

ADOLESCENCE AND DEVELOPMENT-IN-TIME

ADOLESCÊNCIA E DESENVOLVIMENTO-NO-TEMPO (2ª PARTE)

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Abstract: The modern age is defined by time, by a temporalization of experience, that is, an understanding that events and change are meaningful in their occurrence in and through time. Millennial, evolutionary, and individual life narratives share such temporalizations with an emphasis on the endings. But not all times are the same. I examine conceptions of adolescence as partaking of panoptical time, a condensed, commodified time built upon global hierarchies of gender, race, and class, and understood at a glance as natural. Panoptical time emphasizes the endings toward which youth are to progress and places individual adolescents into a sociocultural narrative that demands “mastery” without movement or effect. In these ways I interrogate the development-in-time episteme through which adolescents are known, consumed, and governed. I conclude by considering contemporary challenges to the slow, linear time of adolescent development. (Second part)

Key-words: adolescence; temporalization; panoptical time.

SCHOOL TIMES

By the 1870s, age-graded schools were entrenched across the U.S. Age-grading was a preeminent structure of schooling and was rationalized as efficient and effective. Joseph Kett traced the beginnings of age-graded curriculum in evangelical Protestant Sunday schools and from there they spread to private and public schools, promoting a systematization of schooling. It had been the norm for one-room schoolhouses, secondary academies, and even colleges to enroll students across a wide age range; it was common for academies (secondary schools) to have male students as young as twelve up through their early twenties. Age heterogeneity had been unremarkable, but the reform efforts of 1830-50 included greater standardization according to age and achieve-

ment, working toward a school that was increasingly a controlled environment for children and youth (KETT, 1974; 1977).

Age-graded schools were part of an intensification of age and related norms. The establishment of graded schools not only concentrated children of the same age together in a stage-based, factory-like setting but also eliminated incidences and tolerances of precocity (CHUDACOFF, 1989, p.36).

Four-year-olds were no longer allowed to enter elementary school, nor were ten-year-olds tolerated in high school. This “compressing of age ranges and decreased tolerance of precocity” occurred in American and British secondary schools and also in universities (op. cit., p.37). Textbook writers and publishers accepted and perpetuated age-graded developmental schemes.

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“Statistical laws” were established primarily upon predictions according to age. Not only could predictions about national population and consumption be based upon age census data, but every aspect of life could be mapped and modeled, including morality, crime, full-time employment, prostitution, divorces, birth of children, and hygiene. “In an era that prized efficiency and “scientific” data, age statistics were the most convenient criteria for measuring and evaluating social standards” (CHUDACOFF, 1989, p.9 1).

Statistics became “part of the technology of power in a modern state” (HACKING, 1991, p. 181). Just as Erikson’s attribution that youth “search for identity” became synonymous with adolescence, so did other statistical norms and standards. Proceeding through the grades (not being held back) and searching for identity became normative. Today we automatically anticipate problems if students are held back or if they skip a grade and are out of step with their age peers. Statistical age-based norms became the basis for bureaucratic practices, but also became the “classifications within which people must think of themselves and of the actions that are open to them” (HACKING, 1991, p. 194), a topic taken up below.

Schools not only became more age-homogeneous, but they utilized close supervision of students’ time to enforce timely development. Schools for African-American and American Indian students, who were perceived as less civilized, demonstrated hypervigilance over time (LOMAWAI, 1995). The “exacting demands of a uniform schedule” were expected to teach the necessity and “the habitual practice of orderly, meek existence” (SCHLOSSMAN, 1977, p.30), at least for certain youths. The “regulation of time” aimed to create a disciplined habitus in criminal tribespeople (TOLEN, 1995, p.95), as it did in reformatories in the U.S. (SCHLOSSMAN, 1977). According to with it all the meticulous controls of power” (1979, p.152). Then and now adolescents regularly incite moral panics by their failure to embody an “orderly, meek existence.”

Teachers and other youth reformers seemed to accept clock time and its demand for homogeneous, public, irreversible, and fragmented time (KERN, 1983). Such a view of time supported the belief that youth in public and private schools should be learning and behaving on identical timetables; this view of time helped establish slow children as hopelessly other. Timely development was always interwoven with strict surveillance of the body. Success could be established and displayed convincingly via “normal” dress and deportment (ALEXANDER, 1995; SCHLOSSMAN & WALLACH, 1978) and by students moving up

at the normal rate, one grade per year. Precocity - in appearance and in age - were signs of deviance and educators learned vigilance over development on time.

MORATORIUM EXPERIENCES, OR GROWING UP IN “EXPECTANT TIME”

The concept of adolescence as a moratorium is part of ERIKSON’s significant impact on popular and scholarly conceptions of youth and adolescence. Although the concept of a youthful moratorium of responsibility may seem quite uncontroversial, when historicized as part of an interrogation of modern temporality, we may consider it differently. The concept of an adolescent moratorium is a specific example of panoptical time, with its invisible observer and contradictory imperatives. In this section, I focus on some experiential dimensions of panoptical time. What are some aspects of living within panoptical time? How does the time of a moratorium affect youth? How can we conceptualize teenaged time experiences within such a modernist temporal order?

Stephen KERN explores how modern emphases productive times was experienced by persons in different social positions. KERN coins the term “expectant time” to describe how “the assembly line and Taylorism diminished the factory worker’s active control over the immediate future in the productive process and relegated him to an expectant mode, waiting for the future to come along the line” [emphasis added] (1983, p 92) KERN argues that this passive temporal mode, oriented toward the future, has material effects on people. “Individuals behave in distinctive ways when they feel cut off from the flow of time, excessively attached to the past, isolated in the present, without a future, or rushing toward one” (KERN, 1983, p.3). This section explores how the moratorium of adolescence may have material effects on youth.

Children and youth are positioned like KERN’s factory workers – waiting passively for the future. According to JAMES & PROUT (1990) children and youth are both imprisoned in their time (age) and out of time (abstracted), and they are thereby denied power over decisions or resources. Teenagers cannot go backward to childhood nor forward to adulthood “before their time” without incurring derogatory labels, for example, immature, loose, or precocious. The dominant concepts regarding youth’s position in the western societies, “development” and “socialization,” make it impossible for youth to exercise power over life events or to represent themselves, since they are not fully

developed or socialized (PROUT & JAMES, 1990). Kern's historical analysis of "expectant time" pushes us to consider the experiences of being caught in age and time.

Despite the passivity of the adolescent moratorium, Erikson's norms for a healthy personality demand an active mastery of one's environment, a unified personality, and accurate perceptions of oneself and the world (ERIKSON, 1968, p. 92). I want to call attention to the difficulties of actively mastering one's environment and securing identity 'when youth mode.' Because the naturalized discourse of youth is so powerful, it is difficult to conceive of how the normative age-grading, vigilance over precocity, and incitement to activeness might affect youths' experiences of being teenaged, and how these powerful pulls and pushes half produce the knowable and known adolescent.

CONCLUSION

By foregrounding the modern development in time episteme and then examining the ways adolescence is made with and through time, I have pursued how adolescence is naturalized via objective, commodified knowledge-at-a-glance and subjective experiences of expectant time, with its constructed anomie and rebellion. Adults patch together their subjective experiences through the panoptical concept of identity and the developing pubertal body; but the "chronotope" of adolescence works to trivialize the intensity of the expectant time, while simultaneously reinforcing it by endless retellings (in social science research, but also in popular culture, say in television, novels, and documentary films). With these various pushes and pulls, I think adolescence has become a comic figure, serious yet trivialized, institutionally ordained and reduced to stereotypes, commodified and malleable as a sign of futures, pasts, fears, and hopes. So viewed, the adolescent is endearing, frightening, unavoidable, and exploitable.

Might adolescence have a future that is different from the past that I have sketched above? In the larger work that this chapter is part of (LESKO, forthcoming), I argue that adolescent development was a shorthand way to worry about and strategize for a familiar, controlled order within remarkably unstable landscapes at home and abroad at the turn of the 20th century. Thus, adolescent development institutionalization, and therapeutic interventions) was, in part, an answer to certain problems presented by economic, international, and familial change. Specifically, ado-

lescence helped identify and create a vision of the modern citizen, who would be equipped for the challenges of the new social, economic, and world arrangements (POPKEWITZ, 1998). This historically situated analysis suggests that we might anticipate new conceptions of adolescence along with the articulation and popularization of different problems.

Just as at the turn of the 20th century, there are now challenges to modern economic, intellectual, global, and familial arrangements. Citizenship and nation-states are likewise under revision (SHAFIR, 1998). Adolescence and children are likely to be redefined in the process, as the global economy expands and discards unproductive processes and people (STEPHENS, 1995). I want to consider how global forces may intensify, modulate, adapt, and disrupt panoptical time, the development in time episteme, expectant time, and the chronotope of adolescence. What indications suggest a shift in modern temporal arrangements?

David HARVEY describes an accelerating compression of time and space accompanying global capitalism. There is now a "schizophrenic rush of time" central to postmodern life and a fluidity across space that matches instantaneous global communications (1990, p.309; see also GREIDER, 1997). POSTMAN (1982) links technological growth with the speed up of time and a resulting disappearance of childhood. Since childhood was based upon sequential learning, which was slow and demanding, the revolutions in electronic literacies make that slowness intolerable and obsolete. Thus the slow development in time of the modern panoptical adolescence is under pressure exerted by global capitalism and technology.

Other scholars document different kinds of revisions to the development in time episteme. For example, FIELD portrays childhood in contemporary Japan as undermined by "a new continuity between childhood and adulthood through technocratically ordered labor" (1993, p.51). Taking a life course perspective, BUCHMANN (1989) argues that differences between youth and adults are eroding because of the fluidity of life scripts, especially in Western Europe and the U.S. The formerly stable order of schooling, employment, marriage, and childrearing in many middle class and working class lives has been changed by economic downsizing, as well as, by changing values around cohabitation and children. Although HARVEY, POSTMAN, FIELD, and BUCHMANN posit different scenarios, each presents evidence that the slow temporal pace of the developing child and the identity-seeking adolescent

are changing. It is tempting to reduce complex changes in temporal ordering and pace to an inversion of generations, with youth leading adults into the brave new world of technology (e.g. RUSHKOFF, 1996), but I find the dynamics more complicated.

Certainly, time and history have begun to be theorized in non-linear ways, for example, time is imaged as a sieve or as folds (SERRES & LATOUR, 1995), and models of recursiveness in science and mathematics threaten the dominance of linear historical time (THOMPSON, 1996). However, I think that such theorizings, apart from the widespread popularization of new social and economic problems, are unlikely to stir enough dissatisfaction with the development-in-time episteme for a major reconstruction of time and history.

I think the time and space compression that HARVEY describes further erodes political support for meeting adolescents' (and children's) needs. The era of child saving in the U.S. ended with welfare "reform" in 1997. The resources once committed to education, health, and social welfare programs of panoptically viewed youth and children are now utilized to build prisons, install metal detectors in schools, and criminalize younger children as adults. As children below ten years of age have become erotic, spectacular, and marketable, the teenager's market share has sunk. Slow development in time may no longer be functional, and quick leaps from childhood to adul-

thood may be called for by virtual workplaces and education provided on line. Such a view is in keeping with interpretations that emphasize greater flexibility – of organisms, welfare systems, and individual potential (HULTQVIST, 1998). Flexibility may distinguish up-and-coming life course theories, as schooling becomes lifelong learning. The clear boundary between adolescence and adulthood is blurred, as everyone needs to keep becoming.

Even if adolescence becomes a recursive state, rather than a life stage left behind once and for all, the superiority of Be "here and now" seems likely to remain privileged and dominant. Despite changes associated with virtual time, flexible bodies, and lifelong learning, the episteme of development-in-time appears likely to prevail. The heralding of the new millennium seems to provide further support for the dogma that the present always surpasses the past, the core idea of progress: "Through progress, we never cease to be at the summit, on the cutting edge, at the state-of-the-art development. It follows that we are always right, for the simple, banal, and naive reason that we are living in the present moment." (SERRES & LATOUR, 1995, p.48-49). Nevertheless, an appreciation of this modern temporal reasoning may help us think and act in untimely ways, that is, "counter to our time and thereby on our time and... for the benefit of a time to come" (NIETZSCHE quoted in Rose, 1999, p. 13).

Resumo: A idade moderna é definida pelo tempo, por uma temporalização da experiência, isto é, por uma compreensão de que os acontecimentos e as mudanças são significativos na sua ocorrência no e através do tempo. Narrativas de vida milenares, evolutivas e individuais partilham tais temporalizações enfatizando o final. Contudo, nem todos os tempos são os mesmos. Eu examino concepções da adolescência como participando do tempo panóptico, um tempo condensado construído sobre hierarquias de gênero, raça e classe, e compreendido como natural. O tempo panóptico coloca a ênfase nas metas finais em direção das quais a juventude deve progredir e coloca o adolescente individual em uma narrativa sócio-cultural que requer o "domínio" como um princípio. Deste modo, coloco questões epistemológicas quanto ao desenvolvimento-no-tempo através do qual o adolescente é conhecido, consumido e governado. Eu concluo considerando os desafios contemporâneos quanto ao desenvolvimento do adolescente em um tempo lento e linear. (2ª parte).

Palavras-chave: adolescência; temporalização; tempo panóptico.

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