

On Location -- Here and Now, or Modernity unhinged

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For a long time now, modernity has been adrift. It has lost its sense of direction. Going nowhere in particular, modernity (or, if you prefer, postmodernity) has come to content itself with nothing but 'means without ends' (Giorgio Agamben) -- and once freed from the gravitational pull of ends, and the associated burden of making history, those newly liberated means have enjoyed an unprecedented period of acceleration. Having dropped out of history and fallen into the event horizon of hyperreality and the simulacrum (Jean Baudrillard), the power-houses of modernity drive on regardless. Speed and terror are the order of the day. Little wonder that many envisage only accelerationist catastrophes and nihilisms ahead. Hereinafter, everything is left spinning deliriously in the unhinged vortex of a perpetual present that fades away without moving on (Fredric Jameson). Modernity -- or postmodernity -- is left 'stirring still' (Samuel Beckett). It continues to go on and on, but without going anywhere or getting anywhere. Modernity has been left in suspended animation. There is just 'Now' -- which endures through what Jacques Derrida aptly called serial erasure (seriasure). 'Now' slips and slides, stutters and stammers, drifts and skids, across the surface of the Real. This paper draws on a number of postmodern and poststructuralist authors -- especially Jean Baudrillard, Félix Guattari, and Jean-François Lyotard -- to craft a 'cognitive mapping' (Fredric Jameson) of this unhinged 'Now,' using the work of Richard McGuire (*Here*), Georges Perec (*Life a User's Manual*), Lars von Trier (*Dogville*), and Chris Ware (*Building Stories*) to go on location with a stillborn 'Now' that no longer comes to pass. The key refrain that will structure the paper is: 'Now, here is the news.'