

Partial Reading List and Notes
Nov. 2021 – Feb. 2022

Lawrence C. Chin

1 November

Watched: (1) John Stockwell on the CIA's last days in Vietnam on *Alternative Views* (1985). Also described on <https://thememoryhole.substack.com>. (At the end of the interview, when he described Thomas Polgar's transfer to the CIA station in Mexico City, he mentioned that the station in Mexico City was the largest, the most prestigious, and the most lucrative of all stations.)¹ (2) David Robarge, chief historian for the CIA, discusses the CIA's work in Vietnam during the W&L Alumni College, "Vietnam: A Retrospective": "CIA, the Ngos, and the Generals". (3) Roland Haas discusses his book *Enter The Past Tense: My Secret Life as a CIA Assassin* (2007).

2 November

Listened to Leslie Cockburn talk about her book on C-SPAN (1991): *Dangerous Liaison*, on the covert relationship between the US and Israeli intelligence since 1948.

3 November

Listened to Ava Soleimany's lecture on Recurrent Neural Network (MIT Deep Learning 6.S191). Then started on MIT 6.S191, "Introduction to Deep Learning" (one lecture at a time, with Alexander Amini and Ava Soleimany, 18.01 – 29.01.2021: introtodeeplearning.com). As well as Anna Prenzel, "Paper Review: Recurrent Neural Networks für die Zeitreihenprognose" (13.12.2020).

6 November

So far one has seen (Amini/ Soleimany): (1) Intro to Deep Learning. (2) Deep Sequence Modeling. (3) Deep Generative Modeling. (4) Deep Learning Limitations and New Frontiers.

Today, continued with (5) Deep Reinforcement Learning.

8 November

Saw the entire series: 誰似任公子: 日本最好的歷史劇《坂上之雲》(2018/ 2021).

13 November

1 This is very important. Since the CIA's operation in Mexico is the largest of all and the Mexican intelligence is more loyal to the CIA than to the Mexican president, the Invisible Hand cannot possibly have wanted to offend his Mexican counterparts with any demonization of Hispanics to the world over. He must have also developed a plan for Mexico which will work for the Mexicans' favor later on.

Continued with MIT 6.S191. Today: (8) AI Biases and Fairness. Also, DW Documentary, “China: Surveillance State or way of the future”? (17.10.2021)

15 November

Continued with MIT 6.S191. Today: (7) Data Visualization for Machine Learning (with Fernanda Viegas).

20 November

Listened to Nancy Fraser, “Against the environmentalism of the rich”, 18.04.2021 (Studium Generale, University of Utrecht). She was merely recycling her old views from the Triple Movement and so on. Note that the event took place 5 days before Prof. F’s wake-up call.

22 November

AI Beginner Track Workshop, 7.

The screenshot shows a Jupyter Notebook titled "Copy of Skeleton_Guided_Project.ipynb" in a Chrome browser. The notebook contains code for a Logistic Regression model. The code defines variables for number of samples (N), number of features (f), data (X), labels/targets (y), weights (W), bias (b), and learning rate (a). It then defines the hypothesis function $\hat{y}(X) = \sigma(XW + b)$, the Binary Cross Entropy loss function $L(y, \hat{y}) = -\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (y_i \log(\hat{y}_i) + (1 - y_i) \log(1 - \hat{y}_i))$, and the gradient descent update rules for W and b.

The rendered output of the notebook is as follows:

Brief Review of Logistic Regression

N: number of samples
f: number of features
X: data; shape = (N, f)
y: labels/targets; shape = (N,)
W: weights; shape = (f,)
b: bias; scalar
a: learning rate; scalar

Our hypothesis

$$\hat{y}(X) = \sigma(XW + b)$$

Loss function - Binary Cross Entropy

$$L(y, \hat{y}) = -\frac{1}{N} \sum_{i=1}^N (y_i \log(\hat{y}_i) + (1 - y_i) \log(1 - \hat{y}_i))$$

Sigma is the logistic regression, while $(XW + b)$ is the linear regression. Linear regression is “shallow learning”, whereas neural network is “deep learning”.

23 November

Listened to “The Spy Whisperer: CIA clandestine officer Darrell M. Blocker”. Upon his retirement in 2018, he was supposedly the most senior black officer in the CIA.

25 November

Today PBS Newshour features James Davison Hunter (the originator of the term “culture war”) to comment on the current climate of polarization. And then Evan Osnos, to discuss his new book, *Wildland: The Making of America’s Fury*.

Then listened to Jaeggi on Dissens, 04.03.2020, “Wir brauchen einen Feminismus für alle Frauen”. They did discuss Fraser’s concept of “progressive neoliberalism”.

26 November

Watched Galileo, “Unterschätzen wir Nordkorea? Was hinter der ‘Lazarus’ Hackergruppe steckt” (15.10.2021).

28 November

In Stories. Have lately taken a look at George Orwell’s *Why I Write*, David Graeber and David Wengrow’s *The Dawn of Everything*, and Jonas Ceika’s *How to Philosophize with a Hammer and Sickle*.

29 November

Came across Jonna Mendez’s “The Moscow Rules” at the International Spy Museum, 13.06.2019. Downloaded, and started reading, her book (with her late husband Antonio Mendez), *The Moscow Rules: The Secret CIA Tactics That Helped America Win The Cold War* (Hachette Book Group, 2019).

30 November

Jonna Mendez, “RAPTOR takes flight: CIA exfiltration story”, International Spy Museum, 30.10.2017.

Jonna Mendez’s presentation on Karl and Hanna Koecher, Smithsonian/ International Spy Museum, 10.04.2015. K. and H. Koecher were Czechoslovakian intelligence’s moles inside the CIA.²

1 December

2 In order to get himself recruited by the CIA, Karl Koecher pretended to be (1) anti-communist, (2) antisemite, and (3) anti-Catholic. This persona was devised by the KGB, who knew exactly what kind of people the CIA was: the northeastern Anglo elites who did not like Jews and Catholics and who would therefore love Koecher. This is another evidence suggesting that the neocons hated the CIA because they thought the CIA people “antisemitic”. And so, in the 1990s: “That’s why the CIA likes these Muslims who hate Jews!”

Jonna Mendez, Liberty University Convocation, 24.04.2019. To a gathering of Christian students, Mendez gave details of her experience.

3 December

Panel of speakers at International Spy Museum, 06.01.2017: Melissa Mahle, Jonna Mendez, Rollie Flynn, and Sandy Grimes.

4 December

In the morning. Thought about the distinction between “transformative” as the Western mode and “restorative” as the Chinese mode. “Transformative” as the deformation of the eschatological mode (transforming the earth into a paradise) and “restorative” as conditioned by the original human experience with the thermodynamic structure of the universe (infusing energy into the system so that the system, weakened over time, is restored to fullness).

Then, read Rosa’s quotes from Simmel:

“Es giebt vielleicht keine seelische Erscheinung, die so unbedingt der Großstadt vorbehalten wäre, wie die Blasiertheit. Sie ist zunächst die Folge jener rasch wechselnden und in ihren Gegensätzen eng zusammengedrängten Nervenreize, aus denen uns auch die Steigerung der großstädtischen Intellektualität hervorzugehen schien. [...] Wie ein maßloses Genussleben blasirt macht, weil es die Nerven so lange zu ihren stärksten Reaktionen aufregt, bis sie schließlich überhaupt keine Reaktion mehr hergeben – so zwingen ihnen auch harmlosere Eindrücke durch die Raschheit und Gegensätzlichkeit ihres Wechsels so gewaltsame Antworten ab, reißen sie so brutal hin und her, daß sie ihre letzte Kraftreserve hergeben und, in dem gleichen Milieu verbleibend, keine Zeit haben, eine neue zu sammeln. Die so entstehende Unfähigkeit, auf neue Reize mit der ihnen angemessenen Energie zu reagieren, ist eben jene Blasiertheit, die eigentlich schon jedes Kind der Großstadt im Vergleich mit Kindern ruhigerer und abwechslungsloserer Milieus zeigt.

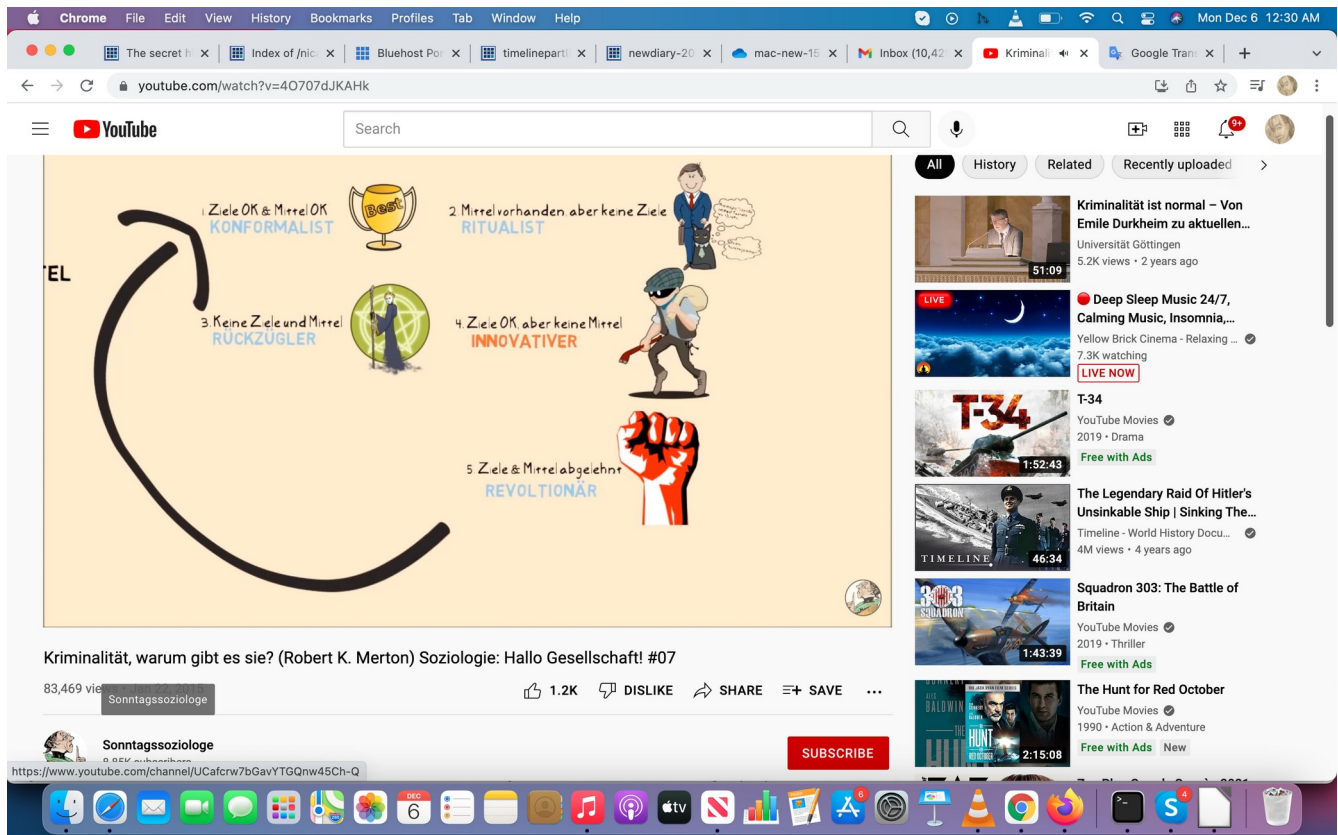
“Mit dieser physiologischen Quelle der großstädtischen Blasiertheit vereinigt sich die andere, die in der Geldwirtschaft fließt. Das Wesen der Blasiertheit ist die Abstumpfung gegen die Unterschiede der Dinge, nicht in dem Sinne, daß sie nicht wahrgenommen würden [...], sondern so, daß die Bedeutung und der Wert der Unterschiede der Dinge und damit der Dinge selbst als nichtig empfunden wird. Sie erscheinen dem Blasierten in einer gleichmäßig matten und grauen Tönung, keines wert, dem anderen vorgezogen zu werden.”

This “Blasiertheit” exactly describes the condition under the new McDonaldization (“the shallow”). Apparently McDonaldization is merely the same continuation of a long trend of modernity which Simmel has already started describing.

In Stories. Read Jennifer Doyles’ new foreword to the English translation of Engels’ *The Origin of the Family*... Had checked out her profile last night (professor of English at UC Riverside).

5 December

An interesting video explaining Robert K. Merton's sociological explanation of "criminality". Of the 5 types, the criminals are of the "innovator" type:



Listened to Simone Weichselbaum (from the Marshall Project) discuss abuses and non-accountability with US Marshals: CBS News, 22.02.2021. (The Justice Department never investigates US Marshals when Marshals killed somebody.)

6 December

"The Unexpected Spy with Tracy Walder", the International Spy Museum, 17.03.2020. Another former CIA agent that is a pretty white female.

Later in the afternoon, checked out her book from the library, *The Unexpected Spy*, St. Martin's Press, 2020. (With Jessica Anya Blau.)

8 December

Bought George Orwell's *Homage to Catalonia* as one's gift for the Libertarian X-Mas party. Thus read Lionel Trilling's "George Orwell and the Politics of Truth".

At the Libertarian X-Mas party, obtained the book as a gift, Bryan Caplan and Zach Weinersmith, *Open Borders: The Science and Ethics of Immigration* (2019).

9 December

Real Stories, “The Fall of El Chapo” (Guzman). Angus Macqueen and Guillermo Galdos attempt to find El Chapo to interview him. Mostly in 2012.

Then, PBS Frontline, “The United States of Secrets”. Took special note of the beginning where Glenn Greenwald says: when people email him “I have something you might be interested in”, 99 percent of the time the person is crazy or delusional. Did Homeland Security back in 2020 ever impersonate me to also write crazy emails to Glenn Greenwald telling him I have “government secrets” to share with him? (Since this PBS Frontline was aired on 13.05.2014, Greenwald is presumably not talking about me.)

10 December

Finally looked into Bill Lubanovic, *Introducing Python: Modern Computing in Simple Packages*, 2nd Ed., 2019.

12 December

Downloaded Marcuse’s *Eros and Civilization*, and its Spanish translation *Eros y Civilización* (with Juan Garcia Ponce). Read all the biographical notes in the translation.

Returned the Python book and checked out Orwell’s *Homage*. This 2015 edition includes a Foreword by Adam Hochschild.

Watched thoroughly “The United States of Secrets”, Part 1 and 2. Quite upset by the documentaries: here these officials (foremost Michael Hayden) are running around as if they were terribly worried about American people’s safety. Hypocrisy. America is actually just a feudal state where these feudal lords see the American people as part of their personal possession, and where they put up this act and lie to the American people in order to deceive them into serving the masters while believing that the masters are serving them.

13 December

Listened to Hartmut Rosa’s conversation with Caroline Mart, 27.09.2021, in Institut Pierre Werner.

15 December

“Wachstum & Beschleunigung – muss das sein? Niko Paech & Hartmut Rosa in Gespräch”, Werkstatt Zukunft, 17.02.2016.

16 December

Megan Twohey and Gabriel J.X. Dance, “Where the despairing log on, and learn ways to die”, *The New York Times*, 09.12.2021.

17 December

Hartmut Rosa, Ringsvorlesung “Postwachstumsökonomie” at the University of Oldenburg, November, 2015. (“Resonanz & Postwachstumsgesellschaft”, Werkstatt Zukunft, 15.12.2015.)

19 December

Seyla Benhabib talks about her life, in “Conversation with History”, UCTV, 12/2004 (8996).

20 December

Reggie Yates, “My 7 Day War: Fighting the Acapulco Cartel”, Real Stories, 23.02.2021. Yates joins the Mexican army infantry patrol in the Acapulco cartel area. Also, “The Sinaloa cartel is alive and thriving without El Chapo”, Vice News, 06.02.2017.

Adam Hochschild, “Rewriting the Spanish Civil War”, UMassHistory, 31.03.2014.

21 December

One is now on (in Rosa) XI, “Die Moderne als Geschichte gesteigerter Resonanzsensibilität”. Whereas in Reckwitz Romanticism is the undercurrent of Singularization seething beneath the dominant trend of Generalization/ Rationalization during the onset of modernity and postmodernity is characterized by Singularization becoming dominant instead with Generalization being relegated to the background – and whereas in one’s own conception Romanticism is the “feminine” side staying underneath the dominant “masculine” side (Rationalization) during the formative period of capitalism and then, during the mature period of capitalism, becoming itself the dominant trend with the “masculine” side now being relegated to the background – in Rosa Romanticism was simply the repository of *Resonanzsehnsüchte* when the world was suddenly “disenchanted” (*entzaubert*) and I-It became the dominant attitude during the onset of modernity. When the I-It mode became the new, and dominant, mode in which the West related to the world, Western men’s desire for resonance (I-Thou) didn’t lessen, but heightened – hence the rise of Romanticism. For Rosa, there is no inversion of the relationship between the I-It (Generalization) and the I-Thou mode (Singularization) when Western society transits from modernity to postmodernity as there is for Reckwitz; Rosa simply assumes that the postmodern fashion of being resonant with the self, others, and nature is just the straightforward continuation of Romanticism into the current age.

22 December

Two articles from Thomas Röper: (1) “Das russische Fernsehen über die Sicherheitsgarantien, über die mit den USA verhandelt wird” (20.12.2021). Here Röper translates the Russia 1 “Weekend Report” on the “guarantees proposals” which Kremlin has communicated to Karen Donfried on 15 December. (2) “Gender und body-positive: Das russische Fernsehen über neue kulturelle Errungenschaften in Westen”

(20.12.2021). Here Röper translates Dmitry Kiselyov's Sunday commentary ("Weekend Report") on the latest trends in political correctness in the West.

24 December

Thomas Röper, "Putins Rede im Verteidigungsministerium und was Spiegel-Leser (nicht) erfahren", 22.12.2021. Translations of Putin's speech on that day, but also Shoigu's.

PBS Newshour, on the launch of James Webb Space Telescope.

25 December

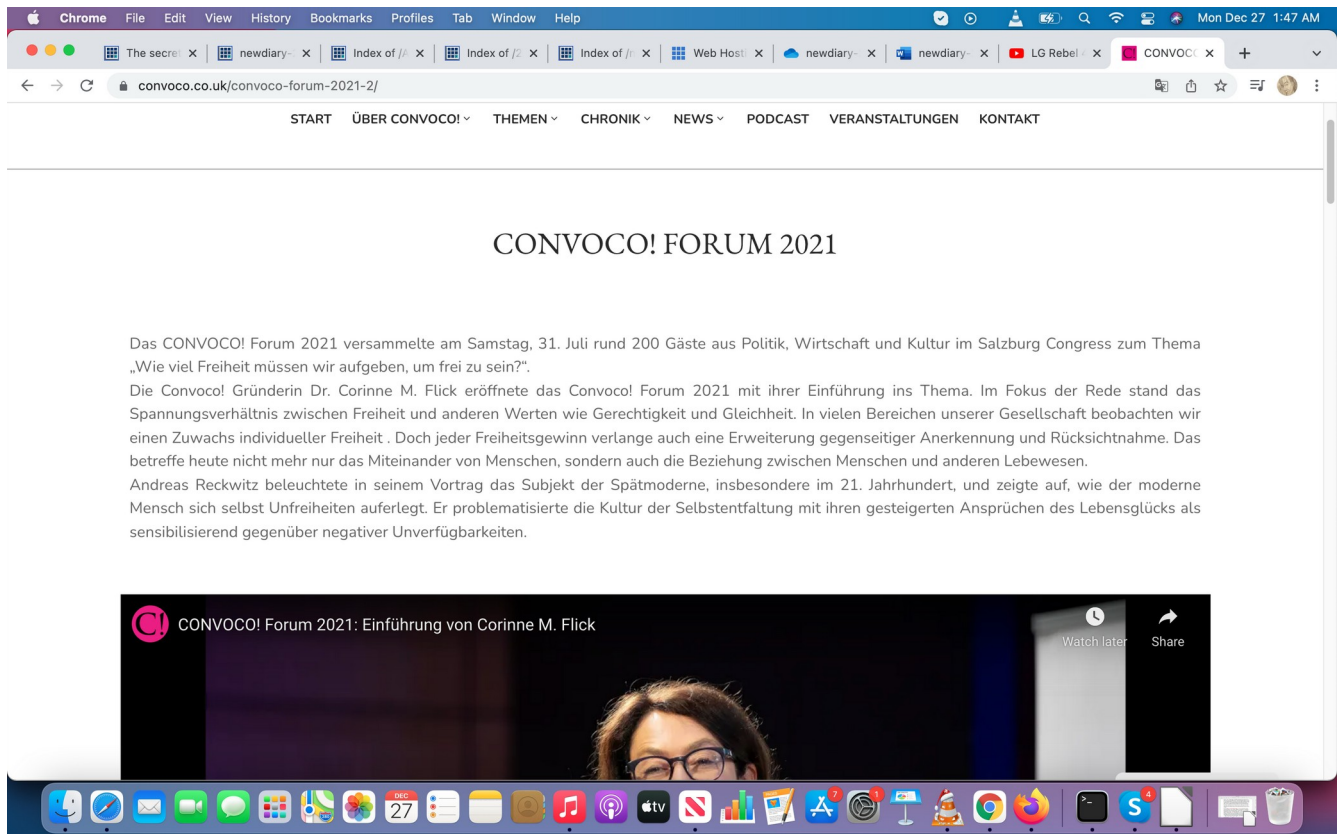
Watched many videos on guns (Sturmgewehr, Gewehr 43, Kalashnikov vs. Sturmgewehr, China's new QBZ-191, Russia's AK-12, and the Japanese Arisaka rifles) – from, among others, Forgotten Weapons and Task and Purpose (Chris Cappy).

26 December

Read the Introduction to Reckwitz/ Rosa, *Spätmoderne in der Krise: Was leistet die Gesellschaftstheorie*.

Also watched "12. SS Panzer Division Hitlerjugend", Welt.

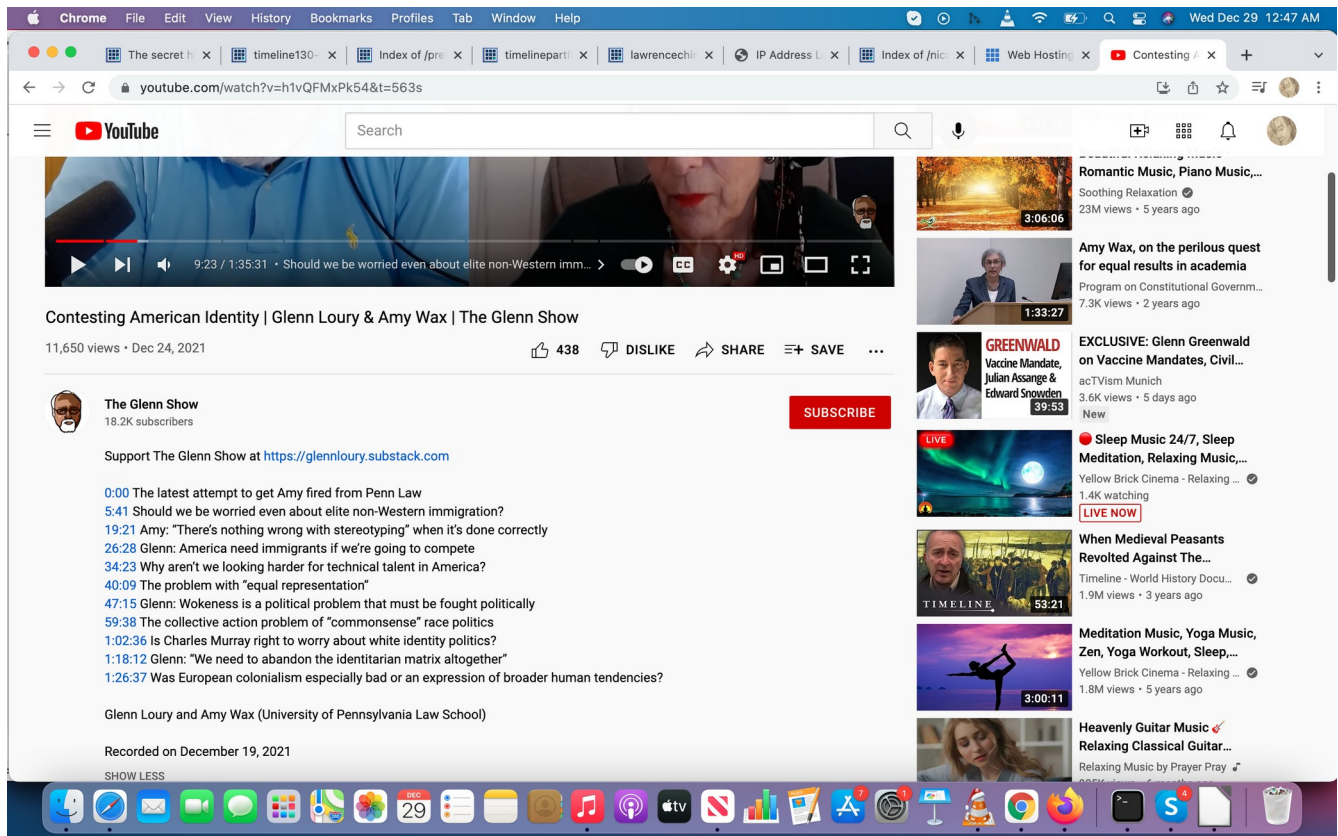
Then, Reckwitz's short lecture at Convoco Forum 2021, "Freiheit und Zwang in der Spätmoderne Kultur", 31.07.2021.



Then read Dr. C. George Boeree's short document on Abraham Maslow: deficient needs vs. being needs. Suddenly realized what one's problem is: during childhood, certain of one's emotional needs were never satisfied, and therefore one has to obsess over these needs for the rest of one's life. This also explains one's inability in the past to pick up cues during socialization (being annoying to others without any idea): because one was merely going around trying to fulfill these unmet emotional needs, one was completely immersed in one's own emotions during interactions with others rather than paying attention to others' emotional states (thus not noticing that other people were not amused by one's own emotional needs). The Invisible Hand would have understood this back in late 2010.

28 December

Listened to Amy Wax and Glenn Loury at The Glenn Show, 19.12.201.



3 January

ARTE Doku, “Putins Zeugen” (Vitaly Mansky). Putin’s presidency from 31.12.1999 to 31.12.2000.

4 January

Edureka Azure Fundamentals Certification AZ-900.

5 January

SRF Dok “Frauen als Opfer der Medien”, 05.08.2021. The story of Jolanda Spiess-Hegglin.

9 January

In this paragraph, where Rosa describes how modern institutions condition us to a reified way of relating to the world, he’s basically just reiterating “Historical Materialism” – how culture (how the people are) is necessarily a mere consequence of the underlying accumulation regime.

“Ob Menschen ihr Leben prädominant in resonanten oder aber in stummen Weltbeziehungen leben, hängt nicht nur und nicht einmal in erster Linie von den kulturellen, situativen und kontextuellen Variablen ab, die sie als Individuen betreffen, sondern in vermutlich noch weit höherem Maße von den institutionellen Kontexten, in denen sie sich bewegen. In den routinierten und habitualisierten

Handlungsformen und in den Praktiken, die wir ausüben, sind nicht nur jeweils spezifische ‘Denkstile’ schon impliziert und definiert, wie der polnische Erkenntnistheoretiker Ludwik Fleck und im Anschluss an ihn die britische Anthropologin Mary Douglas zeigen, sondern immer auch und auf einer noch tieferen Ebene spezifische Formen der Selbst- und Weltbeziehung angesiedelt. ‘Where you sit is where you stand’ lautet ein geflügeltes Wort im politischen Leben des Londoner Regierungsviertels. Gemeint ist damit, dass die Sicht auf die Welt von der Institution geprägt wird, in der sich jemand bewegt beziehungsweise für die er oder sie arbeitet. Ein Verteidigungsminister denkt und handelt naturgemäß anders als ein Staatssekretär für Erziehung oder ein Beamter im Wirtschaftsressort. Aus der Perspektive der Resonanztheorie wäre die Einsicht aber durchaus noch zu erweitern: ‘Where you sit is *how* you stand.’ Wie jemand in die Welt gestellt ist, hängt sogar in leiblicher Hinsicht ganz umfassend von den Praxisformen und den institutionellen Zusammenhängen ab, die seinen oder ihren Erfahrungs- und Bewegungshorizont prägen. So ist es unmittelbar einsichtig, dass eine Turnerin oder ein Tänzer auf eine andere Weise auf die Welt bezogen ist als eine Holzfällerin oder ein Bauer, und zwar sowohl in der pathischen Dimension, also in der Art und Weise, wie die begegnende Welt erfahren wird, als auch in der intentionalen, mithin in der Gestalt des Herangehens an die Welt. Institutionen bestimmen die möglichen Formen, die Achsen und die Intensitäten der Beziehungen, die wir zur Welt entwickeln können – nicht nur in kognitiver Hinsicht, in unserem Erkenntnisvermögen, sondern auch in emotionaler und leiblicher Perspektive. Sie erzeugen und verhindern mögliche Resonanzsensibilitäten ebenso wie spezifische Verdinglichungspraktiken.”

At Stories. Read the two pages on “governmentality” in James Miller’s *The Passion of Michel Foucault*.

Also: (1) “Why you should be worried about Facebook’s Metaverse”, Vice News, 07.12.2021; and (2) “Mexico’s cartels are deadlier than ever despite the pandemic”, Vice News, 16.09.2020.

11 January

Katharina Wilhelm, “Positive Diskriminierung/ Affirmative Action in den USA”, Deutschland Funk, 18.07.2020. This piece is as dumb as all those from America: even though it describes the upcoming battle for affirmative action in California, there is no mention in it of Asian Americans at all – despite the fact that they constitute the main opposition force. Another instance of total silence when it comes to Asians.

Picked up Michael Bazzell’s *Open Source Intelligence Techniques*, 9th ed. (01.01.2022). Was quite disappointed: it seems to differ very little from the 8th edition (even though Bazzell has promised 20% new content). And the book is more than 50 dollars!

12 January

Listened to Bazzell’s Podcast 245 (07.01.2022) – on his 9th edition OSIN book.

13 January

Listened to Kathleen Belew’s commentary on Stewart Rhodes’ arrest on PBS Newshour.

14 January

Once, again, as soon as Rosa clearly defines his *Beschleunigungsthese*, it turns out to be identical to my McDonaldization thesis:

“In Übereinstimmung mit den in Kapitel X.1 entwickelten Überlegungen gilt daher in struktureller Hinsicht, dass eine Gesellschaft dann modern ist, wenn sie sich nur (noch) dynamisch zu stabilisieren vermag, wenn sie also systematisch auf Wachstum, Innovationsverdichtung und Beschleunigung angewiesen ist, um ihre Struktur zu erhalten und zu reproduzieren. Die Trias Wachstum, Beschleunigung und Innovationsverdichtung lässt sich dabei als zeitliche (Beschleunigung), sachliche (Wachstum) und soziale (Innovationsverdichtung) Dimension eines einzigen Dynamisierungsprozesses verstehen, der sich seinerseits als *Mengensteigerung pro Zeiteinheit* definieren lässt.”

The “dynamical process” which defines modernity is just *my* version of “McDonaldization”: more volume in lesser time.

Also, Natasha Bertrand and Jeremy Herb, “US intelligence indicates Russia preparing operation to justify invasion of Ukraine”, CNN, 14.01.2022. Russian operatives prepositioned in eastern Ukraine to get ready to launch false flag attacks on Russia’s own proxy forces.

17 January

Downloaded, and started reading, Reckwitz’s *Das Ende der Illusionen*. Reckwitz wants to explain the rise of rightwing populism by laying bare problems internal to the late modern society. He never gave a thought that, maybe, all this is caused by the rise of Asian economies.

19 January

A little bit of Gabriel García Márquez, including his Nobel Prize lecture of 1982.

23 January

Because of the similarity of Rosa’s Resonance Theory to Heidegger’s, looked up Heidegger’s “history of being” (Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy) and *Seinsvergessenheit* (Heidegger’s fragments). In Rosa, modernity may be characterized by *Resonanzvergessenheit* (even though, with Heidegger, *Seinsvergessenheit* started with Plato and Aristotle and characterizes pretty much the entire Western history and so is not simply the peculiarly defining moment for modernity). But whereas, with Heidegger, the history of the West can be started anew when Being is remembered, with Rosa modernity can be restarted when Resonance is properly remembered (instead of all this mere “semblance of resonance” so characteristic of postmodern life).

In Stories. Also took notice of Nancy Folbre, *The Rise and Decline of Patriarchal Systems* (2020).

24 January

Checked out, and started reading, Dostoevsky's *The Devils*, translation by David Magarshack. Would also compare the French and Spanish translations downloaded from the Internet.

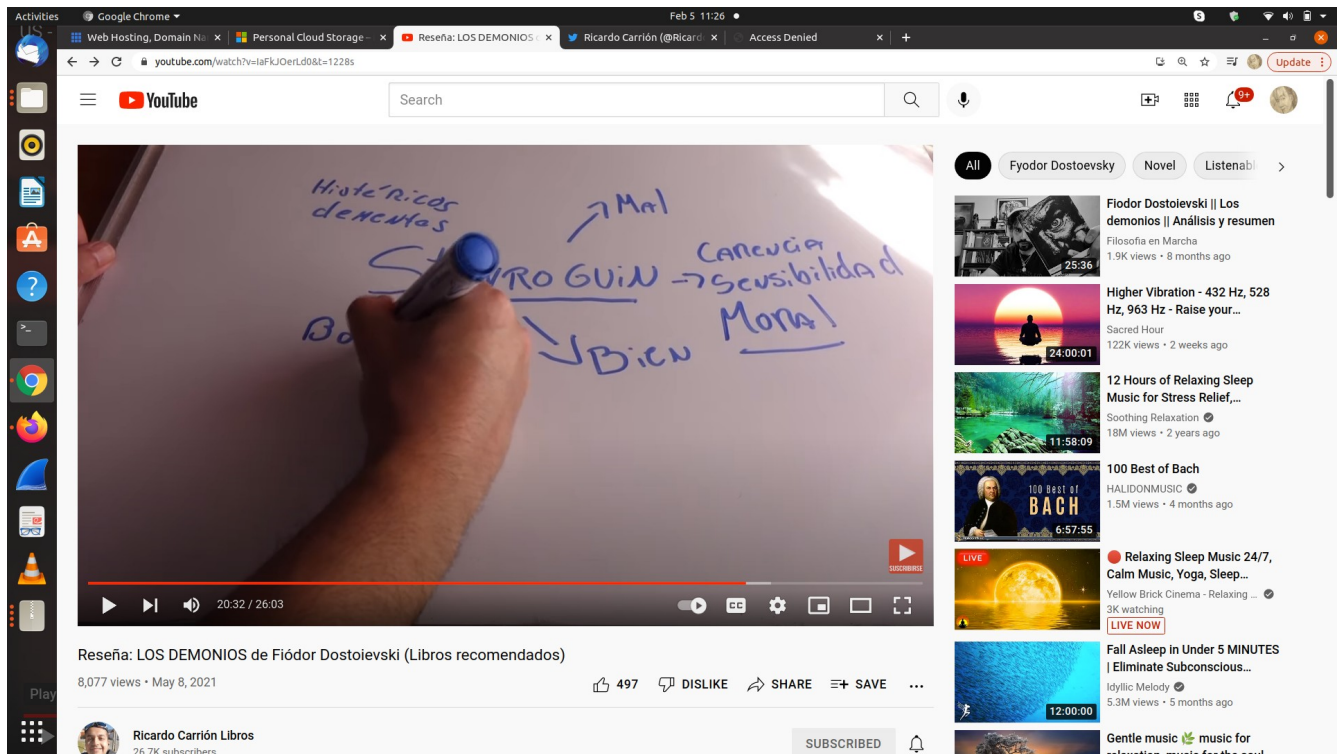
31 January

Rosa brilliantly distinguishes between two kinds of *Selbstwirksamkeit*: while everyone seeks *Selbstwirksamkeit*, some only seek it in dominating the world and others, the sort seen in *Weltreichweitenvergrößerung* or *Verdinglichung*. This is Homeland Security CO chief and the Secret Society women. Then there are some who seek it in achieving resonance with others. This sort of people are more developed and, unfortunately, I have to count myself among them. This harkens back to what I told Rod on 3 July 2013: I can only achieve happiness when operating in an I-Thou relationship with people while many people, like the politicians, are quite content with I-It relationships with the people they govern over.

5 February

Rosa says that a *Postwachstumsgesellschaft* is one which has switched from the mode of domination (I-It) toward the world to the mode of resonance (I-Thou), so that *Selbstwirksamkeit* is sought not in domination of the Other, but in dialog with the Other. Again, he fails to take into account the problem that so many underdeveloped people (such as the Secret Society women and their kind) are simply incapable of resonance since only highly developed people are capable of it. For the underdeveloped people, *Selbstwirksamkeit* can only be sought in domination. But Rosa also says that a *Postwachstumsgesellschaft* is one which has switched from the predominance of the I-It mode with the relegation of the I-Thou mode to exceptional cases to the inverse, the predominance of the I-Thou mode with the relegation of the I-It mode to exceptional cases. Perhaps this *Postwachstumsgesellschaft* is also one in which the highly developed people capable of resonance shall rule over the underdeveloped people incapable of resonance and in which the I-Thou mode shall be codified as the norm even though most people are not capable of participating in it.

Listened to Ricardo Carrión's excellent presentation on Dostoevsky's *The Demons*.



Stories. Read the introductory comments to “Letter on Humanism” and “The Question Concerning Technology” in Heidegger, *Basic Writings*. Again, Heidegger’s concern with the way of Being (revealing beings) inherent in technology echoes Rosa’s concern with modernity’s *Steigerungsllogik* and the accompanying dumb (*stumme*) relationship to the world.

Finished reading Rosa’s *Resonanz*.

7 February

Downloaded, and started reading, *Weil Kapitalismus sich ändern muss* (Rosa and Lessnich).

Also downloaded Rosa and Scheuerman ed., *High Speed Society* (2009). Note that this anthology was published by the Pennsylvania State University Press.