Summary of David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity*

Notes by **Patrick Mooney**

N.B. This chapter-by-chapter summary necessarily distorts Harvey's argument by de-nuancing it and stripping out most of Harvey's examples. (Excerpted quotes are provided in partial amelioration of this fault.) It is presented in the hope that it will be useful, but is not a substitute for a careful reading of Harvey's text, which is (in any case) highly enjoyable.

N.B. This summary is *very rough* and may even contain typos. A **prettier** version, with frames to allow for parallel readings, is also available; so are bibliographic entries in **Zotero RDF** and **BibTEX format**, which also contain these reading notes.

N.B. Thoughtful suggestions for improvement are more than welcome.

Summary

Part one: "The passage from modernity to postmodernity in contemporary culture"

Ch. 1 ("Introduction," pp. 3-9) examines major thematics considered to be "postmodern" and poses the basic question of the Enquiry: Is "postmodernism" simply another trendy fad from the art world, or does it indicate a real change in the mode of life experienced by real people? Major examples are Jonathan Raban's *Soft City* and the photographs of Cindy Sherman.

Ch. 2 ("Modernity and modernism," pp. 10-38) traces the "modernist" project back to its Enlightenment roots, bracketing the question of whether the worst excesses of 20th-century modernity were inevitable. Harvey's relation to modernity is apparently ambivalent: while one can appreciate the goals of the Enlightenment project in their historical context, the underside of the project of rationality, universality, and technologism has always had its critics, from Rousseau to Weber and Nietzsche. Harvey says that the Enlightenment project began to break down about 1848, producing cultural trends that are grouped together under the rubric "Modernism." 1910-1915 are a critical period in this development. This is partly due to the increasing class tensions in capitalist Europe in the mid-19th century, but also has to do with a specific change in the experience of space and time. Modernism's increasing tendency to mythologize found its outlets in the fascist movements and American consumerism no less than in T.S. Eliot or James Joyce.

Ch. 3 ("Postmodernism," pp. 39-65) describes the term as a reaction to those parts of the Enlightenment project still present in modernity; "postmodernism" rejects totalizing meta-language, meta-narrative, and meta-theory in favor of constructs such as Lyotard's

“language games” or Foucault's “power-discourse” formations. This rejection of totalizing narratives leads to an emphasis on the analysis of a plurality of resistances to power in radical though in place of Marx's meta-narrative of a revolution of the proletariat. Harvey also picks up on Lyotard's (somewhat implicit) argument that “postmodernism” as cultural phenomenon is grounded in a change in the social and technical conditions of life. Partly, this postmodern resistance to the meta-narrative of the proletarian revolution takes the form of doubt that Marx's “alienation” applies adequately to workers: if identity is fragmented (“schizoid,” as postmodern concerns with identity frequently assert), than it is doubtful that “alienation” can characterize them sufficiently to motivate class identity and revolutionary fervor (e.g., pp 53-4) Harvey goes on to analyze postmodern aesthetics as characterized by “depthlessness” and “reproduction” rather than “depth” and “original production.” Finally, differences in communicative forms (i.e. television) are analyzed as being both typical products of and shaping forces in the postmodern consciousness. Tied in with the inability to make overarching aesthetic or value judgments, the postmodern aesthetic has become more directly and explicitly tied to corporate interests as explicit investment -- both economically and as a way of legitimating the operations of big capital.

Ch. 4 (“Postmodernism in the city: architecture and urban design,” pp. 66-98) traces the effects of postmodernism on the conceptualization of space. For modernists, space is to be subordinated to larger social plans; for postmodernists, space is independent and autonomous. Postmodern criticisms of modernist urban planning center on the “anti-ecological,” rationalist, symbolically impoverished spaces constructed according to the demands of overarching demands for urban rationalization under the impetus of big capital. Harvey traces the origin of high modernist urban restructuring plans to the crisis after World War II. In Europe, the war had directly resulted in the destruction of large parts of many major cities; in the United States, newly affluent returning GIs were able to take advantage of a restructuring of urban space to accommodate the demands of corporations that had enriched themselves during the war. Capital's tendency is to reproduce itself, and the profits generated in World War II allowed for re-investment in infrastructures so that urban spaces could be rationalized. Harvey is here critical of postmodernist architecture/urban design and the discourse that surrounds it on several grounds: (1) Postmodern architecture fails to deliver on its promise of near-infinite variety, degenerating very quickly into “gentrification and … monotony” (77); (2) Postmodern urban planning is itself increasingly rationalized, and marginalizes the poor in new and increasingly oppressive ways; (3) the construction of “spectacular” spaces such as Baltimore's City Fair and San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf, masks the real conditions of urban life by presenting a sanitized version of civic identity; (4) Postmodern conceptions of space simply pander to the consumer demands created by other forms of discourse; this ultimately leads to representing “heritage sites” as history and “historical forms” in architecture as a series of meaningful “distinctions” that construct identity through consumer choice.

Ch. 5 (“Modernization,” pp. 99-112) traces the Marxian account of capitalist modernization. After a summary of Marx's commodity fetishism, he critiques postmodernism's thematic of “the impenetrability of the other” as simply “overt complicity with the fact of fetishism and of indifference towards underlying social meanings” (101). Harvey recapitulates much of Marx's argument about capital, tracing the possibility of profit back to the division and alienation of labor. Harvey here traces many contemporary features of capitalist production -- urban organization, the fluidity and ephemerality of corporate locations, the constant drive to increasingly rationalize production -- to these basic aspects of the capitalist mode of production. Harvey here also locates Marx within the tradition of modernity and the Enlightenment project (e.g., p. 111)

Ch. 6 (“POSTmodernISM or postMODERNism?,” pp. 113-118) provides a preliminary assessment of the postmodern condition: positive in its “concern for difference for the difficulties of communication, for the complexity and nuances of interests, cultures, places, and the like” (113), and useful as “mimetic of the social, economic, and political practices in society,” provided that it is accompanied by careful analysis (113-4).

However, it overstates its own importance and difference from previous cultural forms (114), and often critiques a straw-man version of modernity (115). Moreover, “postmodernism, with its emphasis upon the ephemerality of *jouissance*, its insistence upon the impenetrability of the other, its concentration on the text rather than the work, its penchant for deconstruction bordering on nihilism, its preference for aesthetics over ethics, takes matters … beyond the point where any coherent politics are left, while that wing of it that seeks a shameless accommodation with the market puts it firmly in the tracks of an entrepreneurial culture that is the hallmark of reactionary neoconservatism” (116).

Part two: “The political-economic transformation of late twentieth-century capitalism”

Ch. 7 (“Introduction,” pp. 121-124) broadly outlines the question of how fundamental the changes in the capitalist mode of production have been during the postmodern period. Despite fundamental changes in the form of social life, “we still live, in the West, in a society where production for profit remains the basic organizing principle of economic life” (121). Harvey nods at the general concerns in Althusser's “Ideology and the Ideological State Apparatus,” but looks at them more briefly and from an economic, rather than socio-psychological, viewpoint.

Ch. 8 (“Fordism,” pp. 125-140) initially defines “Fordism” in terms of two primary characteristics: not only the de-skilled, repetitive, rationalized industrial production associated with Taylor's methodologies, but also control over the “private” aspects of workers' lives that tends to produce the appropriate ideological stances conducive to the expansion of the then-current mode of capitalist production. Harvey traces the expansion of Fordist production processes from 1913 to 1973, noting that a variety of accommodations had to be made in the regime of accumulation for Fordism to spread outside of the United States as a common regime of accumulation. Two major problems were generally encountered in the spread of Fordism: (1) Fordism accelerates the alienation of labor already present under the capitalist mode of production; and (2) the relations between organized labor, corporate production, and state regulation had to be altered so as to work productively in a Keynesian regime. This relation was only achieved after 1945, resulting in an economic expansion that depended on (1) expanding industrial production; (2) increasing consumer demand by those producers who were able to occupy privileged labor positions; (3) financial systems being interlinked across markets; and (4) neoimperial (in Lenin's sense) appropriation of raw materials from underdeveloped countries. As Fordism was successfully exported, however, other countries increasingly became competing centers of Fordist production, rather than sources of raw materials and markets for products produced in the (previously) nearly unique countries that had fully integrated Fordist systems of production. The requirement of keeping demand for the output of industrial production processes high under these circumstances led to decreasing union power, lower rates of profit and wage increase, and increasing fracturing of labor relations as “privileged labor” was increasingly able to take advantage of the joys of mass consumption (especially when combined with existing inequalities based on gender, race, and ethnicity), leaving . (134-8) Centralized administration of benefits tended to produce cultural blandness, and third-world countries found themselves exploited and impoverished even as they were being promised the benefits of Fordism for participating in the global market.

Chapter 9 (“From Fordism to flexible accumulation,” pp. 141-172) describes the reorganization of the capitalist mode of production under a new regime of accumulation, “flexible accumulation.” Harvey traces the impetus for this change to accelerating tensions under the Fordist regime of accumulation, citing increased international competition for the major Fordist countries; rigidified relations between capital, government, and organized labor; decreasing production and profits, increasing inflation; and heightened social tension between those inside and outside privileged production jobs. Overall, the transition to flexible accumulation has several effects: the restructuring

of the labor market into more flexible forms, cutting away at traditionally well-compensated “core” jobs in favor of a “periphery” and “second periphery.” This has numerous advantages for capitalists: it becomes simpler to reduce employment during economically slack times (150-2) and allows for alternate arrangements of production, which reduce the possibility for labor to organize (153). Those production systems that remain Fordist in character have been increasingly transfered to markets where labor costs less and is less regulated. At the same time, a shift in employment from manufacturing to service has accelerated. Harvey, in summary, identifies four major increases in corporate business trends during the postmodern era: (1) mergers; (2) corporate diversification; (3) self-employment; and (4) outsourcing (158). The most important results of these multiple shifts in the mode of production are (1) increased access on up-to-the-minute information for making business decisions (159); and (2) the complete reorganization of the global system of finances, especially insofar as it is increasingly integrated (160-1). Major effects of the decreasing barriers in the global financial system have been the increasing tendency for fictitious capital to be created (“paper entrepreneurialism,” etc.) (163-4) and the decreasing power of nation-states (notably the U.S.) to regulate capital flows and processes (165-6). The net effect of these changes has been a rise in neoconservative political power (168-170) as governments struggle with yet another manifestation of capitalism's tendency to produce internal contradictions. Harvey suggests at the end of the chapter that the sense of life as “new … fleeting … ephemeral” underlying postmodernity maps onto the characteristics of capital flows during the postmodern period.

Chapter 10 (“Theorizing the transition,” pp. 173-188) begins with Harvey remarking on the confusion of economic theorists under the regime of flexible accumulation. Most economic theorists (including Marxists) seem to throw up their hands under the burden of attempting to deal with this mode of accumulation theoretically. Harvey surveys several overviews of “postmodern” economics and proposes an analysis based on terms from classical Marxism. Since flexible accumulation is still a form of capitalism, he argues, basic Marxian forms of analysis should provide a way of looking at the post-Fordist economy. Citing three elements of basic Marxist economic theory (“Capitalism is growth-oriented,” “Growth in real values rests on the exploitation of living labour in production,” and “Capitalism is necessarily technologically and organizationally dynamic”), he skims over Marx's argument that these basic conditions are contradictory, i.e. that capitalism is necessarily crisis-prone (180-1). Capitalist crises take the form of periodic overaccumulation, “a condition in which idle capital and idle labour supply … exist side by side with no apparent way to bring these idle resources together to accomplish socially useful tasks” (180). The classical Marxian responses to capitalistic crises (devaluation of commodities, productive capacity, or labor value; macro-economic control; absorption of overaccumulation through infrastructural re-investment -- “temporal or spatial displacement”) are examined, along with their negative consequences -- inevitably, to precipitate a new crisis of overaccumulation. In this context, Harvey argues that post-World War II Fordism was a response to the capitalistic crisis of the worldwide depression of the 1930s and 40s, and that this regime of accumulation successfully contained the inherent contradictions of the capitalist mode of production until approximately 1973, when the previously mentioned conditions precipitated a new crisis.

Chapter 11 (“Flexible accumulation - solid transformation or temporary fix?,” pp. 189-197) sketches the outlines of an evaluation of the stability of the new regime of flexible accumulation. Rejecting the extreme views that (1) the new regime is so radically different that current theoretical perspectives are completely unable to deal with it (189-90); and (2) discourse about the change to a flexible mode of accumulation is mere hype about surface changes that obscures the real solidarity of the working-class movements (190-1), Harvey argues that the technology of flexible accumulation is an increasingly hegemonic form of production that leads to real changes in the relations of capitalist production (191-4), including changes in the underlying possibilities of working-class consciousness (192). Pointing out similarities to past crises of capitalist accumulation, Harvey expresses doubts that the new regime of accumulation will be able to support itself under the increasing fluidity of forms of investment, creation of new forms of

fictitious capital, and burgeoning debt levels. He argues that if the flexible system of accumulation is to continue to contain the inherent contradictions of capitalism, it will likely be through the continuing expansion of credit and the continuing displacement of profits across spaces and into the future.

Part three: “The experience of space and time”

Ch. 12 (“Introduction,” pp. 201-210) presents an overview of the argument that the experience of modernity is bound up with a specific experience of space and time. Harvey argues that space and time are commonly “naturalized,” treated by people as if they were self-evident or obvious (201-3). Of course, this is an aspect of ideology, and masks the real social and psychological factors producing specific concepts of space and time. Time and space are produced through material processes and practices, Harvey argues, and because capitalism is a continuously revolutionary mode of production, it follows that it should revolutionize the production of space and time as well as material production (204-5). However, Harvey argues that time has typically been privileged over space in theory, and he proposes as reconceptualization of their relationship. Space becomes predominant in theory under certain social conditions, however, such as conditions of nationalistic feeling and/or war, particularly when space is mythologized. (208-9)

Ch. 13 (“Individual spaces and times in social life,” pp. 211-225) continues the argument by presenting an overview of twentieth-century theoretical approaches to these topics. Harvey synthesizes de Certeau's, Bourdieu's, Lefebvre's, and Foucault's concepts of space (among others), finding commonalities in the production of space through social practices and outlining a set of arguments about how spatial production occurs, largely after Lefebvre's three dimensions of space (“material and spatial practices,” “representations of space,” “spaces of representation”). This schematic emphasizes the mutually determinative character of Lefebvre's spatial dimensionality. Drawing on Georges Gurvitch's 1964 outline of the variety of ways that time is experienced socially, Harvey argues that neither space nor time can be understood outside the context of social action.

Ch. 14 (“Time and space as sources of social power,” pp. 226-239) traces some examples of this theoretical position by posing two basic questions: (1) How are the social processes that produce the “objective” qualities of space and time to be understood? and (2) How are spatial and temporal practices used and modified by these social practices? Harvey traces a connection between time, space, and money, arguing that money (as a measure of value) is based on time spent by a worker in production, and that the concept of time as value was discovered in the medieval period through the exploration of space. Thus, increasing reliance upon money as determinant of value alters concepts of space and time (226-8). Contrapositively, alterations in the production of space and time are advantageous to capitalists. (229) Harvey then traces examples of changes in production of time (230-2) and space (232-4) as capitalist strategies to increase profit by devaluing labor, and traces examples of capital-labor struggles in which control over space and/or time have been dominant issues (235-9).

Chapter 15 (“Time and space of the Enlightenment project,” pp. 240-259) traces the changes in the production of time and space from the medieval period through the Enlightenment. For medievals under feudalism, space was sensuous and direct, and individual locations were situated in an unknown, “weakly grasped” cosmology; medieval maps emphasize the sensory qualities of space rather than the rational and objective qualities (240-2). The Renaissance instituted a number of changes that affected the production of space -- artistic perspectivism; mathematical developments; rationalized, “objective” and “functional” mapping according to a Ptolemaic system; Newtonian optics. Rationalization and abstractification of time also occurred during this period due to the increased availability of mechanical timekeeping devices. (242-7) These changes in the production of time and space opened up theoretical possibilities for the domination of

space (via rationally planned social theories) and time (via an increased temporal sense regarding the possibilities of the future), especially for the nascent bourgeoisie. Because space and time encode and provide for the reproduction of social relations, changes in their representation imply changes in the sociopolitical order as well. (247-52) It is on this basis that modernist critiques of space and time become relevant. Harvey takes de Certeau's arguments as generally representative of the problems of Enlightenment space and time: insofar as the map is a “totalizing device,” it homogenizes and reifies the diverse forms of spatiality that are actually produced in the area that it represents. Moreover, it converts the real fluidity of experience in the represented area into a fixed representation, thereby doing violence to it, causing the alienation of the occupants of the space from the representation of it (252-3). Following Lefebvre, Harvey notes several problems with the strategy of conquering space through abstractification (cartographically) and fragmentation (by dividing it up into alienable land parcels): (1) principles of pulverization need to be established; (2) “production of space” is made into an explicit political-economic problem; (3) “abstraction” of space obscures the social relations that produced the concept of space in the first place; (4) “homogenized” space undercuts conceptions of “place”-as-meaningful location. Finally, and most importantly, (5) space can only be conquered by producing space-as-concept -- but there are inherent contradictions in this proposition. (255-9) The production of mechanisms to dominate space necessarily result in the production of new conceptions of space. Harvey argues that the experience of space and time throughout the post-medieval period is dominated by a phenomenon that he calls “time-space compression,” a fundamental tendency to revolutionize the production of time and space to the point that the representation of the world that we make to ourselves is fundamentally altered (240).

Chapter 16 (“Time-space compression and the rise of modernism as a cultural force,” pp. 260-283) traces the development of the modernist period to the mid-nineteenth century and the revolutions of 1848. Harvey argues that these revolutions were responses to the British depression of 1846-7, the first unequivocal crisis that can be assigned to capitalist overaccumulation. This crisis precipitated a new round of time-space compression, initially developing as a crisis in aesthetic representation of time (Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Zola, e.g.) that was itself a response to the respatialization accompanying technological advances (railway, telegraph, enhanced steamship travel) and the burgeoning age of imperialism that remapped the globe in terms of the spaces of domination of the advanced capitalist countries. (260-5) These new representations of time (and space) encountered another crisis of representation at the time of World War I, when increasing fragmentation (Fordist rationalization of production, simultaneous worldwide radio transmission, increasing market interdependence) produced new aesthetic responses constituting “high modernism” (Joyce, Proust, Stein, Picasso and other cubists) (266-70). Harvey argues that this set of new aesthetic responses encapsulated these changes in the mode of production (of goods and of culture), but resulted in tensions between interpretations based on nationalism/space/Being and interpretations based on internationalism/time/Becoming. One method of resolving these contradictions was the aestheticizing of politics, particularly through mythologicization. Ultimately, this culminated in the aetheticized, mythologizing politics of fascism, which represents modernism's inability to contain the contradictions (270-83) Postmodernism, for Harvey, is a response to these new rounds of contradictions.

Chapter 17 (“Time-space compression and the postmodern condition,” pp. 284-307) argues that the cultural phenomenon “postmodernity” is a response to the round of time-space compression associated with the transition from Fordist capitalism to the regime of flexible accumulation. Postmodern compression of time is associated with an acceleration in the turnover of capital (via credit, electronic and plastic money, etc.) and an acceleration in consumption. (285) The turnover of capital has largely been accelerated by increased volatility of fashion (in the broad sense of the word) and increased production of disposable products. The increase in disposability also affects basic social relationships (producing a “throwaway society”). (286) The increase in volatility produces a business climate in which long-range planning is increasingly difficult; methods of capitalist response to this phenomenon involve seeking very short-

range capital turnover or attempting to intervene actively in the production of volatility. Notably, the acceleration in consumption is also associated with the rise of *image* as a commodity produced by the capitalist, especially (but not exclusively) in the role that advertising plays in production and consumption. (287-8) This increased ability to produce images more or less at will is exemplified in the rise of personal image consultants and the production of class & other group identity on the basis of images. (288-9) The image, as commodity, entails special systems of production, including specialists producing it, and has a very rapid turnover time. One result of all of this increased volatility and turnover speed in the system has been to cause capitalists to attempt to buffer themselves against these factors through a variety of economic means (futures markets, government debt securitization, insurance schemes, etc.). All of this leads to deeper questions of identity for individuals living under this regime of accumulation, which explains the aesthetic concern with the search for identity and the revival of “basic institutions” (family, community, etc.) and emphasis on historical roots. (290-2) Spatial adjustments to this new regime of accumulation have also fundamentally altered the production of space. It costs substantially less to ship commodities widely, and some forms of communication, such as satellite telephone, not only collapse space entirely by making everyone equally distant but have no cost increase based on distance. Media presents all events as of equal ontological status regardless of their actual provenance. Ironically, the effect of the collapse of space has been an increased attention to the specific qualities of various places, especially as capital becomes increasingly mobile. Differences in labour markets, especially, are relevant as space collapses. (293-6) These changes in time and space are linked to changes in the representation of value via money, which is increasingly immaterial -- linked neither actual production nor to any material base -- and, since the collapse of the Bretton Woods system of international exchange, highly volatile. As money has become more volatile, so has inflation. (296-7) The increased rates of inflation have rendered money useless as a store of value for the future and led to more speculative forms of investment -- art, stock speculation, etc. Money's breakdown as symbol of value both reflects and reinforces the postmodern phenomenon of time-space compression, and this crisis in representation is affected by the rise of the image as commodity in the postmodern system of production. (299) This is exemplified by the changes in the distribution of commodities, which present post-1970 consumers with a vastly increased selection of commodities from across the globe, which Harvey analyzes by looking at food availability in markets and restaurants. This increased eclecticism in commodities feeds the postmodern sense of eclecticism in general, in which all options become equivalent consumer choices. (299-301) One implication of this change is an increase in the sense of place in the production of group identity, especially in the increase in 'identity politics,' as the sense of history collapses under the barrage of representations of 'history as commodity.' (303) This points toward one indication that our “mental maps” are lagging behind the material changes in the system of production: the collapse of history and emphasis on place provides a useful interpretive scheme for geopolitical events since the transition to flexible accumulation. (305-6)

Chapter 18 (“Time and space in the postmodern cinema,” pp.308-323) analyzes two films -- Ridley Scott's *Blade Runner* and Wim Wenders's *Himmel über Berlin* (called *Wings of Desire* in English translation), finding traces of postmodern time-space compression and its resulting changes in consciousness in the production of these films as cultural artifacts.

Part four: “The condition of postmodernity”

Ch. 19 (“Postmodernity as a historical condition,” pp. 326-327) recapitulates Harvey's argument so far: “postmodernity” as an aesthetic-cultural phenomenon is continuous with, not a radical break from, the conditions of Enlightenment and modernist thought. Moreover, it is explicable as the result of the changes in the capitalist system of production. Harvey proposes to survey some of the aspects of the postmodern condition in the short chapters of part IV.

Ch. 20 (“Economics with mirrors,” pp. 328-335) cites examples of Reagan's “trickle-down” theory, claiming that the discontinuity between Reagan's moral bankruptcy and his high approval rating show that postmodern politics are based on aesthetics, not ethics. Though the late modernist period showed that television savvy could influence election outcomes. Harvey traces the deployment of Reagan's image as a strategy to pursue a specific neoconservative political agenda (330-2), especially as a way of widening the class gap.

Ch. 21 (“Postmodernism as the mirror of mirrors,” pp. 336-337) ties the polemic against Reagan-era image-based politics in to the thematic concerns of postmodernism as a whole, arguing that postmodernism's reflexive rejection of any meta-narrative effectively precludes the possibility of addressing the underlying mechanisms of domination in “flexible accumulation” capitalism.

Ch. 22 (“Fordist modernism versus flexible postmodernism, or the interpenetration of opposed tendencies in capitalism as a whole,” pp. 338-342) revises table 1.1, based on Hassan's work, to show the differences between modernity and postmodernity in the context of the change from Fordist to flexible accumulation. Harvey suggests that the opposition between “modernism” and “postmodernism” expressed in the table “constitutes a structural description of the totality of political-economic and cultural-ideological relations within capitalism” (339). This, he suggests, provides a more complete descriptions of capitalism's working than simple adherence to one idea or the other, and notes that viewing the table this way lets us see “the categories of both modernism and postmodernism as static reifications imposed upon the fluid interpenetration of dynamic oppositions” (339). This, he says, is why Marx's *Capital* provide such a useful analysis of current economic-social conditions.

Ch. 23 (“The transformative and speculative logic of capital,” pp. 343-345) opens with a reminder that “capital is a process and not a thing” (343), reminding us that capital's goal is to reproduce itself and that this necessarily involves a reproduction (but also a constant transformation) of the social processes that are required to maintain it as the dominant mode of production. These social processes are what underlie and constitute cultural life. For Harvey, it is in the crises of accumulation that interventions are possible, because these crises of accumulation, by generating new ways of producing time and space, loosen the grip of the extant ideology and open up opportunities for new forms of cultural life to be produced.

Ch. 24 (“The work of art in an age of electronic reproduction and image banks,” 346-349) provides brief notes on the ability to archive and store contextless images, then retrieve them for mass dispersal. Harvey argues that, despite their democratizing appearance, the logic of capital still controls what can and cannot be done with these image stores. The mobilization of capital is evident, for instance, in the way that cultural producers are mobilized by capital to produce (market, circulate, package, transform) a continuing stream of spectacles for public consumption. Of course, this is precisely what opened up the possibility for German fascism to become such a powerful political force. (346-7) The expansion of the “middle class” to include cultural producers integrates artists and aesthetes into the dominative logic of capital by seducing them with visions of individual freedom within the capitalist regime, and therefore fractures possibilities for class consciousness. As postmodern capitalism is increasingly a regime of accumulation that produces images and symbols, and thereby produces space and time, this is a particularly canny move for capital to make.

Ch. 25 (“Responses to time-space compression,” pp. 350-352) examines various theoretical responses to that phenomenon. Deconstructionism, Harvey argues, has value insofar as it promotes analysis of hidden presuppositions and simplifications, but the reflexive rejection of all narratives and metatheories into language games or “a rubble of signifiers” “produced a condition of nihilism that prepared the ground for the re-emergence of a charismatic politics and even more simplistic propositions than those which were deconstructed.” (350) A second response is a simplification of the

“complexity of the world” to “highly simplified rhetorical propositions,” including slogans and “depthless images.” Harvey also acknowledges a middle-of-the-road postmodernism “which spurns grand narrative but which does cultivate the possibility of limited action.” Dubbing this “progressive postmodernism,” he acknowledges its positive contributions (visions of other possible worlds and grounds for acting on them, but says that “it is hard to stop the slide into parochialism, myopia, and self-referentiality in the face of the universalizing force of capital circulation.” Harvey does praise the attempts to find new forms of representation that adequately address these new conditions of time, space, and money, mentioning Baudrillard and Virilio in this context but claiming that this branch of postmodern thought, too, sometimes tends to degenerate into “the most alarming irresponsibility” (351).

Ch. 26 (“The crisis of historical materialism,” pp. 353-355) analyzes the cultural phenomenon of the left's theoretical difficulties with postmodernism. For Harvey, the New Left of the 1960s, which provided a political basis for the cultural shift towards postmodernism, was more closely aligned with libertarianism and anarchism than with traditional “orthodox” Marxism. Though the New Left was, in his opinion, justified in its concern with “race and gender issues, of difference, and of the problems of colonized peoples and repressed minorities, of ecological and aesthetic issues,” it “tended to abandon its faith both in the proletariat as an instrument of progressive change and in historical materialism as a mode of analysis” (354), which left it without a coherent theoretical framework. Harvey argues that the rejection of “orthodox” Marxism was “both necessary and positive” because new theoretical groundings were needed for dialectical materialism. Harvey lists several basic and fundamental shifts that were necessary in Marxist thought, including a recognition of “otherness” as a fundamental category (and not something to be grafted onto class as a subsidiary consideration), a broader recognition of the cultural significance of images and discourses, and the reformulation of Marxism as “historical-geographical materialism,” which is to be understood as open-ended and dialectical rather than a canonical set of fixed theory. (355)

Ch. 27 (“Cracks in the mirrors, fusions at the edges,” pp. 356-359) points toward signs that postmodernist thought as a dominant interpretive regime is (as of 1990, the time of its writing) becoming passé. Harvey argues that further crises of capitalist accumulation are immanent and that, at the same time, deconstructivist thought is revealing its own set of contractions, particularly in its response to accusations of anti-Semitism and neo-fascism. (357)

Selected quotations

Part one: “The passage from modernity to postmodernity in contemporary culture”

“To the degree that it does try to legitimate itself by reference to the past, therefore, postmodernism typically harks back to that wing of thought, Nietzsche in particular, that emphasizes the deep chaos of modern life and its intractability before rational thought. This does not imply, however, that postmodernism is simply a version of modernism; real revolutions in sensibility can occur when latent and dominated ideas in one period become explicit and dominant in another.” (44)

“Whereas the modernists see space as something to be shaped for social purposes and therefore always subservient to the construction of a social project, the postmodernists see space as something independent and autonomous, to be shaped according to aesthetic aims and principles which have nothing necessary to do with any overarching social objective, save, perhaps, the achievement of timeless and 'disinterested' beauty as an objective in itself.” (66)

“How a city looks and how its spaces are organized forms a material base upon which a range of possible sensations and social practices can be thought about, evaluated, and achieved.” (66-7)

“It has, unfortunately, proved impossible to separate postmodernism's penchant for historical quotation and populism from the simple task of catering, if not pandering, to nostalgic impulses.” (87)

“Postmodern concerns for the signifier rather than the signified, the medium (money) rather than the message (social labour), the emphasis on fiction rather than function, on signs rather than things, on aesthetics rather than ethics, suggest a reinforcement rather than a transformation of the role of money as Marx depicts it.” (102)

“Capitalism did not invent 'the other' but it certainly made use of and promoted it in highly structured ways.” (104)

“Capitalism, in short, is a social system internalizing rules that ensure it will remain a permanently revolutionary and disruptive force in its own world history. If, therefore, 'the only secure thing about modernity is insecurity,' then it is not hard to see from where that insecurity derives.” (107)

“What Marx depicts, therefore, are social processes at work under capitalism conducive to individualism, alienation, fragmentation, ephemerality, innovation, creative destruction, speculative development, unpredictable shifts in methods of production and consumption (wants and needs), a shifting experience of space and time, as well as a crisis-ridden dynamic of social change. If these conditions of capitalist modernization form the material context out of which both modernist and postmodernist thinkers and cultural producers forge their aesthetic sensibilities, principles, and practices, it seems reasonable to conclude that the turn to postmodernism does not reflect any fundamental *change* of social condition. The rise of postmodernism either represents a departure (if such there is) in ways of thinking about what could or should be done about that social condition, or else (and this is the proposition we explore in considerable depth in Part II) it reflects a shift in the way in which capitalism is working these days. In either case, Marx's account of capitalism, if correct, provides us with a very solid basis for thinking about the general relations between modernization, modernity, and the aesthetic movements that draw their energies from such conditions.” (111-2; emphasis in original)

“It is equally wrong to write off the material achievements of modernist practices so easily. Modernists found a way to control and contain an explosive capitalist condition. They were effective for example, in the organization of urban life and the capacity to build space in such a way as to contain the intersecting processes that have made for a rapid urban change in twentieth-century capitalism. If there is a crisis implicit in all of that, it is by no means clear that it is the modernists, rather than the capitalists, who are to blame.” (115)

“But postmodernism, with its emphasis upon the ephemerality of *jouissance*, its insistence upon the impenetrability of the other, its concentration on the text rather than the work, its penchant for deconstruction bordering on nihilism, its preference for aesthetics over ethics, takes matters too far. It takes them beyond the point where any coherent politics are left, while that wing of it that seeks a shameless accommodation with the market puts it firmly in the tracks of an entrepreneurial culture that is the hallmark of reactionary neoconservatism. Postmodernist philosophers tell us not only to accept but even to revel in the fragmentations and the cacophony of voices through which the dilemmas of the modern world are understood. Obsessed with deconstructing and delegitimating every form of argument they encounter, they can end only in condemning their own validity claims to the point where nothing remains of any basis for reasoned action. Postmodernism has us accepting the reifications and partitionings, actually celebrating the activity of masking and cover-up, all the fetishisms of locality, place, or social grouping, which denying that kind of meta-theory which can grasp the

political-economic processes (money flows, international divisions of labour, financial markets, and the like) that are becoming ever more universalizing in their depth, intensity, reach and power over daily life." (116-7)

"If both modernity and postmodernity derive their aesthetic from some kind of struggle with the *fact* of fragmentation, ephemerality, and chaotic flux, it is, I would suggest, very important to establish why such a fact should have been so pervasive an aspect of modern experience for so long a period of time, and why the intensity of that experience seems to have picked up so powerfully since 1970." (117-8)

Part two: "The political-economic transformation of late twentieth-century capitalism"

"Signs and tokens of radical changes in labour processes, in consumer habits, in geographical and geopolitical configurations, in state powers and practices, and the like, abound. Yet we still live, in the West, in a society where production for profit remains the basic organizing principle of economic life. We need some way, therefore, to represent all the shifting and churning that has gone on since the first major post-war recession of 1973, which does not lose sight of the fact that the basic rules of a capitalist mode of production continue to operate as invariant shaping forces in historical-geographical development." (121)

"What was special about Ford (and what ultimately separates Fordism from Taylorism), was his vision, his explicit recognition that mass production meant mass consumption, a new system of the reproduction of labour power, a new politics of labour control and management, a new aesthetics and psychology, in short, a new kind of rationalized, modernist, and populist democratic society." (125-6)

"In the United States, for example, the unions won considerable power in the sphere of collective bargaining in the mass-production industries of the Midwest and North East, preserved some shop-floor control over job specifications, security and promotions, and wielded an important (though never determinant) political power over such matters as social security benefits, the minimum wage, and other facets of social policy. But they acquired and maintained these rights in return for adopting a collaborative stance with respect to Fordist production techniques and cognate corporate strategies to increase productivity." (133)

"The perpetual problem of habituating the worker to such routinized, de-skilled and degraded systems of work, as Braverman (1974) forcefully argues, can never be completely overcome. Nevertheless, bureaucratized trade union organizations were increasingly corralled (sometimes through the exercise of repressive state power) into the corner of swapping real wage gains for co-operation in disciplining workers to the Fordist production system." (134)

"The unions also found themselves increasingly under attack from the outside, from excluded minorities, women and the underprivileged. To the degree they served their members' narrow interests and dropped more radical socialist concerns, they were in danger of being reduced in the public eye to fragmented special-interest groups pursuing self-serving rather than general aims." (138)

"At the very minimum the state had to try and guarantee some kind of adequate social wage for all, or to engage in redistributive policies or relative impoverishment and lack of inclusion of minorities. Increasingly, the legitimation of state power depended on the ability to spread the benefits of Fordism over all and to find ways to deliver adequate health care, housing and educational services on a massive scale but in a humane and caring way." (139)

"In spite of all the discontents and all the manifest tensions, the centrepieces of the Fordist regime held firm at least until 1973, and in the process did indeed manage to

keep a postwar boom intact that favoured unionized labour, and to some degree spread that 'benefits' of mass production and consumption even further afield. Material living standards rose for the mass of the population in the advanced capitalist countries, and a relatively stable environment for corporate profits prevailed." (140)

"In retrospect, it seems there were signs of serious problems within Fordism as early as the mid-1960s. By then, the West European and Japanese recoveries were complete, their internal market saturated, and the drive to create export markets for their surplus output had to begin (figure 2.3). And this occurred at the very moment when the success of Fordist rationalization meant the relative displacement of more and more workers from manufacturing. The consequent slackening of effective demand was offset in the United States by the war on poverty and the war in Vietnam." (141)

"More generally, the period from 1965 to 1973 was one in which the inability of Fordism and Keynesianism to contain the inherent contradictions of capitalism became more and more apparent." (142)

"The only tool of flexible response lay in monetary policy, in the capacity to print money at whatever rate appeared necessary to keep the economy stable. And so began the inflationary wave that was eventually to sink the postwar boom." (142)

"These enhanced powers of flexibility and mobility have allowed employers to exert stronger pressures of labour control on a workforce in any case weakened by two savage bouts of deflation, that saw unemployment rise to unprecedented postwar levels in advanced capitalist countries (save, perhaps, Japan)." (147)

"Such flexible employment arrangements do not by themselves engender strong worker dissatisfaction, since flexibility can sometimes be mutually beneficial. But the aggregate effects, when looked at from the standpoint of insurance coverage and pension rights, as well as wage levels and job security, by no means appear positive from the standpoint of the working population as a whole." (151)

"While it is true that the declining significance of union power has reduced the singular power of white male workers in monopoly sector markets, it does not follow that those excluded from those labour markets, such as blacks, women, ethnic minorities of all kids, have achieved sudden parity (except in the sense that many traditionally privileged white male workers have been marginalized alongside them." (152)

"Working-class forms of organization (such as the trade unions), for example, depended heavily upon the massing of workers within the factory for their viability, and find it peculiarly difficult to gain any purchase within family and domestic labour systems." (153)

"What is most interesting about the current situation is the way in which capitalism is becoming ever more tightly organized *through* dispersal, geographical mobility, and flexible responses in labour markets, labour processes, and consumer markets, all accompanied by hefty doses of institutional, product, and technological innovation." (159)

"The 'merger and takeover mania' of the 1980s was part and parcel of this emphasis upon paper entrepreneurialism, for although there were some instances where such activities could indeed be justified in terms of rationalization or diversification of corporate interests, the thrust was more often than not to gain paper profits without troubling with actual production." (163)

"The electoral victories of Thatcher (1979) and Reagan (1980) are often viewed as a distinctive rupture in the politics of the postwar period. I understand them more as consolidations of what was already under way throughout much of the 1970s. The crisis of 1973-5 was in part born out of a confrontation with the accumulated rigidities of government policies and practices built up during the Fordist-Keynesian period. Keynesian policies had appeared inflationary as entitlements grew and fiscal capacities

stagnated. Since it had always been part of the Fordist political consensus that redistributions should be funded out of growth, slackening growth inevitably meant trouble for the welfare state and the social wage." (166-7)

"If the language of the regulation school has survived better than most, it is, I suspect, because of its rather more pragmatic orientation. There is, within the regulation school, little or no attempt to provide any detailed understanding of the mechanisms and logic of transitions. This, it seems to me, is a serious lack." (177-9)

"The Marxist argument is, then, that the tendency towards overaccumulation can never be eliminated under capitalism. It is a neverending and eternal problem for any capitalist mode of production." (181)

"The revival of the sweatshops in New York and Los Angeles, of home work and 'telecommuting', as well as the burgeoning growth of informal sector labour practices throughout the advanced capitalist world, does indeed represent a rather sobering vision of capitalism's supposedly progressive history." (187)

"Eclecticism in labour practices seem [sic] almost as marked in these times as the eclecticism of postmodern philosophies and tastes." (187)

"I do not, therefore, see the neo-conservative monetarism that attaches to flexible modes of accumulation and the overall devaluation of labour power through enhanced labour control as offering even a short-term solution to the crisis-tendencies of capitalism. The budget deficit of the United States has, I think, been very important to the stabilization of capitalism these last few years, and if that proves unsustainable, then the path of capitalist accumulation world-wide will be rocky indeed." (192)

Part three: "The experience of space and time"

"Space and time are basic categories of human existence. Yet we rarely debate their meanings; we tend to take them for granted, and give them common-sense or self-evident attributions." (201)

"I think it important to challenge the idea of a single and objective sense of time or space, against which we can measure the diversity of human conceptions and perceptions. […] It is, however, by no means necessary to subordinate all objective conceptions of time and space to this particular physical conception, since it, also, is a construct that rests upon a particular version of the constitution of matter and the origin of the universe." (203)

"The objectivity of time and space is given in each case by the material practices of social reproduction, and to the degree that these latter vary geographically and historically, so we find that social time and social space are differentially constructed. […] Since capitalism has been (and continues to be3) a revolutionary mode of production in which the material practices and processes of social reproduction are always changing, it follows that the objective qualities as well as the meanings of space and time also change. On the other hand, if advance of knowledge (scientific, technical, administrative, bureaucratic, and rational) is vital to the progress of capitalist production and consumption, then changes in our conceptual apparatus (including representations of space and time) can have material consequences for the ordering of daily life." (204)

"How adequate are such modes of thought and such conceptions in the face of the flow of human experience and strong processes of social change? On the other side of the coin, how can spatializations in general, and aesthetic practices in particular, represent flux and change, particularly if these latter are held essential truths to be conveyed?" (206)

“The combination of film and music provides a powerful antidote to the spatial passivity of art and architecture. yet the very confinement of the film to a depthless screen and a theatre is a reminder that it, too, is space-bound in some curious ways.” (207)

“The common-sense notion that 'there is a time and a place for everything' gets carried into a set of prescriptions which replicate the social order by assigning social meanings to spaces and times.” (214)

“The organized spatio-temporal rhythms of capitalism provide abundant opportunities for socialization of individuals to distinctive roles.” (216)

“Being, suffused with immemorial spatial memory, transcends Becoming. It founds all those nostalgic memories of a lost childhood world. Is this the foundation for collective memory, for all those manifestations of place-bound nostalgias that infect our images of the country and the city, of region, milieu, and locality, of neighbourhood and community? And if it is true that time is always memorialized not as flow, but as memories of experienced places and spaces, then history must indeed give way to poetry, time to space, as the fundamental material of social expression. The spatial image (particularly the evidence of the photograph) then asserts an important power over history.” (218)

“The grid of spatial practices can tell us nothing important by itself. To suppose so would be to accept the idea that there is some universal spatial language independent of social practices. Spatial practices derive their efficacy in social life only through the structure of social relations within which they come into play. Under the social relations of capitalism, for example, the spatial practices portrayed in the grid become imbued with class meanings. To put it this way is not, however, to argue that spatial practices are derivative of capitalism. They take on their meanings under specific social relations of class, gender, community, ethnicity, or race and get 'used up' or 'worked over' the course of social action.” (223)

“[Gurvitch's schematic of the ways in which people experience time] inverts the proposition that there is a time for everything and proposes that we think, instead, of every social relation containing its own sense of time.” (223)

“It is a fundamental axiom of my enquiry that time and space (or language, for that matter) cannot be understood independently of social action.” (223-5)

“Money measures value, but if we ask what constitutes value in the first instance, we find it impossible to define value without saying something about how the time of social labour is allocated.” (227)

“Ironically, the explorations of the calendar and time measurement that had been promoted by the monastic orders in order to impose religious discipline were appropriated by the nascent bourgeoisie as a means to organize and discipline the populations of mediaeval towns to a new-found and very secular labour discipline.” (228)

“The general effect, then, is for capitalist modernization to be very much about speed-up and acceleration in the pace of economic processes and, hence, in social life. But that trend is discontinuous, punctuated by periodic crises, because fixed investments in plant and machinery, as well as in organizational forms and labour skills, cannot easily be changed.” (230)

“The Renaissance separated scientific and supposedly factual sense of time and space from the more fluid conceptions that might arise experientially.” (244)

“The extraordinary strength of spatial and temporal imagery in the English literature of the Renaissance likewise testifies to the impact of this new sense of space and time on literary modes of representation. The language of Shakespeare, or of poets like John Donne and Andrew Marvell, is rife with such imagery.” (247)

“If spatial and temporal experiences are primary vehicles for the coding and reproduction of social relations (as Bourdieu suggests), then a change in the way the former get represented will almost certainly generate some kind of shift in the latter.” (247)

“Enlightenment thinkers similarly looked to command over the future through powers of scientific prediction, through social engineering and rational planning, and the institutionalization of rational systems of social regulation and control. They in effect appropriated and pushed Renaissance conceptions of space and time to their limit in the search to construct a new, more democratic, healthier, and more affluent society. […] Maps, stripped of all elements of fantasy and religious belief, as well as of any sign of the experiences involved in their production, had become abstract and strictly functional systems for the factual ordering of phenomena in space. […] They also allowed the whole population of the earth, for the first time in human history, to be located within a single spatial frame.” (249-50)

“By treating certain idealized conceptions of space and time as real, Enlightenment thinkers ran the danger of confining the free flow of human experience and practice to rationalized configurations.” (253)

“The conquest and control of space, for example, first requires that it be conceived of as something usable, malleable, and therefore capable of domination through human action. Perspectivism and mathematical mapping did this by conceiving of space as abstract, homogeneous,and universal in its qualities, a framework of thought and action which was stable and knowable.” (254)

“Time-space compression is a sign of the intensity of forces at work at this nexus of contradiction and it may ell be that crises of overaccumulation as well as crises in cultural and political forms are powerfully connected to such forces.” (258)

“All Enlightenment projects had in common a relatively unified common-sense of what space and time were about and why their rational ordering was important. This common basis in part depended on the popular availability of watches and clocks, and on the capacity to diffuse cartographic knowledge by cheaper and more efficient printing techniques. But it also rested upon the link between Renaissance perspectivism and a conception of the individual as the ultimate source and container of social power, albeit assimilated within the nation state as a collective system of authority.” (258-9)

“The thesis I want to explore here, however, is that the crisis of 1847-8 created a crisis of representation, and that this latter crisis itself derived from a radical readjustment in the sense of time and space in economic, political, and cultural life. Before 1848, progressive elements within the bourgeoisie could reasonably hold to the Enlightenment sense of time ('time pressing forward', as Gurvitch would put it), recognizing that they were fighting a battle against the 'enduring' and ecological time of traditional societies and the 'retarded time' of recalcitrant forms of social organization. But after 1848, that progressive sense of time was called into question in many important respects.” (260-1)

“Events proved that Europe had achieved a level of spatial integration in its economic and financial life that was to make the whole continent vulnerable to simultaneous crisis formation. The political revolutions that erupted at once across the continent emphasized the synchronic as well as the diachronic dimensions to capitalist development.” (261)

“Nationalist workers could exhibit xenophobia in Paris yet sympathize with Polish or Viennese workers struggling, like them, for political and economic emancipation in their particular spaces.” (262)

“It was only after 1850, after all, that stock and capital markets (markets for 'fictitious capital') were systematically organized and opened to general participation under legal rules of incorporation and market contract.” (262)

“Even though, for example, excessive speculation in railroad construction triggered the first European-wide crisis of overaccumulation, the resolution to that crisis after 1850 rested heavily upon further exploration of temporal and spatial displacement.” (264)

“The map of domination of the world's spaces changed out of all recognition between 1850 and 1914. Yet it was possible, given the flow of information and new techniques of representation, to sample a wide range of simultaneous imperial adventures and conflicts with a mere glance at the morning newspaper.” (264)

“Ford, we recall, set up his assembly line in 1913. He fragmented tasks and distributed them in space so as to maximize efficiency and minimize the friction of flow in production. In effect, he used a certain form of spatial organization to accelerate the turnover time of capital in production. Time could then be accelerated (speed-up) by virtue of the control established through organizing and fragmenting the spatial order of production. In that very same year, however, the first radio signal was beamed around the world from the Eiffel tower, thus emphasizing the capacity to collapse space into the simultaneity of an instant in universal public time.” (266)

“Public time was becoming ever more homogeneous and universal across space.” (266-7)

“By enhancing links between place and the social sense of personal and communal identity, this facet of modernism was bound, to some degree, to entail the aestheticization of local, regional, or nation politics. Loyalties to place then take precedence over loyalties to class, spatializing political action.” (273)

“It is, therefore, a readily understandable paradox that in an age when the annihilation of space through time was proceeding at a furious pace, geopolitics and the aestheticization of politics underwent a strong revival.” (273)

“While modernism always ostensibly asserted the values of internationalism and universalism, it could never properly settle its account with parochialism and nationalism. It either defined itself in opposition to these all too familiar forces (strongly identified, though by no means exclusively so, with the so-called middle classes') or else it took the elitist and ethnocentric road by presuming that Paris, Berlin, New York, London, or wherever, was indeed the intellectual fount of all representational and aesthetic wisdom.” (276)

“This deployment of art in the shaping of space to create a real sense of community was, to Sitte, the only possible response to modernity. […] needing a new ideal 'beside and above the real world,' Sitte 'exalted Richard Wagner as the genius who recognized this redemptive, future-oriented work as the special task of the artist. The world that the rootless seeker of science and trade destroyed, leaving the suffering Volk without a vital myth to live by, the artist must create anew.” (276) [quoting Schorske's *Fin-de-siècle Vienna: Politics and culture*]

“The dramatic spectacles of the sort the Nazis organized certainly brought space alive and managed to appeal to a deep mythology of place, symbolizing 'community,' but community of a most reactionary sort. under conditions of mass unemployment, the collapse of spatial barriers, and the subsequent vulnerability of place and community to space and capital, it was all too easy to play upon sentiments of the most fanatical localism and nationalism. I am not even indirectly blaming Sitte or his ideas for this history. But I do think it important to recognize the potential connection between projects to shape space and encourage spatial practices of the sort that Sitte advocated, and political projects that can be at best conserving and at worst downright reactionary in their implications.” (277)

“Newspapers fed popular anger, swift military mobilizations were set in motion, thus contributing to the frenzy of diplomatic activity that broke down simply because enough

decisions could not be made fast enough in enough locations to bring the warlike stresses under collective control. Global war was the result. It seemed, to both Gertrude Stein and Picasso, a *cubist* war and was fought on so many fronts and in so many spaces that the denotation appears reasonable even on a global scale." (278)

"The heroic modernists sought to show how the accelerations, fragmentations, and imploding centralization (particularly in urban life) could be represented and thereby contained within a singlular image." (279-80)

"If modernism meant, among other things, the subjugation of space to human purposes, then the rational ordering and control of space as part and parcel of a modern culture founded on rationality and technique, the suppression of spatial barriers and difference, had to be merged with some kind of historical project." (280)

"As spatializations, the artefacts produced by the moderns (with exceptions, of course, such as the Dadaists) conveyed some permanent if not monumental sense of supposedly universal human values. But even Le Corbusier recognized that such an act had to invoke the power of myth. And here the real tragedy of modernism begins. Because it was not the myths favoured by le Corbusier or Otto Wagner or Walter Gropius that in the end dominated matters. It was either the worship of Mammon or, worse still, the myths stirred up by an aestheticized politics that called the tune. Le Corbusier flirted with Mussolini and compromised with Pétain's France, Oscar Niemeyer planned Brasilia for a popular president but built it for ruthless generals, the insights of the Bauhaus were mobilized into the design of the death camps, and the rule that form follows profit as well as function dominated everywhere. […] Its insights, tragically, were absorbed for purposes that were not, by and large, its own" (281-2)

"The opposition between Being and Becoming has been central to modernism's history. That opposition has to be seen in political terms as a tension between the sense of time and the focus of space. […] Even under conditions of widespread class revolt, the dialectic of Being and Becoming has posed seemingly intractable problems. Above all, the changing meaning of space and time which capitalism has itself wrought, as forced perpetual re-evaluations in representations of the world in cultural life. It was only in an era of speculation on the future and fictitious capital formation that the concept of an avant-garde (both artistic and political) could make any sense." (283)

"Indeed, learning to play the volatility right is now just as important as accelerating turnover time. This means either being highly adaptable and fast-moving in response to market shifts, or masterminding the volatility. The first strategy points mainly towards short-term rather than long-term planning, and cultivating the art of taking short-term gains wherever they are to be had. This has been a notorious feature of US management in recent times. […] Mastering or intervening actively in the production of volatility, on the other hand, entails manipulation of taste and opinion, either through being a fashion leader or by so saturating the market with images as to shape the volatility to particular ends." (287)

"Advertising and media images (as we saw in Part I) have come to play a very much more integrative role in cultural practices and now assume a much greater importance in the growth dynamics of capitalism. Advertising, moreover, is no longer built around the idea of informing or promoting in the ordinary sense, but is increasingly geared to manipulating desires and tastes through images that may or may not have anything to do with the product to be sold." (287)

"Images have in a sense, themselves become commodities. This phenomenon has led Baudrillard (1981) to argue that Marx's analysis of commodity production is outdated because capitalism is now predominantly concerned with the production of signs, images, and sign systems rather than with commodities themselves. The transition he points to is important, though there are in fact no serious difficulties in extending Marx's theory of commodity production to cope with it." (287)

“The acquisition of an image) by the purchase of a sign system such as designer clothes and the right car) becomes a singularly important element in the presentation of self in labour markets and, by extension, becomes integral to the quest for individual identity, self-realization, and meaning.” (288)

“Insofar as identity is increasingly dependent upon images, this means that the serial and recursive replications of identities (individual, corporate, institutional, and political) becomes a very real possibility and problem.” (289)

“The home becomes a private museum to guard against the ravages of time-space compression. At the very time, furthermore, that postmodernism proclaims the 'death of the author' and the rise of anti-auratic art in the public realm, the art market becomes ever more conscious of the monopoly power of the artist's signature and of questions of authenticity and forgery (no matter that the Rauschenberg is itself a mere reproduction montage). It is, perhaps, appropriate that the postmodernist developer building, as solid as the pink granite of Philip Johnson's AT&T building, should be debt-financed, built on the basis of fictitious capital, and architecturally conceived of, at least on the outside, more in the spirit of fiction than of function.” (292)

“Heightened competition under conditions of crisis has coerced capitalists into paying much closer attention to relative locational advantages, precisely because diminishing spatial barriers give capitalists the power to exploit minute spatial differentiations to good effect. Small differences in what the space contains in the way of labour supplies, resources, infrastructures, and the like become of increased significance. Superior command over space becomes an even more important weapon in class struggle.” (293-4)

“If capitalists become increasingly sensitive to the spatially differentiated qualities of which the world's geography is composed, then it is possible for the peoples and powers that command those spaces to alter them in such a way as to be more rather than less attractive to highly mobile capital.” (295)

“The question of which currency I hold is directly linked to which place I put my faith in. That may have something to do with the competitive economic position and power of different national systems. That power, given the flexibility of accumulation over space, is itself a rapidly shifting magnitude. The effect is to render the spaces that underpin the determination of value as unstable as value itself. This problem is compounded by the way that speculative shits bypass actual economic power and performance, and then trigger self-fulfilling expectations. The de-linking of the financial system from active production and from any material monetary base calls into question the reliability of the basic mechanism whereby value is supposed to be represented.” (297)

“A strong sense of 'the Other' is replaced, he [I. Chambers] suggests, by a weak sense of 'the others.'” (301)

“Disruptive spatiality triumphs over the coherence of perspective and narrative in postmodern fiction, in exactly the same way that imported beers coexist with local brews, local employment collapses under the weight of foreign competition, and all the divergent spaces of the world are assembled nightly as a collage of images upon the television screen.” (302)

“Whereas modernism looked upon the spaces of the city, for example, as 'an epiphenomenon of social functions,' postmodernism 'tends to disengage urban space from its dependence on functions, and to see it as an autonomous formal system' incorporating 'rhetorical and artistic strategies', which are independent of any simple historical determinism (Calquhoun, 1985).” (304)

“This should alert us to the acute geopolitical dangers that attach to the rapidity of time-space compression in recent years. The transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation,

such as it has been, ought to imply a transition in our mental maps, political attitudes, and political institutions. But political thinking does not necessarily undergo such easy transformations, and is in any case subject to the contradictory pressures that derive from spatial integration and differentiation. There is an omni-present danger that our mental maps will not match current realities. The serious diminution of the power of individual nation states over fiscal and monetary policies, for example, has not been matched by any parallel shift towards an internationalization of politics. Indeed, there are abundant signs that localism and nationalism have become stronger precisely because of the quest for the security that place always offers in the midst of all the shifting that flexible accumulation implies. The resurgence of geopolitics and of faith in charismatic politics (Thatcher's Falklands War, Reagan's invasion of Grenada) fits only too well with a world that is increasingly nourished intellectually and politically by a vast flux of ephemeral images." (305-6)

"The problems are not confined to the realms of political and military decision-making, for the world's financial markets are on the boil in ways that make a snap judgement here, an unconsidered word there, and a gut reaction somewhere else the slip that can unravel the whole skein of fictitious capital formation and of interdependency." (306)

"By putting this condition into its historical context, as part of a history of successive waves of time-space compression generated out of the pressures of capital accumulation with its perpetual search to annihilate space through time and reduce turnover time, we can at least pull the condition of postmodernity into the range of a condition accessible to historical materialist analysis and interpretation." (306-7)

"She [Rachel] escapes the schizoid world of replicant time and intensity to enter the symbolic world of Freud." (312)

"The depressing side of the film is precisely that, in the end, the difference between the replicant and the human becomes so unrecognizable that they can indeed fall in love (once both get on the same time scale). The power of the simulacrum is everywhere. […] While Tyrell's eyes are indeed torn out during his killing, this is an individual rather than a class act of rage. The finale of the film is a scene of sheer escapism (tolerated, it should be noted, by the authorities) that leaves unchanged the plight of replicants as well as the dismal conditions of the seething mass of humanity that inhabits the derelict streets of a decrepit, deindustrialized, and decaying postmodernist world." (313-4)

"Brilliant portrayals though both films are of the conditions of postmodernity, and in particular of the conflictual and confusing experience of space and time, neither has the power to overturn established ways of seeing or transcend the conflictual conditions of the moment." (322)

"Cinema is, after all, the supreme maker and manipulator of images, for commercial purposes, and the very act of using it well always entails reducing the complex stories of daily life to a sequence of images upon a depthless screen. The idea of a revolutionary cinema has always run aground on the rocks of exactly this difficulty." (323)

Part four: "The condition of postmodernity"

"Aesthetic and cultural practices are peculiarly susceptible to the changing experience of space and time precisely because they entail the construction of spatial representations and artefacts out of the flow of human experience. They always broker between Being and Becoming." (326)

"It is possible to write the historical geography of the experience of space and time in social life, and to understand the transformations that both have undergone, by reference to material and social conditions. Part III proposed an historical sketch of how that might be done with respect to the post-Renaissance Western world. The dimensions of space and time have there been subject to the persistent pressure of capital circulation and

accumulation, culminating (particularly during the periodic crises of overaccumulation that have arisen since the mid-nineteenth century) in disconcerting and disruptive bouts of time-space compression." (326)

"Since phases of time-space compression are disruptive, we can expect the turn to aesthetics and to the forces of culture as both explanations and *loci* of active struggle to be particularly acute at such moments. Since crises of overaccumulation typically spark the search for spatial and temporal resolutions, which in turn create an overwhelming sense of time-space compression, we can also expect crises of overaccumulation to be followed by strong aesthetic movements." (326)

"The election of an ex-movie actor, Ronald Reagan, to one of the most powerful positions in the world but a new gloss on the possibilities of a mediatized politics shaped by images alone. his image, cultivated over many years of political practice, and then carefully mounted, crafted, and orchestrated with all the artifice that contemporary image production could command, as a tough but warm, avuncular, and well-meaning person who had an abiding faith in the greatness and goodness of America, built an aura of charismatic politics." (330)

"The biggest physical export from New York City is now waste paper. The city's economy in fact rests on the production of fictitious capital to lend to the real estate agents who cut deals for the highly paid professions who manufacture fictitious capital." (331-2)

"The obverse side of this affluence was the plague of homelessness, disempowerment, and impoverishment that engulfed many of the central cities. 'Otherness' was produced with a vengeance and a vengefulness unparalleled in the post-war era." (332)

"One of the prime conditions of postmodernity is that no one can or should discuss it as a historical-geographical condition. […] It is conventional these days, for example, to dismiss out of hand any suggestion that the 'economy' (however that vague word is understood) might be determinant of cultural life even in (as Engels and later Althusser suggested) 'the last instance.' The odd thing about postmodern cultural production is how much sheer profit-seeking is determinant in the first instance." (336)

"The street scenes of impoverishment, disempowerment, graffiti and decay become grist for the cultural producers' mill, not, as Deutsche and Ryan (1984) point out, in the muckraking reformist style of the late nineteenth century, but as a quaint and swirly backdrop (as in *Blade Runner*) upon which no social commentary is to be made. 'Once the poor become aestheticized, poverty itself moves out of our field of social vision', except as a passive depiction of otherness, alienation and contingency within the human condition." (336-7)

"It seems as if postmodernist flexibility merely reverses the dominant order to be found in Fordist modernity. The latter achieved relative stability in its political-economic apparatus in order to produce strong social and material change, whereas the former has been dogged by disruptive instability in its political-economic apparatus, but sought compensation in stable places of being and in charismatic geopolitics." (339)

"One side-effect has been to rekindle a lot of theoretical interest in the nature of money (as opposed to class) power and the asymmetries that can arise therefrom (cf. Simmel's extraordinary treatise on *The philosophy of money*). Media stars, for example, can be highly paid yet grossly exploited by their agents, the record companies, the media tycoons, and the like. Such a system of asymmetrical money relations relates to the need to mobilize cultural creativity and aesthetic ingenuity, not only in the production of a cultural artefact but also in its promotion, packaging, and transformation into some kind of successful spectacle." (347)

"The imaging of politics by the public relations agencies matched the politics of imaging in powerful ways." (348)

“In the hands of its more responsible practitioners, the whole baggage of ideas associated with postmodernism could be deployed to radical ends, and thereby be seen as part of a fundamental drive towards a more liberatory politics, in exactly the same way that the turn to more flexible labour processes could be seen as an opening to a new era of democratic and highly decentralized labour relations and co-operative endeavours.” (353)

“Jesse Jackson employs charismatic politics in a political campaign which nevertheless begins to fuse some of the social movements in the United States that have long been apathetic to each other. The very possibility of a genuine rainbow coalition defines a unified politics which inevitably speaks the tacit language of class, because this is precisely what defines the common experience within the differences. US trade union leaders finally begin to worry that their support for foreign dictatorships in the name of anti-communism since 1950, has promoted the unfair labour practices and low wages in many countries which now compete for jobs and investment. And when British Ford car workers struck and stopped car production in Belgium and West Germany, they suddenly realized that spatial dispersal in the division of labour is not entirely to the capitalists' advantage and international strategies are feasible as well as desirable.” (358)