

# Cycles and Coexistences, Comparisons and Catastrophes

## An Introduction to the Volume

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Modernity has a particular relationship with time and change. It has been characterized as the era in which the very idea of history as accelerating change toward the genuinely new has taken root in Occidental thought. Change is no longer restricted to a string of events to be chronicled, a more or less eternal cycle of life, or the inevitable course of decline toward the end time (on this view of modernity and these changing ideas of change, see, e.g., Koselleck, 1979). However, different philosophies of history and meta-narratives have since competed to capture the patterns and trends of change or the absence thereof (White, 1973). History and change have been described as moving, for example, in cycles, along generations of humans or other entities such as technologies coexisting or replacing each other, by catastrophes (to name some of the conceptions that will be taken up below), or in many other ways.

Mostly without any explicit reflection on the character of historicity in general and its own historicity, media and communication research has been strongly preoccupied with change—and much less so with continuities, although systematic theorizing would require to always consider the logical opposite of a term and to make a convincing argument for one side or for diverging tendencies. The development of the media (not only as merely technological artifacts but also as social institutions) has often been considered an agent of change (again, not necessarily in the sense of technological determinism but as a non-teleological social evolution catalyzed by, or interacting with the evolution of media technologies) or as reflective of social change. As mediated communication enables societies to self-monitor and come to a (collectively shared) understanding of itself and, therefore, fulfills a crucial function for their inner states, change (and continuities) in technologies, institutions, structures, and situations of communication can be decisive factors in further societal developments. This volume is dedicated to such patterns of communicative change and stability. It systematically explores different levels at which change and stability in communication can occur and be consequential.

This volume is dedicated to a scholar who has always been preoccupied with communicative change and continuities and the different scholarly and societal perspectives on these processes (which tend to overemphasize change over stability). In his research, he almost always dealt with different facets of the question whether different postulates of media and communication change can really be substantiated with hard empirical facts or whether they are based on specific or generalizable illusions of an ever-changing media landscape in which only seemingly nothing remains constant. This volume is dedicated to Wolfram Peiser who sadly passed away before his time in 2021.

It assembles contributions on communicative change and stability by a number of his academic companions, including his advisors, advisees, and peers. In one way or another all of these scholars' reasoning about communicative change has been influenced by Wolfram Peiser's thoughts on these questions which he shared with them, with us, widely. Even though coming from very different sub-fields of the communication discipline, all of the contributions in this book mirror Wolfram Peiser's influence, some very obvious and explicit, some in a more nuanced manner. Therefore, the contributions in this volume, despite touching upon very different aspects of communicative change and continuities resonate quite well with each other. It is Wolfram Peiser's intellectual legacy which lives on in his academic companions and binds their work together.

Wolfram Peiser was born in 1962 in the Bergisches Land, a wooded low mountain range in Northwestern Germany where he decided to study economics in the regional capital of Wuppertal. Soon drawn toward the social-scientific analysis of communication and the media, he completed his PhD at the Department of Journalism and Communication Research at Hanover University of Music and Drama under the supervision of Klaus Schönbach who also contributed to this volume. Peiser then worked and completed his habilitation at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz at the chair of Christina Holtz-Bacha, who is also the author of one of the subsequent chapters. Thereafter, he served as interim professor and was then appointed as full professor at LMU Munich's Department of Media and Communication in 2006. Until his death, he supervised various PhD, habilitation, and other theses. Some of their authors and former members of his chair's academic staff are also among the contributors of this volume (Benjamin Krämer, Philipp Müller, Johanna Schindler, and Cornelia Wallner).

Among the different chairs at the department (several of Peiser's professorial colleagues are also present in this volume: Hans-Bernd Brosius, Romy Fröhlich, Christoph Neuberger, and Carsten Reinemann), Wolfram

Peiser specialized on media structures and media economics as well as media reception and effects—if this can still be termed “specialization” in today’s highly differentiated academic landscape. The topics of the courses he taught ranged from a regular lecture on media economics to celebrity and stardom, media and acceleration, perceived realism of media content, or media and beauty.

## **Cycles and Continuities**

The idea that history actually repeats itself is mostly seen as a simplistic or anachronistic concept. Popular sayings and quotes such as that we are doomed to repeat history if we do not learn from it or that history repeats itself as tragedy and farce demonstrate that we mostly do not really believe in the cyclical nature of history. Surely, cycles of, for instance, attention or scandalization are postulated in middle- to low-range theories of communicative phenomena, but only to discover and explore their exceptions or to contextualize assumptions of irreversible communicative change that structurally alters the conditions under which attention, moralization etc. function.

The seasons of the year are one of the last levels at which dominant Western thinking seems to accept cyclical conceptions of time in the stricter sense, if only to learn that due to global warming, the seasons ‘are not longer what they used to be’ in a given region. Googling information on the Bergisches Land, we can read from the local press that climate change raises hopes for more tourists in this region (reputed to be rather rainy), but that at the same time its forests are dying. This demonstrates that change can always be framed in different value-laden ways (or perceived and judged from different angles) and that the selection of a specific interpretation of change contributes to further change due to its impact on (other) actors’ resulting (re-)actions—an argument which has been put forward with regard to media change by one of the PhD theses supervised by Wolfram Peiser (Müller, 2016).

Astrology, in contrast, is often derided by researchers as prototypically irrational folk belief based on anecdotal evidence, confirmation bias, and faulty causal reasoning. But what if, Wolfram Peiser and Klaus Schönbach thought in 1993, people actually differ in their character due to the season of birth, but for other reasons than the influence of the stars? As an academic side project, they analyzed data on seasons of birth and personality traits, found weak but significant effects, and published the results in a popular science journal (Schönbach & Peiser, 1994). Almost thirty years

later, Klaus Schönbach (in this volume) now presents new evidence for such effects, this time on media use.

Actually, Schönbach's analysis does not only imply one but two levels of temporality: the cycles of the seasons and the continuing (albeit possibly weakening) influence of earlier experiences in later life. Wolfram Peiser also studied such continuing effects in other contexts, including his PhD thesis. The effects analyzed by Peiser, however, do not originate in cyclical phenomena but in irreversible historical media change that affects each cohort differently, leading to possible media generations such as the "television generation" he sought to distinguish from other cohorts (Peiser, 1996). Individuals passing through the different stages of life and historical changes intersect in the differential experiences and sometimes lasting differences of cohorts. Peiser addressed the "problem of generations" (Mannheim, 1970) in various ways. He discussed the analysis of effects of age, period, and cohort effects from a methodological perspective and its potential for strategic, i.e., future- and long-term oriented market research (Peiser, 1991) and applied cohort analysis in different empirical studies of media use (Peiser, 1996, 1999a, c, 2000a, c). One of the PhD theses supervised by Peiser throughout his career (three as main supervisor and six as second examiner) also discusses the temporal dimensions of media socialization along this logic (Krämer, 2012). In a short theoretical contribution going beyond media reception, Peiser discussed how not only generations that were socialized differently due to media change but also journalists with different generational experiences contribute to social change (Peiser, 2003).

The term "generation" also carries a second meaning, a genealogical and even more relational one where one person or entity, or one more or less contemporaneous group creates, or transforms into, a later one. In media history, we may ask whether and when evolutionary change can be periodized into generations of media and in academia, we can analyze the relations of power, transmission of institutional and cognitive resources, and (mutual) influence between academic generations of supervisors and the supervised. Here, the concept of generation is more strictly relational than categorical (as in the case of cohort analysis proper), a symbolic, social structure of corresponding roles and unequal conditions based on age (or career phase) (in analogy to the relationship between parents and children in the family, see Närvänen & Näsman, 2004). In this sense, this volume unites four academic generations: Peiser's supervisors, Wolfram Peiser himself and academic peers of his own age cohort, those he supervised, and his students' and staff's students.

Political history, it is typically assumed, does not repeat itself in the strict sense, but to get a chance of actually “changing things” in a democratic way (who is in government or the policies that they implement), we rely on election *cycles*. They come with election campaigns that may well be described as rituals which are repeated without much evidence of the desired effects. Christina Holtz-Bacha (in this volume) does not shy away from the question of whether political advertising is actually useless or even harmful. Reviewing the literature on US election advertising, she identifies many studies with minimal effects on persuasion and mobilization, except under favorable circumstances, and concludes that we know very little about the potentially detrimental effects of attack advertising. She concludes that it remains a mystery why political actors keep spending large amounts of money on communication measures whose effects are rather unsubstantiated. It may then be asked what history or histories campaigners have learned from to consider advertising effective.

Political communication is of course not limited to election campaigns and therefore calls for more literature reviews on important developments. One of the major trends discussed in the more recent literature is political polarization and the role of social media in the process. Ludwig and Müller (in this volume) synthesize the literature on this relationship, not only in terms of findings (that do not support any alarmism) but also in terms of conceptualizations and explanations.

In addition to the conceptual differences between polarization and the related concept of fragmentation that Ludwig and Müller discuss, a change in scholarly diagnoses is noteworthy: While Holtz-Bacha and Peiser (1999) asked: “Do the mass media lose their integrative function?,” thus treating this function as formerly fulfilled, polarization research tends to treat (social) media as dysfunctional for social integration from the outset. A historical narrative of media-induced decline has been superseded by a narrative of media-caused threat. A certain cyclical model, however, seems once again confirmed by Ludwig and Müller’s review: What starts out as a concept on which high hopes for diagnostic and explanatory values is placed in academia will become a vague catchword once it emerges as a trending research topic.

In comparison to another rather early publication by Wolfram Peiser (1999b), we can identify interesting shifts in communication researchers’ concerns with the effects of digitization. Disintegration is already mentioned in his 1999 essay but described in terms that seem innocuous compared to today’s fears of confrontation: He assumes that stronger audience fragmentation might lead to fewer common mediated experiences and topics for conversation, and more social contacts with like-minded people.

Similarly, problems of “credibility and quality” as identified by Peiser appear rather harmless compared to the threat of rampant disinformation discussed today. In addition to a very broad shift from television to the Internet or social media as the main media technologies scholars are discussing, today’s research probably deals with social inequality somewhat less with regard to unequal resources and the provision of content that suits the interests of specific groups, as Peiser did in 1999, and more with a view to sociotechnical biases or discriminatory and offensive communication. Finally, while Peiser (1999) treated problems of information overload and the burdens of selection and judged them to be manageable by the users, today’s discussion on selectivity on the one hand focuses more on how algorithmic filters already narrow down what recipients are confronted with in a biased and nontransparent way. On the other hand, it detects that an increasing number of users has given up on managing incoming information and has turned to (at least periodic) news avoidance.

## **Competitions and Coexistences**

Communication is not only subject to change at the historical level, but creates irreversibilities at the micro level of each interaction. It transforms a contingent situation with two or more interdependent actors, each with their expectations and with a horizon of possible choices, into a new situation that then has its history and a new, differently pre-structured horizon (as Luhmann’s, 1987, theory of communication suggests). Theories and methods that only consider a static constellation or only one actor’s perspective fail to see the whole picture. This is the topic of two contributions in this volume by Christoph Neuberger and Johanna Schindler.

Neuberger discusses possible dynamic constellations in the public sphere, distinguishing different modes of interaction, namely diffusion, mobilization, conflict, cooperation, competition, and scandal. Going beyond the often rather static approach of social network analysis and public sphere theory, Neuberger describes how constellations of two or three actors with one-way or two-way communication, direct and indirect interactions, and shared or antagonistic interests create different fundamental courses of interaction. The interactions are always oriented both toward the past and the future: Actors pursue their interests (for example, they compete for a common but exclusive goal to be reached in the future), but also react to past communication (for example, to counter the accusations of scandalous behavior).

Johanna Schindler (in this volume) theorizes communication in groups as a process in which individual contributions are combined or transformed and that makes systems of interaction information processors not unlike, but distinct from individual cognitive systems. Group processes can either be oriented toward an open future if they process information in an open-ended mode or toward a predetermined common goal that, of course, may or may not be reached. This depends on the group members' individual and shared histories and the history in the making that is the interaction. Both orientations may be pursued in more automatic or systematic ways, adding a second dimension of processing modes.

Again, both articles imply more than one level of temporality. Interactions are not simply eternal structures deduced formally, but subject to social change and changes in media environments in particular. Christoph Neuberger thus also analyzes the shifts in different social fields in terms of the modes of interaction, such as the increasing reliance on competition in many areas or the increased potential for cooperation in online as opposed to mass media communication. Johanna Schindler also does not only aim for an abstract theory of information processing but relates the modes of processing to key technical possibilities of the Internet, namely participation, selectivity, interaction, interconnectedness, and automatization.

When new media environments are compared to older ones, an important topos in the analysis of social change comes into play: the idea of displacement, whether as complete substitution or coexistence, either on an equal footing or with certain entities persisting in niches (often framed metaphorically in terms of "death" or "survival"). Wolfram Peiser was well aware that theses on the displacement of media are highly contingent on the definition of the competing entities and of their former and possibly new functions, as well as the criteria for substitution. Furthermore, as he argues in his discussion of the so-called "Riepl's law" (see Riepl, 1913), such a "law"—according to which new media never completely replace older ones but push them into niches—entails difficult-to-test counterfactual assumptions on the development that would have occurred without the new competitor (Peiser, 2008). Such new structures cannot only substitute or complement older ones at the level of overall media technologies (however defined) but also at the level of organizational structures. A dissertation co-supervised by Peiser (see Engesser, 2013) analyzed whether participatory journalism the quality criteria of traditional journalism and what factors make this more likely.

## **Crises and Comparisons**

Another recurring topos in historical descriptions is that of the crisis, a unique and deciding moment of danger, decline, or decision that, however, implies a chance of recovery or radical renewal (on the conceptual history of the term that also includes the possibility of recurring or chronic crises, see Koselleck & Richter, 2006). In the social sciences, crises have a double character: as a scholarly diagnosis and as social perception or construction to be reconstructed by the researcher.

Communication research itself may be said to be in a crisis—due to the dissolution of its disciplinary and methodological boundaries that recent media change has brought about but also due to its shortcomings in terms of theorizing science and scientific practices.

Hans-Bernd Brosius (in this volume) discusses whether the discipline is about to lose its former focus of analysis, public communication, and whether it should turn to all forms of mediated communication as its object. Brosius disagrees, warning of a crisis of identity in which the discipline would become indistinguishable from neighboring ones. However, the solution cannot be a return to the theories and methods of the disciplinary mainstream of the “golden age of mass communication,” he argues. Although golden ages are a recurring theme in narratives of crisis, Brosius does not choose the completely nostalgic or restorative solution, but proposes a renewed concept of mass communication 2.0 that includes publicly visible interpersonal communication.

Wolfram Peiser also engaged with the question of mainstream and heterodox views, and of different paradigms more broadly, within a changing discipline, surveying the members of the German Communication Association (DGPK) together with Matthias Hastall and Wolfgang Donsbach (Peiser, Hastall & Donsbach, 2003). Later, he also co-supervised a thesis on the scholarly identity and habitus of German-speaking communication professors (Huber, 2010) and speculated on the effects of changing media environments, theoretical fads, interests, or the generational socialization and media use of communication researchers on their conceptions of media effects (Peiser, 2009). In the 2003 survey, one third of respondents already agreed that the association’s topics and divisions had differentiated too much while a third also felt that they are biased toward certain paradigms or that researchers with specific profiles do not really feel represented by the association. 60% of the participants responded that research on interpersonal communication should be represented in the DGPK, but compared to 96% for mass communication and (only?) 82% for research on the Internet. The authors describe the identity of the discipline as



both “pluralist” and “diffuse,” but refuse to diagnose a crisis and also to take sides, laconically concluding that the findings “are what they are” (p. 333). This is, however, not so say that Peiser rejected critical and normative perspectives, in particular on the discipline itself. For example, former member of his chair Cornelia Wallner typically adopts normative perspectives on the public sphere and other phenomena, including on the discipline itself, for now culminating in a special issue on criticism of, in, and through communication and media studies (Gentzel, Kannengießer, Wallner, & Wimmer, 2021).

Benjamin Krämer (in this volume) sees the discipline in a crisis not so much in terms of substantial objects and concepts, but due to a general lack of sufficiently systematic theoretical conceptualizations and of an awareness of the different functions of theory. In addition to, or maybe even as an underlying cause of the replication crisis diagnosed in several disciplines, unsystematic theorizing is an obstacle to fruitful research. Krämer identifies several types of shortcomings and argues that they do not only lead to unnecessary tests of badly justified hypotheses or arbitrary postulates of relationships and mechanisms, but, more broadly, to a lack of understanding of what objects of study, operationalizations, and research findings mean.

One of the problems identified by Krämer goes back to a frequent criticism raised by Peiser: One cannot reasonably make claims about what is new or what is specific to a phenomenon by studying only the novelty or the phenomenon in isolation. Wolfram Peiser therefore always encouraged his students and staff to conduct systematic comparisons, not necessarily based on original data on all eras or sides—which would often be uneconomical or impossible—but using either existing datasets or existing literature, at least for one side of the comparison. And compare they did!

One recent example that not only uses existing literature effectively but also connects different domains of communication research comparatively is the contribution by Cornelia Wallner (in this volume) who discusses relationships between structural features of media systems and media effects. While one might not necessarily expect media systems to exhibit a detectable effect at the individual level (yet, the literature reviewed by Wallner indicates such effects!), one would maybe expect the analysis of media systems to deal with some of the most stable structures in society. However, the logic of relating features of the media system to media use can also be applied to structural change, for example analyzing the effects of media use on democratization, as literature synthesized by Wallner does.

Two of Peiser's former PhD students also contributed to the—predominantly synchronic—comparative literature on media systems and their relationship with political systems, however considering tradition as one dimension of comparison, i.e., the time frame in which political and media institutions (the first newspaper, commercial TV station etc.) were established (Engesser & Franzetti, 2001). During her time at Peiser's chair in Munich, another colleague, Karin Knop, compared mediated constructions of reality in a variety of popular media genres. She went beyond the usual range of genres investigated in mainstream communication research, critically turning to advertising, comedy, or reality TV (Knop, 2012a, 2012b; Knop & Petsch, 2010). And to further highlight the diversity of topics addressed at the chair, we may also mention that during his short time in Munich, Felix Frey published an article on the changing historic media use of the lower classes in the German empire (Frey, 2016).

While the theory or interpretation crisis diagnosed by some (including Krämer in this volume) is one crisis that goes unnoted by many, Carsten Reinemann and Anna-Luisa Sacher (also in this volume) refer to a widely discussed alleged crisis: that free speech is supposedly increasingly restricted—or that people no longer agree about what can be said. Research may ask survey respondents whether they think opinions can be freely expressed and compare answers over time, or it may ask them for their perception of change. Both measurements, when interpreted with caution, will inform researchers about different perceptions that will probably be based on different experiences or individual interpretations of different discourses. Wolfram Peiser would probably have asked: What do people have in mind when they hear about “freedom of expression” or “what can be said”? And this is the kind of answer that Reinemann and Sacher are also seeking with their analysis. Subsequently, they also ask: Do people really disagree about what can be said and what statements do they think are acceptable? Empirically, their research indicates people seem to agree that certain statements towards women are unacceptable. In addition to this rather broad consensus, the authors find more complex and often unexpected patterns of small influences, not of gender but of experiences with discrimination and media trust, on the occurrence of specific perceptions of opinion expression. In terms of change, they also identify generational differences that, however, do not lend themselves to narratives according to which younger generations are simply more sensitive or critical toward discrimination.

Wolfram Peiser was always interested in media users' perceptions of reality, and their conditions and limitations. It is therefore no coincidence that among the different theories of media uses and effects, he published

predominantly on the third-person effect (Peiser & Peter, 2000, 2001). He was also a most dedicated mentor and supervisor, but never pushed himself to the fore in this role. Consequently, to our knowledge, he only co-authored a single conference presentation with researchers at his chair. The contribution was successfully presented at an ICA conference but unfortunately never appeared as a published article during Wolfram Peiser's lifetime. Therefore, his co-authors decided to publish an article that aims to reconstruct the main ideas and findings of the study (Frey, Peiser & Krämer, in this volume). It is also not surprising that this text deals with perception, namely with the criteria media users employ to assess the degree of realism of media content. Very much in line with Peiser's exhortations not to focus on the most trendy, yet often narrow and short-lived, research interests, the contribution goes beyond the current preoccupations with disinformation and media skepticism, and considers media content more broadly, considering a wide range of cues of authenticity, and distinguishes different types of media users. In our modern understanding, time is irreversible and unrepeatable but Felix Frey and Benjamin Krämer tried to turn back the clock by returning to the old slides, notes, abstracts, and datasets to reconstruct what could have been one of the last publications co-authored by Wolfram Peiser.

Gender differences in communication professions are a topic dear to his long-time colleague Romy Fröhlich who, however, focuses on genre differences and their perception in her contribution to this volume. Her chapter is diagnostic as well as programmatic. Fröhlich observes that in today's media environment, users are more than ever confronted with "particular-interest oriented persuasive simulations of journalism" or PR texts by strategic communicators imitating journalism with a persuasive intention. She then asks what criteria could serve to distinguish this genre from actual journalistic coverage in content analyses and how recipients would process both types of texts. Symptoms of crises abound: Traditional advertising is less credible than ever, which is why communicators turn to PR genres that imitate journalism. Users migrating from traditional media to the Internet are increasingly likely to encounter such content—either by chance or because they deliberately avoid traditional journalism which, further weakened by economic crises, is decreasingly able to scrutinize and control what enters the public sphere. However, Fröhlich's argument does not stop at this general diagnosis but spells out its implications at both the levels of content and reception, as well as specific subsequent research questions and indicators. Following Wolfram Peiser's persistent strive for conceptual and methodological rigor, the outlined research program con-

vinces with its systematic theoretical conceptualizations and careful operationalization.

## Catastrophes and Choices

If large parts of the modern population do not share a specific understanding of an end time but only of mundane catastrophes, it is in this vein that we leave the otherworldly to individual meditation but express our great sadness about the—in a sense, “catastrophic”—loss that has been the early death of Wolfram Peiser (on the sometimes surprising conceptual history of the notion of “catastrophe” that includes dying or any quick change to the negative or positive, see Brieße & Günter, 2009). We will conclude this introduction by summarizing some of the advice and strategies of doing research that, as one of his gifts to his students and colleagues, he often conveyed in courses, colloquiums, and individual conversations. They help avoid catastrophic failures of research as well as small and often unnoticed shortcomings.

The first step of each research endeavor has to be to *collect* systematically. Peiser usually recommended to *consider* a broad range of theoretical approaches, concepts, factors, and actors with their respective perspectives. This is to make sure to systematically contemplate as many alternatives as possible (and reasonably justifiable) in terms of research questions or hypotheses, forms of models, designs, and methods before choosing the ultimate research interest and framework for a study. As indicated above, Peiser emphasized systematic *comparison* in order to identify what is actually specific about a phenomenon and its causes or background. He also advised to try and *connect* all aspects of a research object or area among each other, even if the result is that some are more or less unrelated. For example, in his lecture on media economics, he provided a long list of key terms and suggested that students pick two or three at random and think about their relationship. This way, they could test whether they had actually understood the concepts and were able to apply them.

In order to understand a phenomenon, it is also useful to work by means of abstraction and analogy, finding one or more general categories it belongs to or similarities to other phenomena with similar properties. This opens up new strands of literature and conceptualizations that lead to new perspectives on the phenomena, whether they are under-researched or require new, original approaches.

Visual aides such as tables and diagrams can help to be systematic when selecting and connecting aspects, always considering all logical alter-

natives. Yet, they should not be used excessively and should always be prepared with greatest care as they always bear the risk of suggesting misleading or under-complex interpretations. Older literature can considerably broaden the horizon and avoid reinventing the wheel while including newer publications helps to find the actually remaining research gaps and to connect a study to the field and one's potential audience.

For example, when planning a study that deals with media and social change, a researcher should try to keep in mind the different kinds of models or narratives of developments: continuous evolution, crisis, catastrophic or revolutionary breaks, cycles or waves (whether actually repetitive or as regular patterns of innovation), complete or partial displacement, phase and genealogical models, etc.

The most important step is of course to *choose* wisely between all the alternatives considered: what to include in a study, how to theoretically frame and empirically investigate it, how to present the theoretical and methodological considerations and the results, and most importantly: how to justify the choices. Decisions create a before and after; they entail consequences, both logical and practical, and can be reasonable with regard to what has been done previously or the ends to be achieved. They come with costs for switching paths and neglecting aspects, come with risks of errors, failures, and criticism (which should be anticipated as systematically as possible). However, they are also liberating, reduce complexity, and pre-structure what is coming. And decisions can only be made between what has been considered before: they are themselves pre-structured by the question and the alternatives.

Once a project has been conducted and documented, with all the large and small decisions, the resulting documentation has to be *correct* and can be *corrected*. In this regard, time is not irreversible. Things can be made more understandable, better reasons can be provided, the order of presentation can be changed. The history one tells is not the history that happened, the text is not simply a chronological narrative or thought protocol, Peiser reminded us, but a logical flow that abstracts from many details and decisions. Yet, of course, it has to be true to what one has done.

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