

Seminario
“Mobility turn”.
Nuovi strumenti storiografici, dalla
preistoria alla modernità

Affinità elettive tra modernità e mobilità

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This Seminar

Seminario 1. Concetti chiave, significati e critiche del Mobility Turn

Seminario 2. Archeologia dei movimenti: ripensare la stanzialità

Seminario 3. **Affinità elettive tra modernità e mobilità**

Seminario 4. Usare la storia per costruire il futuro dei trasporti





This Seminar

Seminario 3. - 28 Maggio 2019 - 13-16

Affinità elettive tra modernità e mobilità

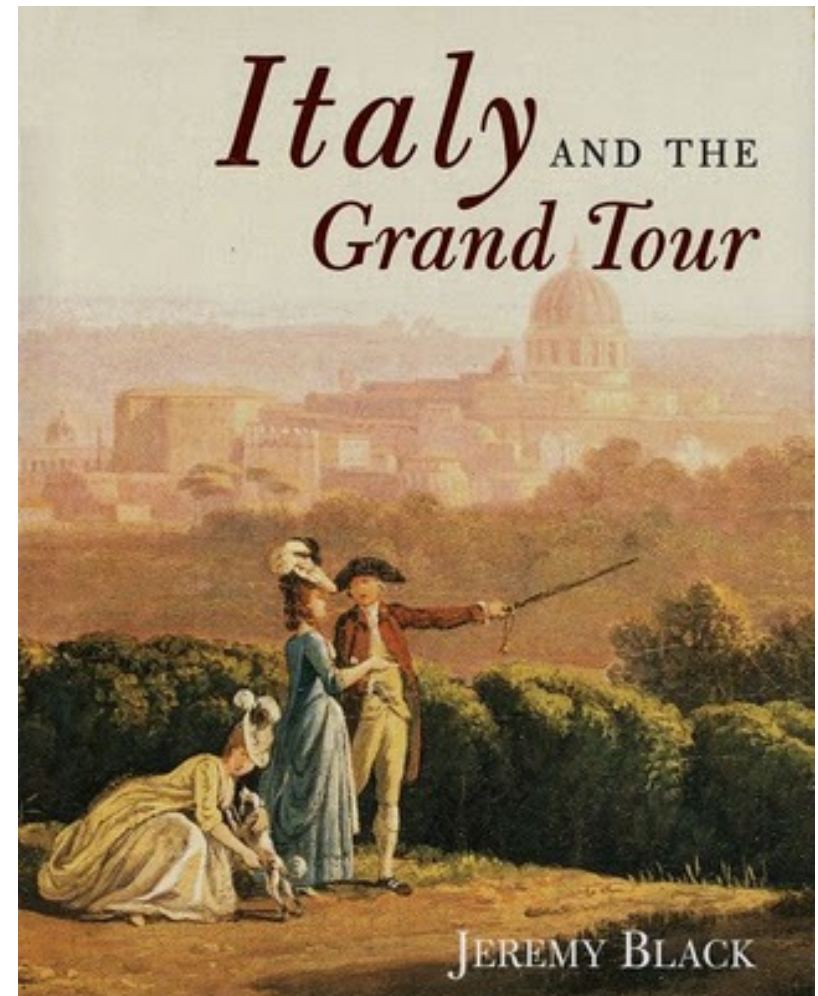
Stephan Rammler, “The Wahlverwandschaft of Modernity and Mobility”, in W. Canzler, V. Kaufmann, S. Kesselring (eds.), *Tracing Mobilities. Towards a Cosmopolitan Perspective* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2008), 57-75





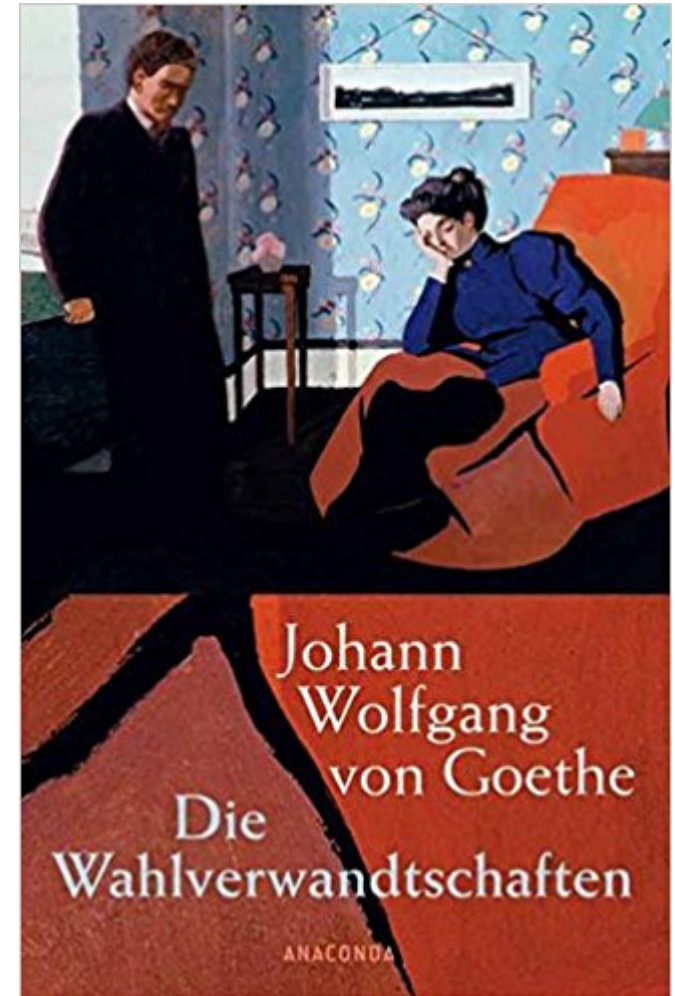
Stephan Rammler suggest a *Wahlverwandschaft* between Modernity and Mobility

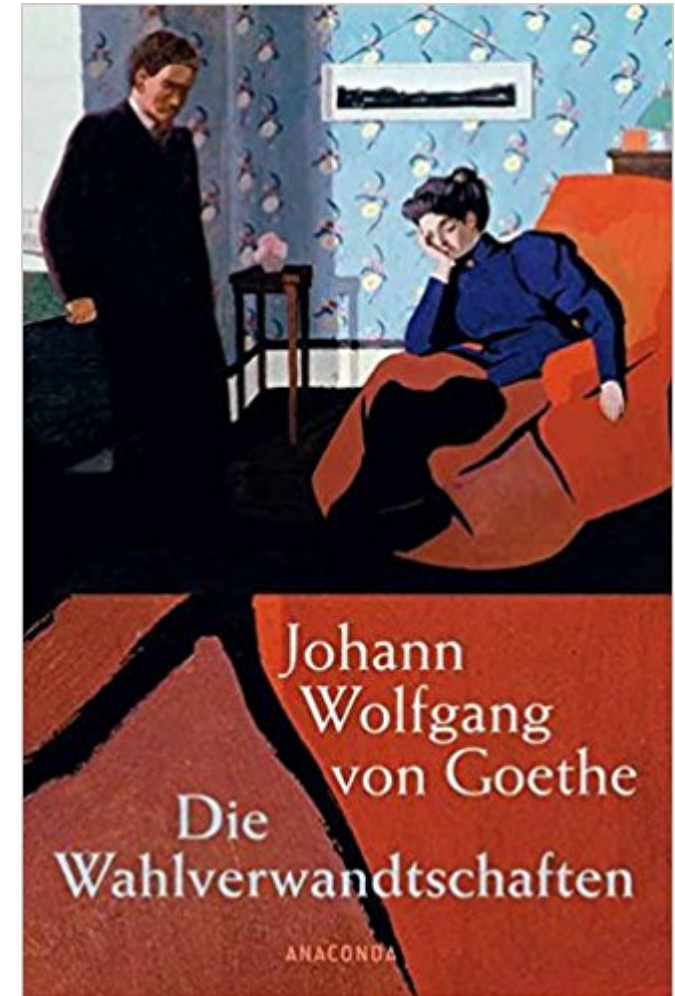
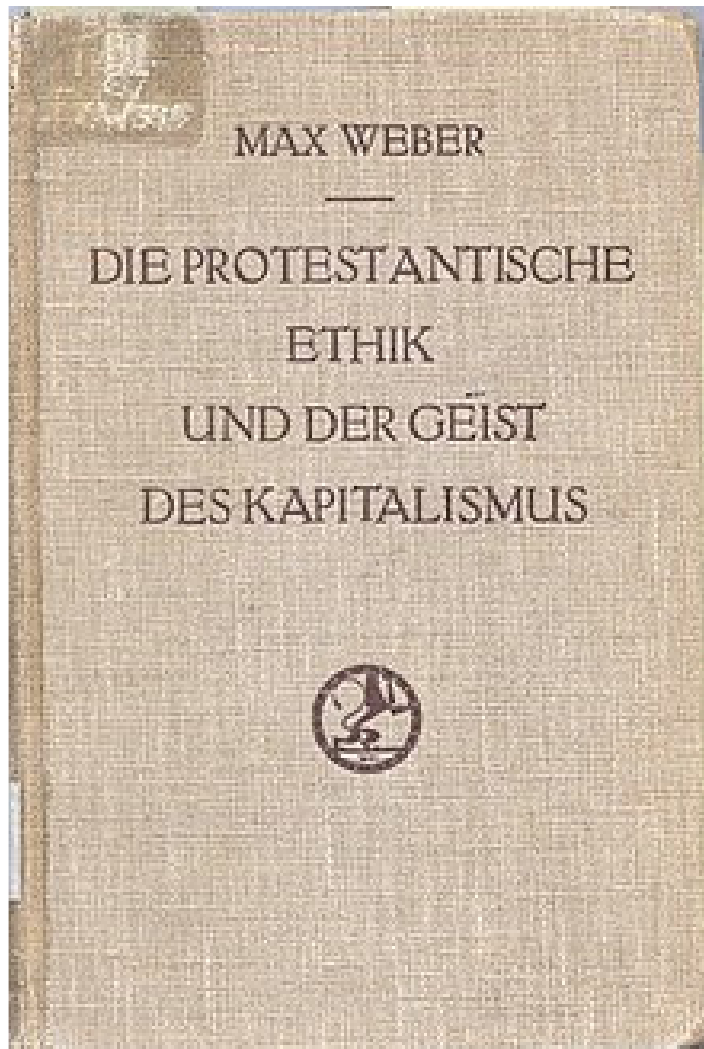
A connubial relation, in which each partner enhances the other.





Wahlverwandschaft in Goethe





Wahlverwandtschaft in Weber





The conception of time in different societies, along history and space.



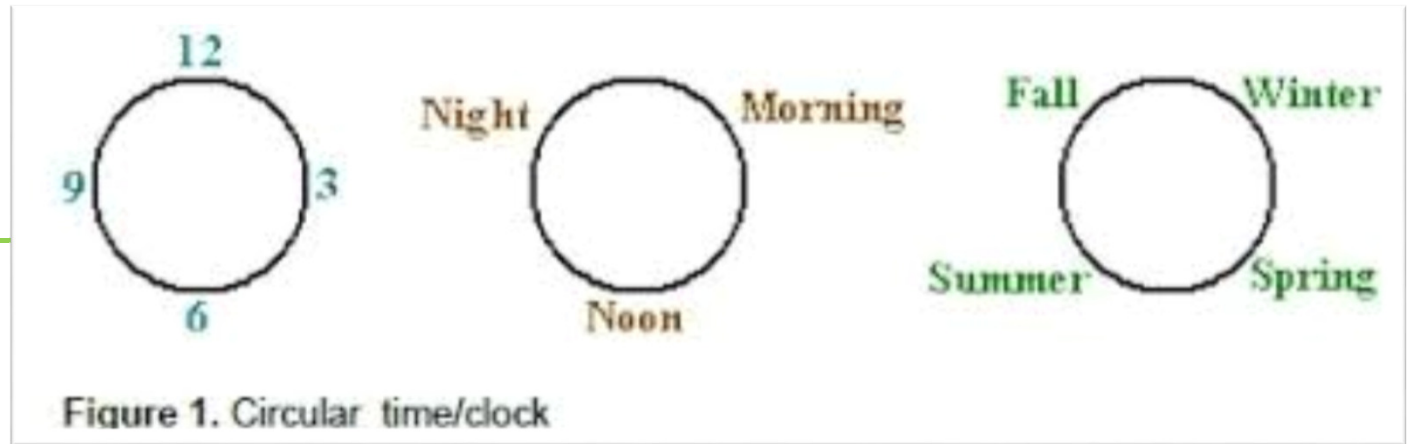
For instance, in ancient Greek we have ***chronos*** and ***kairos***.



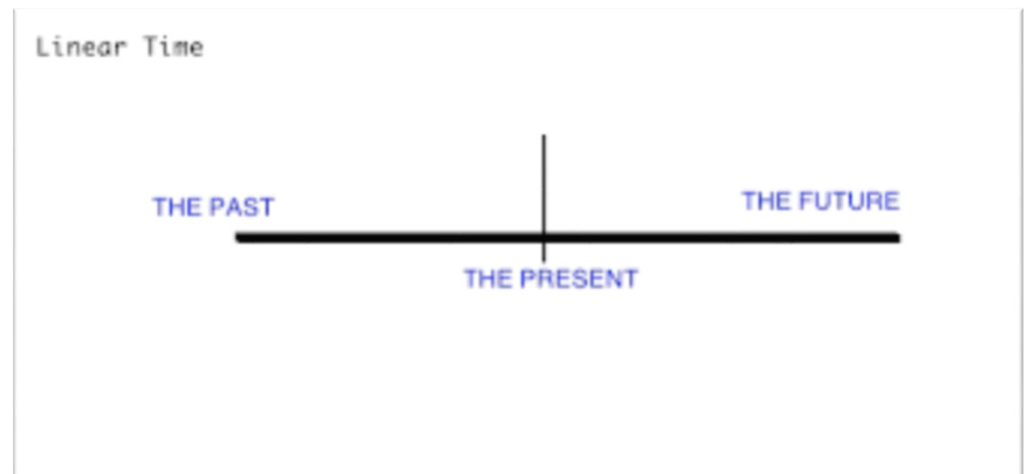
What... is time? I know well enough what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled.

(Confessions, book XI)
Augustine of Hippo





Linear, spiral or circular concepts of time. Those are central not only in defining ourselves as organized groups, and in giving sense to our lives.





And we have space: today, we follow a linear idea of space...





And now we
combine time
and space
together!

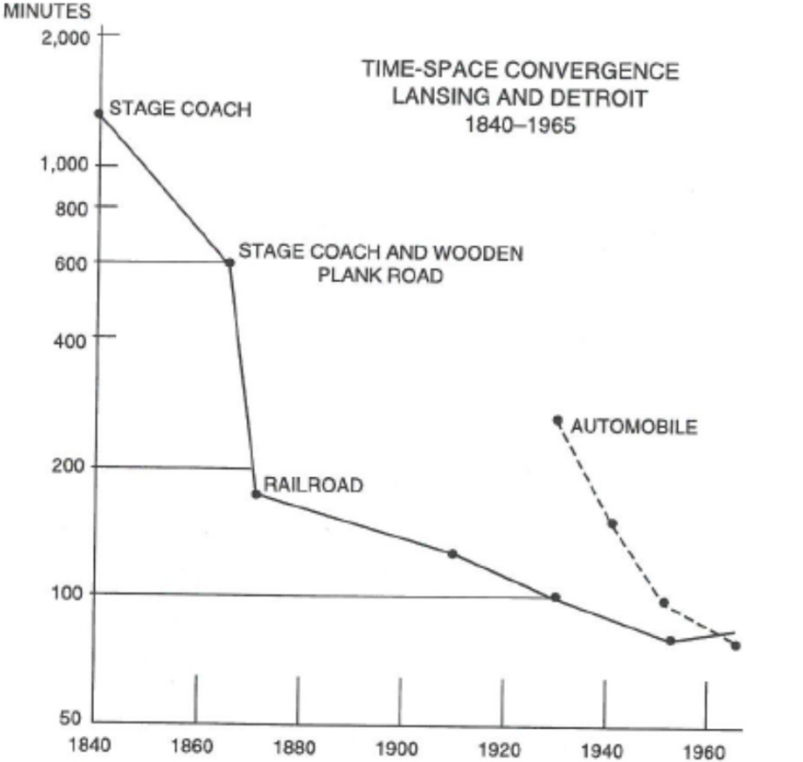


Figure 2.1 The classic model of time-space convergence.



H. Sharbau. N.S. del.

S. Waller. lith.

Explanation of colours. Green within 10 days. Yellow 10-20 days. Pink 20-30 days. Blue 30-40 days. Brown more than 40 days journey.

Published for the Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society, 1851.



Paul Virilio



Intersection of military technology and the experience of speed (Speed as central in warfare).

Speed not as a technical issue, but a political one.

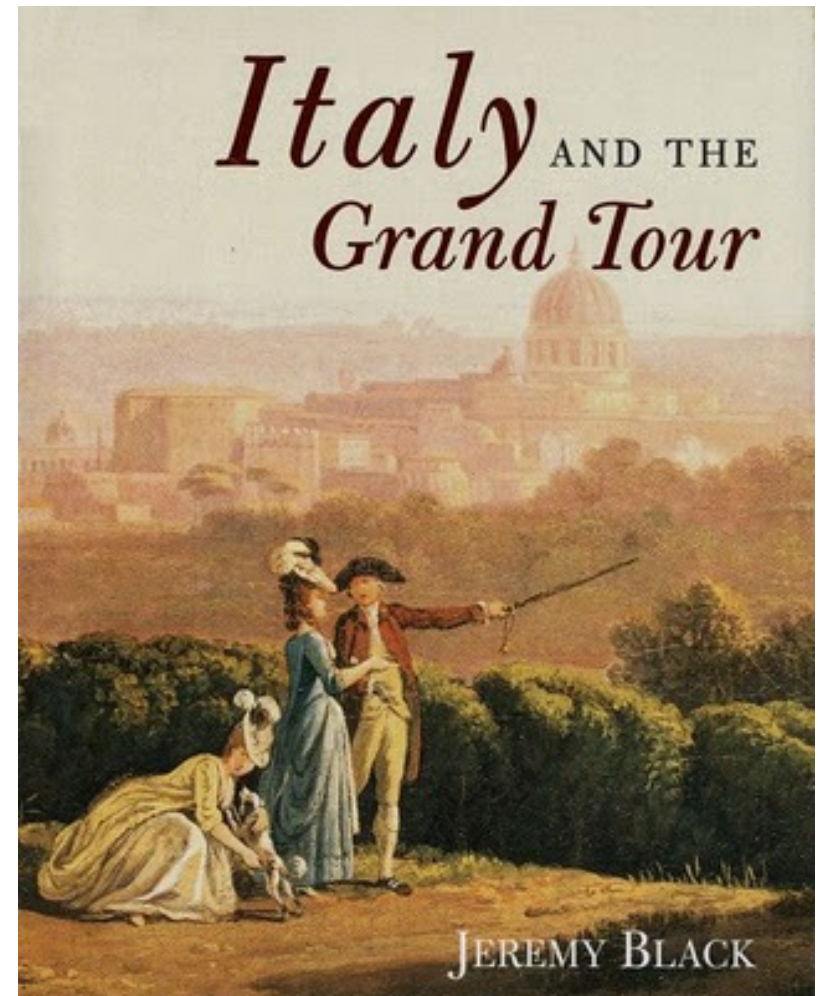
Speed summarize *in se* time and space.





Stephan Rammler suggest a *Wahlverwandschaft* between Modernity and Mobility

A connubial relation, in which each partner enhances the other.





Wahlverwandtschaft because Mobility permits ideas, people and goods circulation, break narrow mind visions. This is not just the quintessence of modernity. It lets Modernity's take off.

As Rammler puts: mobility “fosters expansion of cultural horizon and mutual inspiration.”

“Transportation enables sociality.”

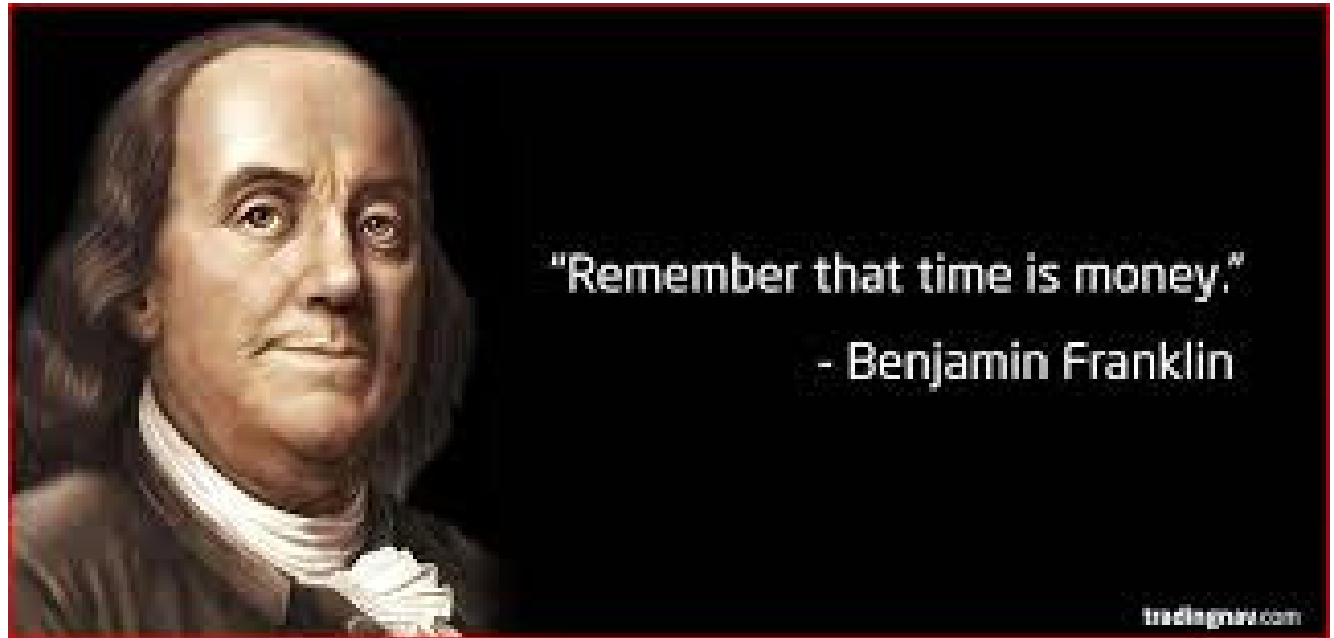




UK in 1839: the new railway system (and telegraph) were “having the effect of ‘compressing’ time and space” and that “distances were thus annihilated”

This latter expression is made famous by Karl Marx who talked about “the annihilation of space by time” (see David Harvey’s works in the 1980s), so to acquire new markets and to cope with the capitalism overproduction.





Modernity has defined Mobility as one of its pillar, the base of its ideology. Dynamism, being on the move and fluidity are, in modernity, not just tools to achieve other results, but goals in se.





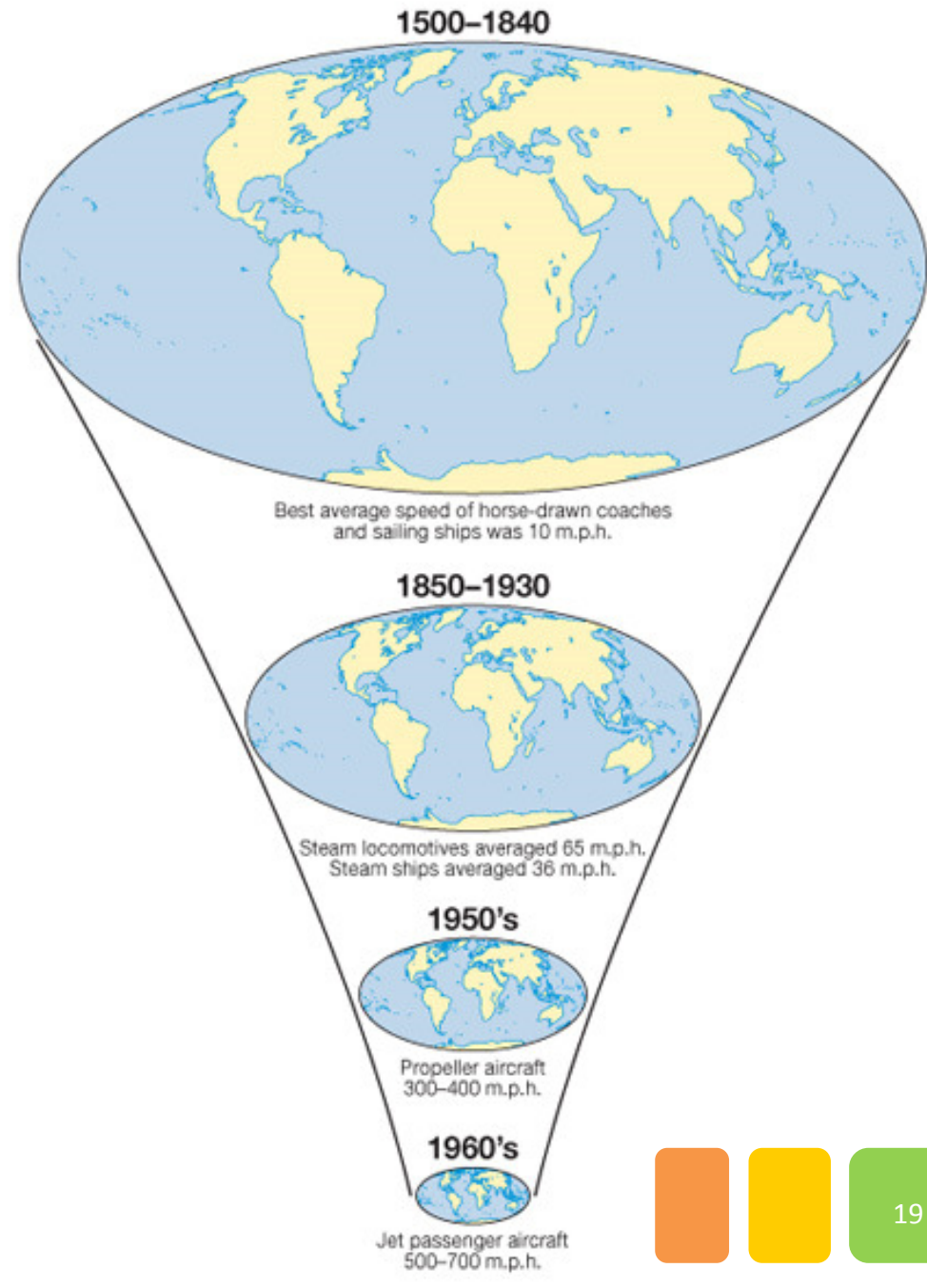
This had lead to space and time compression.

We “save” time, and yet we are under time constrain. Time is NOT less relevant. On the opposite: we live in a time-obsessed environment.





Shrinking time and space is thus the outcome of this *Wahlverwandtschaft*





Acceleration is therefore the key concept in mobility.
But naturally, while we “save” time, we are still under time constraints.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRy_73ivcms



Here, we can appreciate Marx quote „all that is solid melts into air“. In modern time, fixity and solid are dissolved.

“Modern capitalism society was dynamic, mobilizing, energetic, and under pressure, just as the steam engines symbolic of the era”.





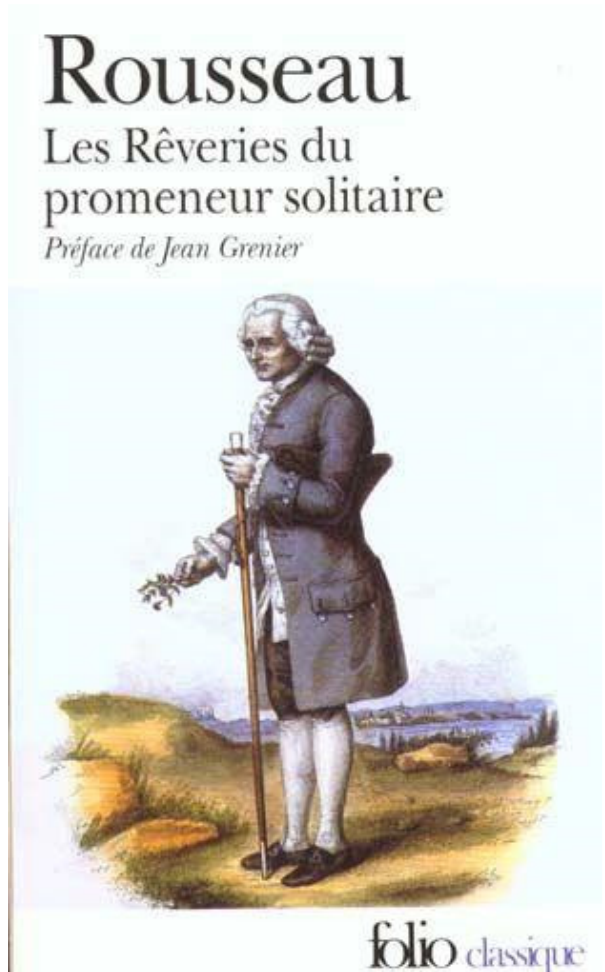
- The role of communication and transport technology is twofold
- Reaching “new” areas,
 - Compressing time and space.

Transport and communication technologies are increasing this compression.





The role of technology in squeezing time and space, or better their combination.

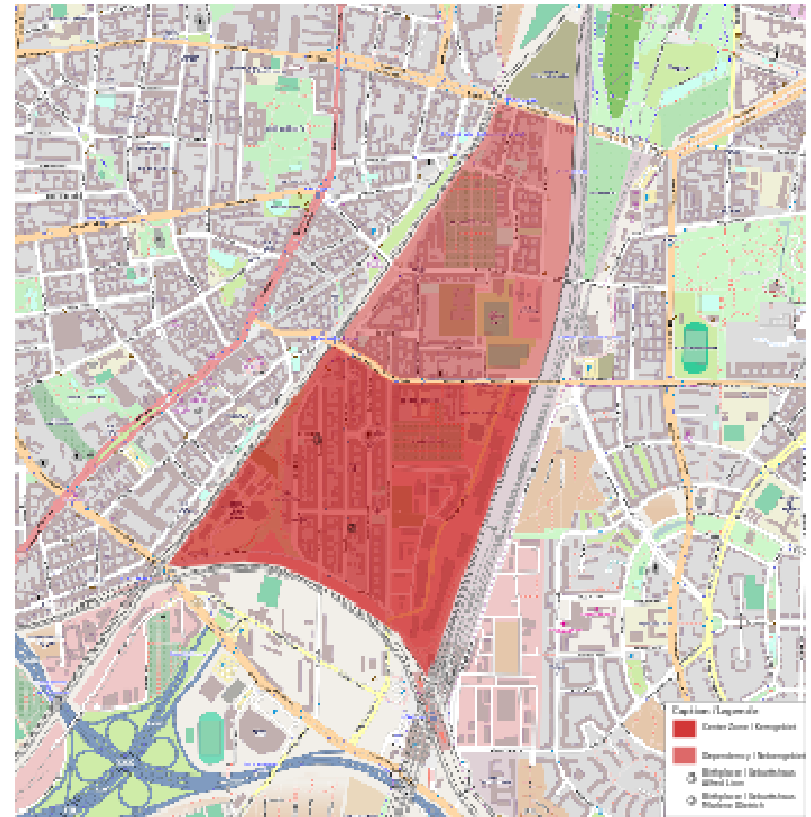




But, we have also a „Dark side“

That is „transportation not only enables, but constrains as well.“

Infrastructures, for instance, connect *and* separate at the very same moment.





Mobility, thus, is a driving force of modernity, and modernity is a driving force of mobility. In other words they have indeed *Wahlverwandschaft*.

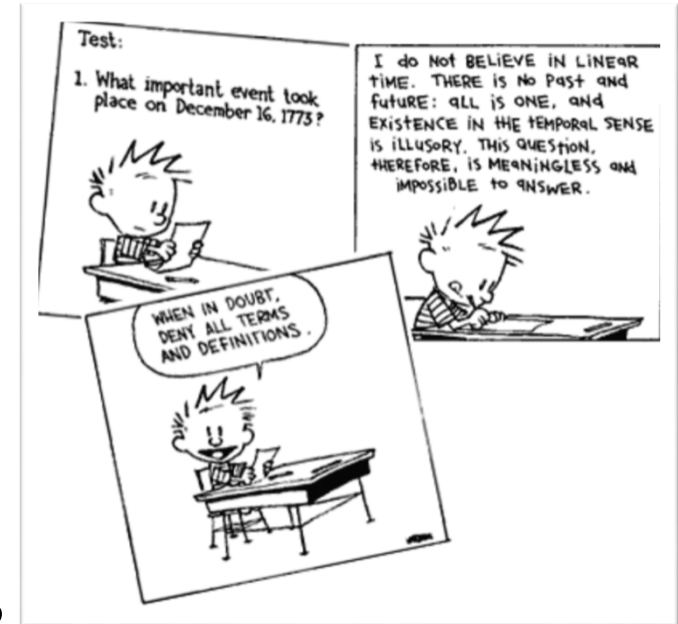
So if they reinforce each other, they can just obsessively push further the boundaries of time and space...





How do we cope with this?

“The bewildering complexity of postmodern hyperspace exceeds the individual capacity of cognitive representation of the world”. The subject, the person “has lost his/her capacity to map their position in a mappable external world” (Warf 2008 based on Jameson 1984)



Test:

1. What important event took place on December 16, 1773?



I DO NOT BELIEVE IN LINEAR TIME. THERE IS NO PAST AND FUTURE: ALL IS ONE, AND EXISTENCE IN THE TEMPORAL SENSE IS ILLUSORY. THIS QUESTION, THEREFORE, IS MEANINGLESS AND IMPOSSIBLE TO ANSWER.



WHEN IN DOUBT,
DENY ALL TERMS
AND DEFINITIONS.





Let's move to a critique of these
Wahlverwandtschaft.





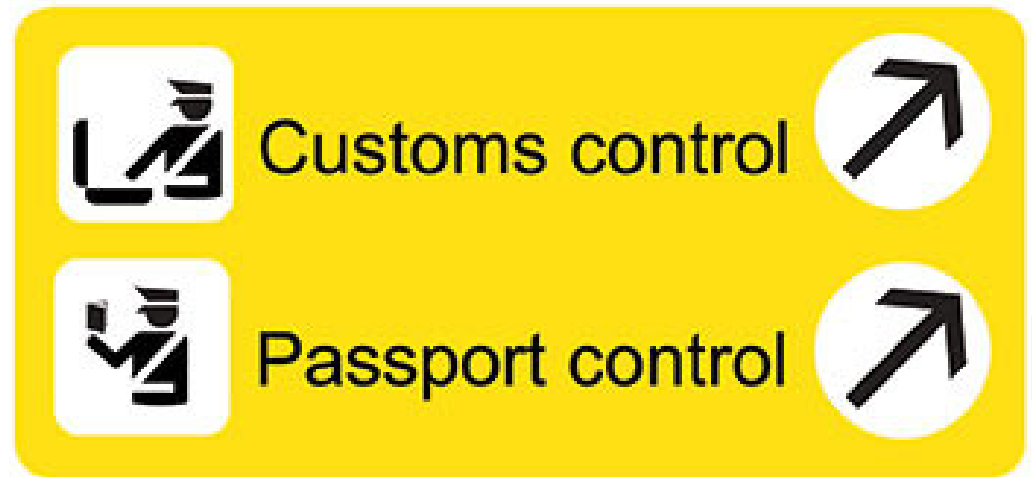
How is distributed this mobility?

Mobility Technologies were, however, for rich, male, healthy and adult users.





Compression of time and space (e.g. technology access) is not equally distributed, but follow income, gender and legal frames.





Often, the transport system are build and used by rich, male, healthy and adult users.





Critical comments

As a first element for our discussion, we should consider mobility NOT as a modern, western, wheeled, motorized, male-dominated affair.



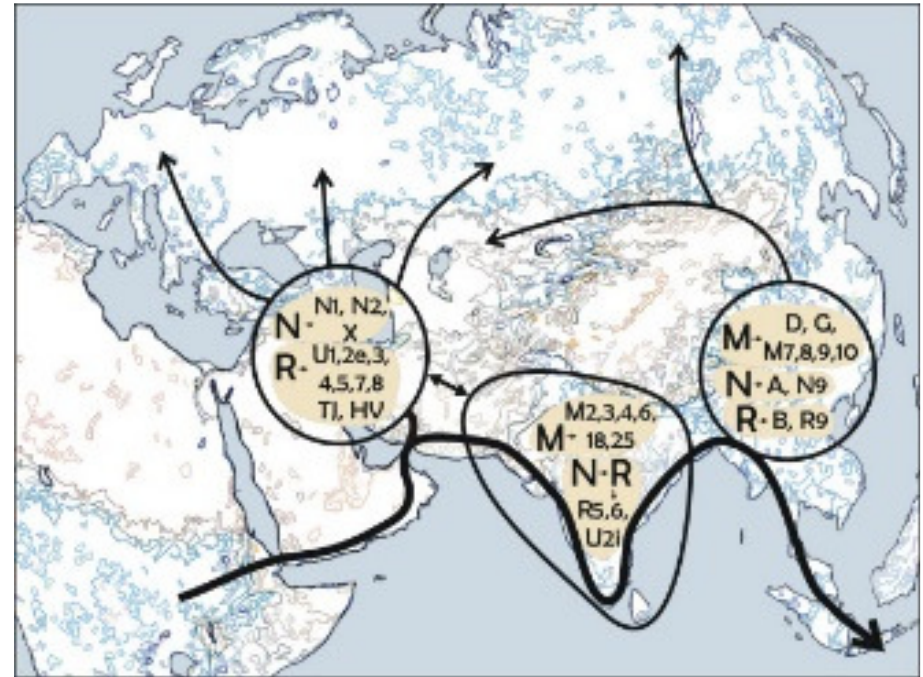
Critical comments

As a first element for our discussion, we should consider mobility NOT as a modern, western, wheeled, motorized, male-dominated affair.

Mobility must be understood as general, encompassing time, gender and other cultures.

And we should consider movement of people, ideas, animals, objects, and information.





Let's move to a critique of these *Wahlverwandtschaft*.

Transport is a „anthropological constant“. So, where is the novelty in modern time?



Is mobility an eye opener?

Political and social closures and limitations were characteristic of the relations between the two ports [Durban and Southampton]. (Hyslop 2017)





UC sailors moved in remarkably limited spatial pattern, subject to tight control by captains, immigration officials and magistrates.

They struggled against inadequate welfare arrangements and poor employment conditions.



Mostly, they came from a very circumscribed geographical area and a more or less homogenous ethnic background.

For all their extensive movement through physical space, their social world was a narrow one.



This leads to the ideology of innovation.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ccKLLdpHqTw>



Aiming at innovation misleads us. We recognize the technologies' negative "externalities"; but we dismiss those as involuntary debris, **whose technology itself can be a successful fix.**





In this vein, innovation is regarded as **astounding** when it regards the future, but **poor** when it regards the past.

After all, this is the core concept of any progressive tale.





So, like a spinning wheel, we will solve the troubles of today (made by our technology) with the technology of the future.





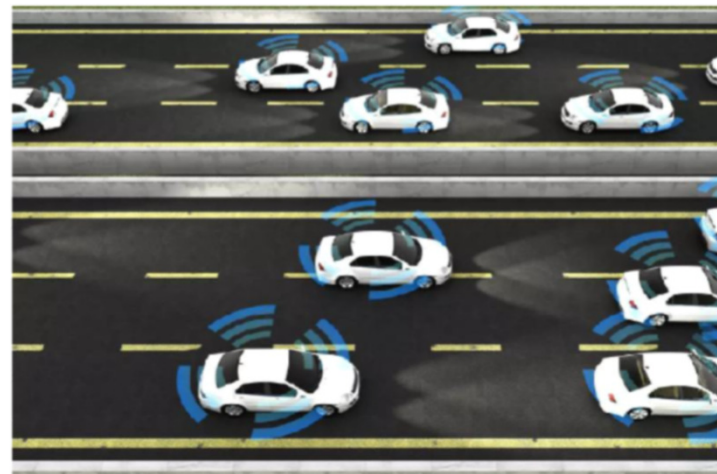
And the technology of the future will create new troubles, which will require new technology to help us, again.

Vox

A new study finds a potential risk with self-driving cars: failure to detect dark-skinned pedestrians

The findings speak to a bigger problem in the development of automated systems: algorithmic bias.

By Sigal Samuel | Updated Mar 6, 2019, 10:50am EST



Autonomous vehicles may drive racial inequity on the highway if we're not careful. Shutterstock







Now, let's see if
we can use
Benjamin's
famous Angelus
Novus definition...





A Klee painting named Angelus Novus shows an angel looking as though he [sic] is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating.

His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread.

This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past.



Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet.

The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them.



*The storm irresistibly propels
him into the future to
which his back is turned,
while the pile of debris
before him grows
skyward.*

*This storm is what we call
progress.*





What we need now an
angel able to stay,
“awaken the dead, and
make whole what has
been smashed”.

An angel who think of the
future, and who has the
time to look at the
present.



29 Maggio 2019 (10-13)

***Usare la storia per
costruire il futuro dei
trasporti***



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