspectives in each of the respects mentioned. We have to account for the extreme dynamism and globalising scope of modern institutions and explain the nature of their discontinuities from traditional cultures. I shall come to a characterisation of these institutions later, first of all posing the question: what are the sources of the dynamic nature of modernity? Several sets of elements can be distinguished in formulating an answer, each of which is relevant both to the dynamic and to the "world-embracing" character of modern institutions.

The dynamism of modernity derives from the *separation of time and space* and their recombination in forms which permit the precise time-space "zoning" of social

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life; the *disembedding* of social systems (a phenomenon which connects closely with the factors involved in time-space separation); and the *reflexive ordering and reordering* of social relations in the light of continual inputs of knowledge affecting the actions of individuals and groups. I shall analyse these in some detail (which will include an initial look at the nature of trust), beginning with the ordering of time and space.

Modernity, Time, and Space

To understand the intimate connections between modernity and the transformation of time and space, we have to start by drawing some contrasts with time-space relations in the pre-modern world.

All pre-modern cultures possessed modes of the calculation of time. The calendar, for example, was as distinctive a feature of agrarian states as the invention of writing. But the time reckoning which formed the basis of day-to-day life, certainly for the majority of the population, always linked time with place—and was usually imprecise and variable. No one could tell the time of day without reference to other socio-spatial markers: "when" was almost universally either connected with "where" or identified by regular natural occurrences. The invention of the mechanical clock and its diffusion to virtually all members of the population (a phenomenon which dates at its earliest from the late eighteenth century) were of key significance in the separation of time from space. The clock expressed a uniform dimension of "empty" time, quantified in such a way as to permit the precise designation of "zones" of the day (e.g., the "working day").¹²

Time was still connected with space (and place) until

the uniformity of time measurement by the mechanical clock was matched by uniformity in the social organisation of time. This shift coincided with the expansion of modernity and was not completed until the current century. One of its main aspects is the worldwide standardisation of calendars. Everyone now follows the same dating system: the approach of the "year 2000," for example, is a global event. Different "New Years" continue to co-exist but are subsumed within a mode of dating which has become to all intents and purposes universal. A second aspect is the standardising of time across regions. Even in the latter part of the nineteenth century, different areas within a single state usually had different "times," while between the borders of states the situation was even more chaotic.¹³

The "emptying of time" is in large part the precondition for the "emptying of space" and thus has causal priority over it. For, as I shall argue below, coordination across time is the basis of the control of space. The development of "empty space" may be understood in terms of the separation of *space* from *place*. It is important to stress the distinction between these two notions, because they are often used as more or less synonymous with one another. "Place" is best conceptualised by means of the idea of locale, which refers to the physical settings of social activity as situated geographically.¹⁴ In pre-modern societies, space and place largely coincide, since the spatial dimensions of social life are, for most of the population, and in most respects, dominated by "presence"—by localised activities. The advent of modernity increasingly tears space away from place by fostering relations between "absent" others, locationally distant from any given situation of face-to-face interaction. In conditions

of modernity, place becomes increasingly *phantasmagoric*: that is to say, locales are thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them. What structures the locale is not simply that which is present on the scene; the "visible form" of the locale conceals the distanced relations which determine its nature.

The dislocation of space from place is not, as in the case of time, closely bound up with the emergence of uniform modes of measurement. Means of reliably subdividing space have always been more readily available than means of producing uniform measures of time. The development of "empty space" is linked above all to two sets of factors: those allowing for the representation of space without reference to a privileged locale which forms a distinct vantage-point; and those making possible the substitutability of different spatial units. The "discovery" of "remote" regions of the world by Western travelers and explorers was the necessary basis of both of these. The progressive charting of the globe that led to the creation of universal maps, in which perspective played little part in the representation of geographical position and form, established space as "independent" of any particular place or region.

The separation of time from space should not be seen as a unilinear development, in which there are no reversals or which is all-encompassing. On the contrary, like all trends of development, it has dialectical features, provoking opposing characteristics. Moreover, the severing of time from space provides a basis for their recombination in relation to social activity. This is easily demonstrated by taking the example of the timetable. A timetable, such as a schedule of the times at which trains run,

might seem at first sight to be merely a temporal chart. But actually it is a time-space ordering device, indicating both when and where trains arrive. As such, it permits the complex coordination of trains and their passengers and freight across large tracts of time-space.

Why is the separation of time and space so crucial to the extreme dynamism of modernity?

First, it is the prime condition of the processes of disembedding which I shall shortly analyse. The separating of time and space and their formation into standardised, "empty" dimensions cut through the connections between social activity and its "embedding" in the particularities of contexts of presence. Disembedded institutions greatly extend the scope of time-space distancing and, to have this effect, depend upon coordination across time and space. This phenomenon serves to open up manifold possibilities of change by breaking free from the restraints of local habits and practices.

Second, it provides the gearing mechanisms for that distinctive feature of modern social life, the rationalised organisation. Organisations (including modern states) may sometimes have the rather static, inertial quality which Weber associated with bureaucracy, but more commonly they have a dynamism that contrasts sharply with pre-modern orders. Modern organisations are able to connect the local and the global in ways which would have been unthinkable in more traditional societies and in so doing routinely affect the lives of many millions of people.

Third, the radical historicity associated with modernity depends upon modes of "insertion" into time and space unavailable to previous civilisations. "History," as the systematic appropriation of the past to help shape the

future, received its first major stimulus with the early emergence of agrarian states, but the development of modern institutions gave it a fundamentally new impetus. A standardised dating system, now universally acknowledged, provides for an appropriation of a unitary past, however much such "history" may be subject to contrasting interpretations. In addition, given the overall mapping of the globe that is today taken for granted, the unitary past is one which is worldwide; time and space are recombined to form a genuinely world-historical framework of action and experience.

Disembedding

Let me now move on to consider the disembedding of social systems. By disembedding I mean the "lifting out" of social relations from local contexts of interaction and their restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space.

Sociologists have often discussed the transition from the traditional to the modern world in terms of the concepts of "differentiation" or "functional specialisation." The movement from small-scale systems to agrarian civilisations and then to modern societies, according to this view, can be seen as a process of progressive inner diversification. Various objections can be made to this position. It tends to be linked to an evolutionary outlook, gives no attention to the "boundary problem" in the analysis of societal systems, and quite often depends upon functionalist notions.¹⁵ More important to the present discussion, however, is the fact that it does not satisfactorily address the issue of time-space distancing. The notions of differentiation or functional specialisation are not well suited to handling the phenomenon of the brack-

Think of the effects of
Missionaries' contact w/
remote Tribals!