Going Nowhere at Top Speed

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Introduction

As anyone who has lost hours on social media can attest, the temporal experience of the internet is one of an unnaturally extended present. The instantaneous feed provides us with an endless loop of content, exorcized from its geographic or historic specificity and offered up to us as part of the long present of the scroll. Contemporary cultural criticism extends this impression to a broader phenomenology. Historians Anne Fuchs, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, David Harvey, Hartmut Rosa, and others, characterize the current experience of time as both an overwhelming sense of acceleration and simultaneous stasis.[1] Most significantly, these scholars identify a corresponding loss of the narratives of history. The pasts that flood our feeds are fragmented and cannot be fit into any meaningful chronology and, troublingly, we are all increasingly hopeless about any direction for our future thanks to the environmental, economic, and political crises of capitalism. To put it another way, we are going nowhere at top speed.

This conception of our historical moment shares a key similar-

[1] See A. Fuchs, *Precarious Times: Temporality and History in Modern German Culture*, Ithaca, 2019; H.U. Gumbrecht, *Our Broad Present: Time and Contemporary Culture*, New York, 2014; D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, Hoboken, 1991; H. Rosa, *Social Acceleration: A New Theory of Modernity*, New York, 2013.

ity with the feudal model of temporality. The feudal relationship to time is characterized by an idea of the past and future as indistinguishable, all part of a long present.[2] While this feeling of feudal futurelessness aligns closely with our contemporary experience of temporality, the feeling of acceleration that characterizes our current moment is very much aligned with the modern conception of temporality. With the rise of modernity, static historical time was replaced by a model of progressive acceleration. Furthermore, labor was increasingly measured in periods of time rather than by observable task, equating time and money. The acceleration of time grew out of a concatenation of the mass diffusion of pocket watches, a heightened tempo of life, the nervous stimulation of the city, and new scientific conceptions of time as irreversibly linear.[3] While capitalist acceleration remains a persistent and defining characteristic of our contemporary temporal experience, the other primary element of modern temporality, hope in progress, is noticeably absent. In its place, we experience a stasis, a lack of hopeful direction, that corresponds to feudal temporality and is similarly rooted in an absence of economic mobility.

At Top Speed

Perhaps the most defining aspect of temporality in the modern era was the inculcation of time thrift. This is the process by which workers are made to internalize the idea that time is equal to money and, subsequently, their working time does not belong to them. This is very much in opposition to the feudal era in which there was no tension between labor and passing time. Social intercourse and idling were readily intermixed with bouts of intense labor. What's more, labor existed on a cyclical timescale, fluctuating with the periods of

[2] F. Hartog, *Regimes of Historicity: Presentism and Experiences of Time*, New York, 2015, pp. 23-24.
[3] M.A. Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 4-5.

the year, time of day, holidays, fairs, and different types of work.[4] Leisure and work were knitted together, meaning that there could be no logical divide between the time of work and the time of personal life. Historian E.P. Thompson describes this feudal mode of work as task-orientation, work based on natural rhythms and observed necessities.[5] This style of labor is innately comprehensible as it requires no abstraction to see the use, indispensability, and outcome of the work.[6]

Measured, regular timekeeping did not immediately produce an opposition between work and life. While mechanical clocks were introduced as early as the thirteenth century, they were generally used to keep time in large towns or in churches and were not distributed amongst the masses.[7] Furthermore, the clocks were imprecise and not suited for any sort of rigorous time-management. It would not be until the seventeenth century that clocks would be able to indicate time to the second, and it was not until the very end of the eighteenth century, and the rise of the industrial revolution, that timepieces were recognized as a convenience instead of a luxury.[8] It was with this turn to the industrial revolution that western society largely switched from a task-based to a time-based model of work.

The process of teaching the workers time thrift after a long history of task-based labor was a deeply difficult process that happened at a variety of different rates. Working hours in a task-oriented system are often as long and as difficult as any factory work, but they are interspersed with leisure time, periods of waiting, and social interaction. Furthermore, the worker feels the necessity and logic of their workday – it is an inevitability that the cow needs to be milked, the fields sown and reaped. In industrial labor, the work is increasingly abstracted from the product. Instead of doing work based on

[4] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", in *Past and Present*, no. 38, 1967, p. 71.
[5] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 60.
[6] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 60.
[7] R. Koselleck, *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, Stanford, 2002, p. 103.
[8] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 69.

observed need, workers are following an imposed order for a set time period. It is this external imposition, and its seemingly arbitrary temporal requirements, to which workers needed to adjust.[9]

The Soviet Union serves as a particularly interesting case study for this problem of transitioning from a task-oriented to a timed labor model. The Soviet government, attempting to raise industrial production in competition with the capitalist west, aimed to convince their workers that time was a finite resource to be guarded and rigidly distributed. This was especially difficult with former peasants who were used to the feudal model and often showed up to their factory jobs late or not at all.[10] In some cases, acts of labor indiscipline were performed by workers to attempt to control the pace and limits of their work, attempting to slow production and gain some agency over their labor. However, labor indiscipline rose in direct relationship to the amount of new workers coming into factories, suggesting that the issue of time discipline was largely one of ignorance rather than concerted efforts to direct the factories' processes.[11] At base, the reformation of temporality in the Soviet Union relied on disabusing the proletariat from the belief that they had a wealth of time. It was fundamentally an ideological issue. Leon Trotsky described this feudal orientation to time, writing that peasants believed "whatever [time or space] is, we probably have enough of it."[12] In industrial society, time was no longer spacious but was instead a finite reserve. In the absence of advanced technology, or the funds to support its development, the Soviet Union hoped to rely on the natural resource of a vast (and, ideally, ideologically enthusiastic) body of workers.[13] Revolutionizing the Soviet workforce

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[9] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Capitalism", p. 79.
[10] I. Brunnbauer, "'The League of Time' (Liga Vremia): Problems of Making a Soviet Working Class in the 1920s", in *Russian History*, no. 4, 2000, p. 469.
[11] W.J. Chase, *Workers, Society, and the Soviet State: Labor and Life in Moscow, 1918-1929*, Champaign, 1989, p. 223.
[12] L. Trotsky, "Alas! We are Not Accurate Enough", in *Problems of Everyday Life: Creating the Foundations for a New Society in Revolutionary Russia*, Atlanta, 1973, p. 93.
[13] S. Lieberstein, "Technology, Work, and Sociology in the USSR: The NOT Movement", in *Technology and Culture*, no. 1, 1975, pp. 52-53.

would certainly be the cheapest and most immediately accessible of any plans for industrialization. Subsequently, the task for the Soviet government, and any establishment hoping to boost industrial production, was to "economize time."[14]

The desire to convince the Soviet population of the value of time thrift is well-expressed by Platon Kerzhentsev's 1923 *Pravda* article, "Time Builds Airplanes." The article introduces Kerzhentsev's experience at a Soviet Congress where he was idly talking with an American journalist while waiting for the delayed meeting to start. The journalist, considering the amount of workers present and the delay of two hours, said "Today we have lost 7,000 working hours waiting for the session to begin. With such an expenditure of labor, it would have been possible to build one or even two airplanes."[15] Kerzhentsev goes on to advocate that the Soviet population begins to express delays in terms of concrete, industrial quantities so "we will sooner realize the economic ruin of our laxness. Then we will learn to value time and work with precision."[16] Kerzhentsev also founded the early 1920s League of Time, an organization of workers' cells that called for the internalization of time discipline both in personal and public life. They published ideal daily calendars, worked to reduce administrative red tape, distributed clocks, carried out time studies, agitated against unnecessary meetings, and tried to institute punctuality through systems of fines.[17]

Thompson, discussing the ideological transition to an "economized time," writes, "Those who are employed experience a distinction between their employer's time and their 'own' time. And the employer must use the time of his labor, and see it is not wasted: not the task but the value of time when reduced to money is dominant. Time is now currency: it is not passed but spent."[18] This idea of time

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[14] L. Trotsky, "Radio, Science, Technology, and Society", in *Problems of Everyday Life*, p. 253.
[15] P. Kerzhentsev, "Vremia stroit aeroplany", in *Pravda*, July 18, 1923, p. 1.
[16] P. Kerzhentsev, "Vremia stroit aeroplany", p. 1.
[17] I, Brunnbauer, "The League of Time", pp. 481-483.
[18] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Labor", p. 61.

as a currency, time as not the substance of life but as the substance of work, is the essential link between the modern and the contemporary models of temporality. This linkage follows logically from the historical dominance of capitalism in both of these time periods. Commodified time did not arise singularly from the needs of industrialization but is instead a fundamental necessity for the progression of capitalism (or, for nations like the Soviet Union, for countries in competition with capitalism). As scholars like Jonathan Martineau and Moishe Postone have noted, capitalism requires an abstract time system, the time of clocks and set working hours that can be divided into undifferentiated units, in opposition to a concrete time that measures the duration of tasks and the processes of human life. In order to exchange labor consisting of many, incommensurable tasks on the market, abstract time is used as a measure that equalizes all forms of work into indistinguishable units with standardized market values.[19] Time is reified from a task with duration, concrete output, and intrinsic meaning into an abstract time value that can be exchanged for any other moment on the market.

Workers initially reacted to the imposition to economize time with simple resistance, skipping work, showing up late, or idling on the job. However, without bargaining power and faced with a labor surplus, the workers were forced to accept the employers' terms. Later, workers would strike for the ten-hour movement, overtime, and the five-day work week. Essentially, this process of bargaining down working time to a livable amount was a process of accepting the employers' conceit that labor should be compensated based on

[19] J. Martineau, *Time, Capitalism, and Alienation: A Socio-Historical Inquiry into the Making of Modern Time*, Chicago, 2016, and M. Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory*, Cambridge, 1993. Martineau, extrapolating from Postone, argues that abstract time is a counterpart of exchange-value, both serving as the obverse to concrete time and use-value respectively. Both authors conclude that abstraction of time is a necessity of capitalism, allowing for the equalizing of all forms of labor that allows for exchange. Because of this, as Postone argues, "The 'progress' of abstract time as a dominant form of time is closely tied to the 'progress' of capitalism as a form of life", p. 213.

time and not on task.[20] The process of inculcating time thrift into the working population, however, did not end with the simple equation of time to money.

Once time has been accepted to equal money, employers feel entitled not just to what the worker naturally produces in a set amount of time but the maximum that could be squeezed from that period of work. In other words, once the employers can, without argument, have ownership of a set amount of time, the ever-hungry capitalist machine increasingly requires more profits. Factory owners increasingly stressed productivity and efficiency, using Taylorist methods to extract further effort. Taylorist systems inherently require increased observation, with upper-level management acting as timekeepers to enforce the highest possible level of productivity.[21] Furthermore, the focus on minimizing movements to the essentials meant that workers' bodies were engineered like cogs in a machine, insisting on minute control and a limit of any human excess. As Soviet philosopher Alexander Bogdanov observed, this meant that workers' senses would be dulled through repetition, further divorcing them from the actuality of their product, and thus the sense of their labor.[22] Thus, the process of teaching laborers time thrift was one of enforcing punctuality, increasing productivity, and exacting control.

This process of inculcating time thrift did not just exist in factories. Globally, the modern era witnessed a process of spatial and temporal compression. The rise of train tracks, telegraph lines, longitude surveys, and the establishment of global standard time were all contributing to a process of intellectual, industrial, and national conquest.[23] The even regulation of time in particular made economic intervention across the globe much easier. The compression of time

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[20] E.P. Thompson, "Time, Work-Discipline, and Industrial Labor", p. 86.
[21] A. Bogdanov, *Mezhdu chelovekom i mashinoy (O sisteme Teylora)*, St. Petersburg, 1913, https://traumlibrary.ru/book/bogdanov-mezhdu-chel/bogdanov-mezhdu-chel.html.
[22] Z.A. Sochor, "Soviet Taylorism Revisited", in *Soviet Studies*, no. 2, 1981, p. 248.
[23] P. Galison, *Einstein's Clocks and Poincare's Maps: Empires of Time*, New York, 2003.

in the modern era was further favored by the heightened tempo of life and nervous stimulation of the city. Time was felt as a weight, a temporal demand that was ever more palpable.[24] In his 1903 essay, "The Metropolis and Mental Life," Georg Simmel describes the experience of modernity as being an oppressively accelerating tempo of modern life that results in the growth of a "protective organ," an extreme rationality that relies on a reduction of all human relationships to economic value, essentially isolating the modern subject.[25] Thus, time thrift is something that must be both outwardly mandated by the employer and internalized by the worker.

In the contemporary era, the internalization of time thrift has been all too successful. Hartmut Rosa notes that anxiety about time shortages and fears of "not keeping up" have steadily increased in industrial countries for the past several decades.[26] This subjective reality, the feeling of time as a shrinking resource that is constantly slipping away, makes it difficult to have any sort of critical relationship to time. It is something so far internalized and naturalized that stepping outside of this acceleration and thinking critically about the experience as something rooted in particular economic conditions is incredibly difficult. Rosa refers to this accelerating temporality as "frenetic" for a reason; the subjective truth of the experience often denies the possibility of an objective, removed stance. The advantage of discussing the historical situatedness of different temporalities is seeing commodified time as a shifting, subjective experience produced by economic forces rather than as a permanent condition.

Methods of further commodifying time abound. On the employers' side, corporations lament the popularity of "quiet quitting," essentially a term created to disparage workers who are not maximally

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[24] M.A. Doane, *The Emergence of Cinematic Time: Modernity, Contingency, the Archive*, Cambridge, 2002, pp. 4-5.
[25] G. Simmel, "The Metropolis and Mental Life", in G. Bridge, S. Watson (eds.), *The Blackwell City Reader*, Oxford and Malden, MA, 2007, p. 11.
[26] H. Rosa, *Social Acceleration*, p. 307. Rosa notes that this is true for all industrial states outside of certain decreases in Japan.

efficient. The term takes as its basis the assumption that anything less than maximum output is an infringement of the terms of work. Amongst workers, "hustle influencers" encourage viewers to monetize hobbies, insisting that anything that you devote yourself to that does not make money is a fundamental misuse of time. In the modern era, productivity efforts were mostly geared toward efficiency standards and careful regulation of the worker's body within the workplace. The transition away from industrial production towards online work, especially in countries relying on financialized economies, expands the domain of productivity. Labor no longer remains in its spatial or temporal limits, expanding outwards to colonize previously "nonproductive" periods. Similarly, as Massimiliano Tomba writes, "The speed of trains and of lorries is articulated by the world-market, which synchronizes the multiplicity of temporalities to the abstract measure of the time of labor. Capital requires not only clocks, but also their synchronization."[27] Submission to the abstract time of capital lubricates the operation of global markets and, the further the markets expand, the more the accelerationist temporality becomes hegemonic. This is not to say that the temporalities discussed here are the only experiences of time. Jonathan Martineau observes that the commodification of time is not a totalizing event but instead a process that meets a variety of blocks when butting up against different temporal frameworks.[28] The relationship to a commodified time as described in this essay results directly from that synchronization "to the abstract measure of the time of labor," a temporality that is hegemonic but not exclusive. However, given that commodified time is the time that best serves capitalism's requirements of ever-increasing production, alienation of labor, and equal-

[27] M. Tomba, *Marx's Temporalities*, Chicago, 2013, p. 136.

[28] J. Martineau, *Time, Capitalism and Alienation*. See especially Chapter 3. See also David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity* where he discusses the globalizing tendencies of capitalism as a dual desire to shrink time and space to a globalized marketplace where "the present is all there is", p. 240. Given that the temporal acceleration is accompanied by a global spatial compression, the temporalities required by capitalism continue to permeate further.

ization for the marketplace, the temporality described accelerates alongside the expanding hegemony of capitalism.

Largely, the contemporary era runs far closer to the modern experience of time than the feudal one. Work is not based on a set of tasks but instead on a commitment of time and, in a society where many fear that they are downwardly mobile, that time commitment can never quite feel like enough. This feeling of time crunch is only exacerbated by the quickened consumer cycles, with products becoming obsolete in rapid succession. Zygmunt Bauman, writing on the relationship between modernity and time, writes, "Modernity starts when space and time are separated from living practice and from each other."[29] Time has been so cleanly separated from living practice that the average person now feels a vague call to productivity at all hours of the day, and a corresponding sense of time wasted, regardless of the necessity, urgency, or relevance of work. In an economy that increasingly relies on financialization, that productivity is ever-further divorced from anything we might recognize as logically necessary. This process of abstraction removes us ever further from a relationship to time that feels agentive, where we can make sense of ourselves as social and economic actors. It is this question of agency that brings us to the fundamental alliance between feudal and contemporary temporalities: a lack of orientation.

Going Nowhere

The long, static present of the feudal and contemporary models is in direct opposition to the always subsumed present of the modern era. Fundamentally, this difference arises from the modern notion of the future as the site of becoming. The feudal model is characterized by repeatable, cyclical history that was directed and mandated by God. In the eighteenth century, Enlightenment thinkers reconceptualized history as a social, economic, and political progression

[29] Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge, 2000, p. 8.

directed by human forces. While the method of progression could vary widely, the modernist project takes the identification and shaping of that method as its central principle. Thus, the ruptures and discontinuities of capitalism, industrialism, and urbanization were understood as the necessary conditions to advance in history.[30] This modern model of progress, founded as it is on an always deficient past and a future in progress, meant that the present moment was always being consigned to the past as obsolete. Peter Osborne describes this modern present as "not so much a gap in time as a gap of time,"[31] a moment always on the cusp of being brushed away.

Tim Armstrong, reflecting on this future-orientation, writes "This shift to the future revolutionized the cultural temporal order and restructured its commitment from the old to the new, from the known to the unknown."[32] The focus on the future and its corresponding investment in change encourages revolutionary thinking, advocacy for political change, and a fundamental belief that economic, social, and political structures can be modified. Georges Gurvitch argues that a historical conception of time is essential for societies to become aware both of their present circumstances and their ability to fundamentally alter those conditions.[33] The modern era, with its clear conception of progressing historical periods oriented towards an as-yet-incomplete future is uniquely suited towards awareness of one's agency as a historical actor.

The stasis that characterizes both the feudal and contemporary moments is situated upon this above all else: a sense of the historical situation as unalterable, even preordained. As Aleida Assmann argues, Western society has largely seen itself disenchanted with the future since the 1980s. Assmann goes on to write, "we no longer rely on the future, we tend to it anxiously."[34] This cultural observation

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[30] D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry Into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Hoboken, 1991, p. 13.
[31] P. Osborne, *The Politics of Time: Modernity and Avant-Garde*, London, 1995, p. 14.
[32] T. Armstrong, *Modernism: A Cultural History*, Cambridge, 2005, p. 10.
[33] G. Gurvitch, *The Spectrum of Social Time*, Berlin, 1963, p. 34.
[34] A. Assmann, *Is Time Out of Joint?: On the Rise and Fall of the Modern Time Regime*, Ithaca, 2020, p. 4.

aligns neatly with Wolfgang Streeck's analysis of the economy, in which he marks the late 1970s as a period of global inflation resulting from productive capital investment falling short of rising wages and standards of living.[35] Since the 1980s, society has become increasingly indebted, with individuals taking out credit card loans, mortgages, and student loans to uphold a standard of living that used to be supported by higher wages and more robust social services.[36] Some scholars identify this as the beginning of a shift towards neo-feudalism that they believe was cemented in 2008. The bailout of banks essentially, in their analyses, served as a government investment in the rentier economy (economy based on extracting rents) over the real economy (economy based on production).[37] While the masses see lower and lower standards of living, the wealthiest parts of society continue to become richer. What's more, this model seems unlikely to change at any time in the near future, with the government continually investing in maintaining upper class wealth rather than enforcing worker protections or putting social safety nets into place.[38] This perhaps contributes to what Zygmunt Bauman, Anne Fuchs, and Francois Hartog all identify as the long present of the contemporary moment. In the absence of any singular narrative of the past and any direction towards the future, the present is always just more of the same.

Both the feudal and contemporary periods conceptualize the future as, at best, static, and, at worst, the site of eschatological disaster.

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[35] W. Streeck, *Buying Time: The Delayed Crisis of Democratic Capitalism*, London, 2017, p. 32.

[36] D. Bezemer, M. Hudson, "Finance is Not the Economy: Reviving the Conceptual Distinction," in *The Journal of Economic Issues*, no. 3, 2016, p. 745.

[37] See for example D. Bezemer, M. Hudon's "Finance is Not the Economy", p. 765 and Y. Varoufakis's "Techno-Feudalism is Taking Over", in *Project Syndicate*, June 28, 2021.

[38] Here, I am especially speaking about the American experience. For scholars arguing that we are transitioning to neo-feudalism, this government alliance with corporations is another marker of a transition to a new economic period. Corporations no longer exert control just through economic pressure but also through political control, while they themselves remain above democratic review. See for example J. Dean's "Same As It Ever Was?", in *The New Left Review Sidecar*, May 6, 2022.

The modern period's grand model of History was preceded by the feudal model's histories, essentially a multitude of stories from which one could learn.[39] Because the present was understood as nothing fundamentally new, one could "issue prognoses based on human action as a static category."[40] The present, past, and future thus blended into one long moment, inherently static, predictable, and cyclical.[41] Given that this chronology was preordained by God, the apocalypse was always on the feudal timeline, marking its inevitable end.

The contemporary period is surprisingly linked to the feudal model along the line of eschatological thinking. The negative economic estimations of our time take on an eschatological lean when we consider the threat of ecological disaster. Historian Anne Fuchs writes that the future is no longer a horizon for ideological planning but instead "the projection screen for dystopian visions of the final ecological catastrophe."[42] Seeing the threats and effects of this climate disaster every day, it is increasingly more difficult to picture a future that does not result in mass suffering. Furthermore, for many it is likely easier to indulge in eschatological thinking when we do not see any historical alternatives. In a system that sees increased economic inequality and continuous government blocks to intervention, many identify the apocalypse as the most tenable site of change, a sort of accelerationism. However, it is important to distinguish between the feudal and contemporary models of apocalypse here. At least the feudal visualization of hellfire to come serves as a reckoning. In the contemporary model, it is those most at fault who are the most likely to see salvation.

Jodi Dean identifies this hopelessness, which she calls "catastrophism," as a fundamental characteristic of the contemporary pe-

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[39] A. Assmann, *Is Time Out of Joint?*, p. 37.
[40] R. Koselleck, *The Practices of Conceptual History*, pp. 111-112.
[41] R. Koselleck, *The Practices of Conceptual History*, p. 111.
[42] A. Fuchs, *Precarious Times: Temporality and History in Modern German Culture*, Ithaca, 2019, p. 13.

riod. Catastrophism is intra-class, though it presents in markedly different ways. Among the working classes, this hopelessness shows up as a generalized anxiety, with workers concerned about their basic survival and their ability to buy groceries and pay rent. In the upper classes, this anxiety about the future manifests in a techno-mysticism in which billionaires consider ways to flee this world after its seemingly inevitable destruction.[43] They plan colonies on Mars or build massive underground bunkers in New Zealand, accepting as a given that this world's resources will be exhausted and that any future will have to rely on extreme advances in technology in an almost incomprehensible leap of faith. In the absence of any real economic mobility with the current stratifications of class,[44] the catastrophism for the working classes is far more mundane, where leaps of imagination involve consistently paid rent.

Naturally, none of the three models have an unburdened relationship to temporality, predicated as they are on extractive processes. Whether that be the feudal acceptance that the world is directed by forces larger than humanity, or the capitalist reduction of time to a currency, what is most compelling is that, as natural as it seems, no relationship to time is inherent. Conceptions of temporality shift in various eras, perhaps most significantly in relation to larger feelings of agency produced by our conceptions of ourselves as historical and economic actors. So, when we speak of contemporary temporality as going nowhere fast, it is with the knowledge that this conception is historically situated and, much like our current conditions, in no way preordained.

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[43] J. Dean, "Neofeudalism: The End of Capitalism?", in *Los Angeles Review of Books*, May 12, 2020.

[44] M. Hudson argues Americans now largely see themselves on the brink of downward mobility, in opposition to the consistent rise of economic status and standard of living post-WWII. See "Asset-Price Inflation and Rent Seeking: A Total-Returns Profile of Economic Polarization in America", in the *Review of Keynesian Economics*, no. 4, 2021, p. 3.