

David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Blackwell, 1990), Parts III and IV

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THE ARGUMENT: Although there has been a simultaneous “sea-change” in political economy, culture, and the experience of space and time (to the “postmodern”) since around 1972, these are “shifts in surface appearance” when seen against “the basic rules of capitalistic accumulation.”

Part III: The experience of space and time

I. Introduction (201-210): material links between political-economic and cultural processes

- A. Space-time: materially constructed experiences: changing w/ revolutionary capitalism
- B. But there are big conflicts in interpreting this construction
 1. Social theories privilege time over space
 - a. Revolutionary progress = annihilation of space through time
 - b. Becoming rather than being
 2. Aesthetic theories thematize the “spatialization of time”
 - a. How can the eternal truths be displayed in midst of flux
 - b. Architecture is a prime example
- C. Political significance of playing social and aesthetic theories off each other
 1. Brief and inadequate treatment of Heidegger
 2. Aestheticization of politics: mythologies of place and person
 - a. Local, national
 - b. International, global
 3. Relation of geopolitical conflicts to capitalism
 - a. Expansion (“spatial fix” for overaccumulation problem)
 - b. Uneven development (for exploitation)

II. Individual spaces and times in social life (211-225)

- A. Survey of theories (211-218)
 1. Hägerstrand: time geography: no connection to material processes
 2. Time-space in connection with material processes
 - a. Foucault: body, enclosure
 - b. De Certeau: everyday life in relation to rationalized order
 - c. Bourdieu:
 - (1) symbolic orderings of time-space = framework for experience
 - (2) space-time practices become fixed & used in social reproduction
 - d. Bachelard: space of imagination: “poetic space”
- B. Complex grid representing connection of spatial practice to social forces (218-)
 1. Three dimensions of spatial practice
 - a. Material practices: organization of material flow
 - b. Representations of space: ways of coding these processes
 - c. Spaces of representation: imagination of new processes
 - (1) all three are drawn from Lefebvre: dialectical relations
 - (2) but modified by Bourdieu:
 - (a) habitus:
 - (b) circular causality of practice and condition
 2. Four aspects of spatial practice
 - a. “Friction of distance”: transaction costs
 - b. Appropriation of space: occupied by objects, activities, people
 - c. Domination of space: control over friction or appropriation
 - d. Production of space: making of new material or representative systems
- C. Gurvitch: meaning of time in social life: relation of time experience and social forms

III. Time and space as sources of social power (226-239)

- A. Introduction: money, time and space as sources of social power (226-227)
 1. What are social processes of objectification of money, time, space?
 2. How can these objectified forces be changed?
- B. Time (227-232)
 1. Money measures value
 - a. Value = time of social labor:
 - b. Merchants measure time to market as value
 2. Thus progressive monetarization of social relations changes time/space

- a. Time measurement: clocks, etc
 - b. Spatial mapping
- 3. And time/space qualities are changed by pursuit of profit: efficiency
 - a. Speeding up capital turnover time: revolutions in production/consumption
 - b. Changing workers bodies: deskilling, speedups, length of working day
- 4. Discontinuities in social time: crises, creative destruction
- C. Space (232-238)
 - 1. Annihilation of space through time; rationalization of spatial organization
 - 2. Effects of production of space: infrastructure: transport / communication
 - a. Always in context of class struggle
 - b. Interplay of place / space:
 - (1) Command of space allows control of place
 - (2) But you need prior control of place to command space
 - c. Pre railroad / telegraph capital & labor equal in ability to command space
 - (1) but capital control over this production of space
 - (2) means labor now better at control of place rather than space
 - 3. Large scale spatial processes under capitalism
 - a. Colonization, imperialism, national liberation, defense of local customs
 - b. Urbanization, suburbanization, urban renewal, gentrification, sprawl
 - 4. Oppositional struggles
 - a. When cast as defense of locality are place-bound
 - b. Tend to be overwhelmed by capital control of space-time
- IV. The time and space of the Enlightenment project [time-space compression] (240-259)
 - A. Feudalism: local autonomous places (240-242)
 - B. Renaissance (242-249)
 - 1. Voyages of discovery:
 - a. Europe only part of wide world
 - b. Geographical knowledge becomes commodity
 - 2. Perspective / individualism
 - a. Foundational concepts
 - (1) Infinite space (vs. "closed world")
 - (2) Arrow of time removed by theoretical physics
 - b. Applications
 - (1) Mapmaking: objectivity, practicality, functionality
 - (a) Perspective: single eye grasping whole world
 - (b) Mathematical principles of projection: manipulation of space
 - (c) Political construction of maps
 - (2) Architecture: baroque folds
 - C. Enlightenment general principles: homogenization and rationalization (249-252)
 - 1. Space: (Architecture, Maps)
 - 2. Time
 - a. Symmetry of prediction and retrodiction
 - b. Capitalist use of homogeneous time to compare production and set value
 - D. Enlightenment tensions (252-259)
 - 1. Maps: homogenization of local space
 - 2. Rational planning: necessity of using maps and clocks
 - a. Whose perspective will be dominant?
 - b. Homogenizing space is only one type of spatial practice
 - 3. Five dilemmas of struggle over space by social use vs capitalist domination
 - a. Pulverization of space (homogenization / commodification)
 - (1) mercantilism (state) Colbert: centralized on Paris
 - (2) liberalism - (private property) Turgot: physiocrats: dispersal
 - b. Production of space as political-economic phenomenon (class struggle)
 - c. Social relations
 - d. Homogenization of space vs heterogeneous places
 - e. Conquest of space
 - (1) only through production of space as fixed frame
 - (2) upon which capitalist creative destruction is let loose
- V. Time-space compression and the rise of modernism as a cultural force (260-283)
 - A. 1846-48: crisis (260-264)
 - 1. Political-economic
 - a. Explanations:

- (1) workers: capitalism run amok
 - (2) progressive bourgeoisie: blockage by aristos
 - (3) aristocrats: undermining of traditional values
- b. Changes:
 - (1) time: progress vs revolution
 - (2) space: productive integration vs nationalism
 - (3) money: international money / credit flow vs gold base
- 2. Cultural crisis of representation: e.g., Flaubert's cinematic cuts
- B. 1850-1910: recovery and expansion (264-266)
 - 1. Political-economic:
 - a. Conquest of space:
 - (1) railroad, telegraph
 - (2) colonialism, imperialism
 - b. Privilege of time: Alfred Marshall
 - 2. Cultural-aesthetic: Kern: culminates in 1910-1914 aesthetic revolution
- C. 1910-1914: revolution (266-278)
 - 1. Political-economic: beginning of Fordism
 - 2. Aesthetic
 - a. Literary: Joyce, Proust
 - b. Art: cubism: Picasso, Braque
 - 3. Political culture: unity between peoples by time-space compression
 - a. Universalism: re-awakening of Enlightenment project (neo-Kantians)
 - b. Particularism: qualities of place: reaction to annihilation of space by time
 - (1) library, museum: ordering of experience
 - (2) craft revivals: William Morris
 - (3) aestheticization of politics
 - 4. Modernity as struggling with universalism vs particularism
 - a. Nietzsche and the problem of European modernity: will to power
 - b. New science of geopolitics: manifest destiny, Lebensraum, etc.
 - c. Vienna example: Camillio Sitte vs Otto Wagner
- D. 1914-1918: WWI (278-279): breakdown of bodies politic
- E. 1920 onward: heroic modernism (279-283)
 - 1. Fight of the universal against the particular
 - 2. Attempt to represent conflictual forces in images
 - 3. Tragedy of modernism: wrestling with myth and aestheticization of politics
- VI. Time-space compression and the postmodern condition (284-307)
 - A. Production and consumption: acceleration of turnover time (284-285)
 - 1. Mass fashion
 - 2. Service consumption: services and spectacles
 - B. Structure of feeling (body politic) (285-286)
 - 1. Volatility and ephemerality
 - 2. Instantaneity and disposability
 - 3. Sensory overload and shutdown / crash
 - C. Managerial responses to volatility (286-287)
 - 1. Short term profit taking (crisis = chronic fatigue, cocaine)
 - 2. Manipulation of taste / desire through image
 - D. Reign of the image (287-291)
 - 1. Image consumption
 - a. Mediatized of politics: fleeting images of nostalgia for stable values
 - b. Personal image politics: mass cultural capital
 - 2. Image concept: simulacrum
 - 3. Image production: complexity theory applied to mass taste
 - E. Attempts at overview (291)
 - 1. Toffler: Future Shock
 - 2. Baudrillard: America
 - F. Risk management / protection from volatility (292-293)
 - 1. Futures markets
 - 2. Fundamentalism
 - 3. Cocooning: home as private museum
 - G. Collapse of space (293-296)
 - 1. Global telecommunications village, etc.
 - 2. Globalized economy: capital flight, deindustrialization, etc.

3. Global cities: LA imports SE Asian patriarchy to run sweatshops
4. Local place quality: government as entrepreneur competing to attract capital
 - a. Good business environment
 - b. Amenities of life: city image, sports teams, yuppie neighborhoods
5. Central paradox of space / place
 - a. Less spatial barriers = increased place differentiation to attract capital
 - b. Increase of fragmentation, insecurity, ephemerality
- H. New financial system (296-298)
 1. Breakdown of Bretton Woods
 2. Dematerialization of capital: only temporarily takes a particular currency form
 - a. Speculation and self-fulfilling prophecies
 - b. Inflation (money not a good form in which to store value)
 - (1) collectibles: art market
 - (2) real estate
- I. Crisis of representation and changed commodity mix (298-302)
 1. Food: globalized fusion cuisines
 2. Travel and “experiences”
 3. Music: world music, domesticated rap
 4. Literature
 5. [Sports:
 - a. Participant: skateboarding: using modernist concrete for pomo flows
 - b. Spectator: retro-stadia vs heroic modernist concrete bowls]
- J. Responses in daily life (302-304)
 1. Cultivation of diversity
 2. Search for security
 - a. Place and social identity: risks exacerbating capitalist fragmentation
 - b. Place and quality: risks fitting into capital attraction game
- K. Geopolitical dangers (304-307)
 1. Aestheticization of politics (Harvey’s good old Being vs Becoming)
 2. Miscalculation under stress
- VII. Time and space in the postmodern cinema (308-325)

Part IV: The condition of postmodernity

- I. Postmodernity as a historical condition (327-328)
 - A. Crises bring aesthetic turn: explanations via autonomous culture:
 - B. Harvey’s Old Left allegiance
- II. Economics with mirrors (329-335)
 - A. Reagan as “teflon president”; “supply-side economics”
 - B. “Casino economy”:
 1. Production of debt and fictitious capital (credit)
 2. Cut back on social services: homelessness explodes
- III. Postmodernism as the mirror of mirrors (336-337)
- IV. Fordist modernism vs flexible postmodernism, or the interpenetration of opposed tendencies in capitalism as a whole (339-342)
 - A. But this is what all the great French philosophers always maintained
- V. The transformative and speculative logic of capital (343-345)
 - A. Speculation in both production and culture
 - B. Real subsumption: intensive commodification of cultural life
- VI. The work of art in an age of electronic reproduction and image banks (346-349)
- VII. Responses to time-space compression (350-352)
 - A. Shell-shocked silence
 - B. Over-simplification
 - C. Particularism
 - D. Celebration
- VIII. The crisis of historical materialism (353-355)
 - A. Old vs New Left
 - B. Pomo lessons for a new New Left
- IX. Cracks in the mirrors, fusions at the edges (356-359)