

Convenience & Immediacy vs The Slow Movement

Discussion at The Park

Wednesday 24 May 2017 7:30pm at *The Park Tavern, Macclesfield*

An Introduction:

In recent decades, many people have said things like “the world has become faster”. This sentiment appears to mean that we are working harder or for longer hours; life is more stressful; there is less time for socializing; the pace of physical and social change is accelerating – amongst other connotations. In 2004, a book appeared called *In Praise of Slow*. This international, best-seller was written by the British-born, Canadian journalist Carl Honoré. In it, he traced the history of our increasingly breathless relationship with time and tackled the consequences and conundrum of living in this accelerated culture of our own creation. Honoré detailed our perennial love affair with efficiency and speed with a blend of anecdotal reportage, history, and intellectual inquiry. It was the first comprehensive look at the worldwide “slow movements” making their way into the mainstream.

Discussion:

1. CH says this about the Slow Movement: “It is a cultural revolution against the notion that faster is always better. The Slow philosophy is not about doing everything at a snail’s pace. It’s about seeking to do everything at the right speed.”

What is good about speed and efficiency vs what is bad about speed and efficiency?

2. Again, CH says that Slow is about “savouring the hours and minutes rather than just counting them. Doing everything as well as possible, instead of as fast as possible. It’s about quality over quantity in everything from work to food to parenting.”

In what aspects of life do speed and efficiency have roles vs in what aspects of life does slow have a role?

3. People have been defending the value of slowness for at least 200 years – think of the Romantics, or the Transcendentalists or even the hippies. But the idea of a Slow Movement which seeks to blend fast and slow to help people work, live and play better in the modern world is more recent. Born in Italy in the early 1990s, the Slow Food movement helped recapture the word ‘slow’ as something positive.

Take-away meals vs home cooked meals? Fast foods as “fuel” vs food as a social activity?

4. Many people enjoy the adrenaline-rushing, Scandinavian thrillers. But what about Slow TV in Norway, that has also crossed to the UK. There are three short videos, linked at the foot of this page.

Scandi-noir thrillers vs Slow TV? 24/7 news cycle of always ‘breaking’ news vs the Slow Read?

5. Travel statistics demonstrate that we willingly spend only so much time for a given journey. This means that if the distance is greater, we demand a faster average speed. Are there any implications for the quality of the journey?

Rail vs flying? For example, can the mode of a journey to a holiday destination be experienced as part of the holiday experience, rather than a chore?

6. The value of experience vs the value of consumption?

Further Viewing:

(a) Carl Honoré’s TED Talk – January 2005

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UhXiHJ8vfuk> (20mins)

(b) Al Jazeera tv: Sept 2015: “Listening post – Norway’s Slow TV”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4Ibe17-JMCU> (18mins)

(c) Slow TV – November 2015 “The Plough, Suffolk”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EscqGqwDP1I> (2mins)