

CHAPTER 2

1989: David Harvey's *Postmodernity: The Space Economy of Late Capitalism*

I think we have stopped a lot of what needed stopping. And I hope we have once again reminded people that man is not free unless government is limited. There's a clear cause and effect here that is as neat and predictable as a law of physics: As government expands, liberty contracts.

Ronald Reagan, Farewell Speech, 11 January 1989.

In July of 1989, in what would be the first of its three printings in a year, Blackwell published David Harvey's *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*.¹ We can see now that it was an unusual book from an unusual academic—and that it appeared at an unusual time. When his book was published, Harvey was, or seemed to be, unexceptional. He had graduated with a PhD from the University of Cambridge in 1961 and so was an experienced academic with five books and numerous other writings already behind him. He was also a highly respected scholar within his field, writing and teaching in the rarefied air of Oxford University. Harvey was also a Marxist. And Marxists in 1980s Britain were 'the enemy within,' as Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher had famously alleged, in reference to the also-allegedly Marxist-dominated National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) and other unions.² For the neoliberals in politics, in the academy and in the mainstream right-wing press, who had established themselves in the political saddle over the course of the 1980s, Marxists were tolerated as long as they remained obscure, confined themselves to the universities, to speaking at symposia that few went to, or writing books that not many bothered to read. But, in a general bucking of the trend of books on Marxist economics and cultural theory, *Postmodernity* sold. It was a best-seller. It became influential, and not only in the academy and left-wing circles of the Anglosphere, but way beyond, with translations published of

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several of his books.³ According to Harvey's Wikipedia entry, the *Independent* newspaper reported that it is 'one of the fifty most important works of non-fiction to be published since 1945.'⁴ Moreover, at the time of writing the book has been cited thousands of times on Google Scholar, and was downloaded in its entirety in PDF format more than thirty-thousand times from a single website.⁵ To date, Harvey's YouTube lectures on the nature of capitalism, how to read Marx's *Capital*, the crises of capitalism, and so on, have attracted almost a million viewers; and a short animation titled 'The Crises of Capitalism' had well over three million viewers by mid 2019. And the *Times Literary Supplement* lauded *Postmodernity* as 'a marvellous, enjoyable and mind-opening book.'⁶

How did this happen? The continuing popularity of *Postmodernity* and the global audience for his analysis of capitalism, I would argue, are due in no small part to the fact that Harvey is also an unusual Marxist—or he was in 1989, when his book began to influence the thinking of so many. The difference is that he folds into his Marxism an original mix of political economy, social-cultural theory and geography. And it is the last of these three disciplines that matters most. It was his attention to time and space in relation to the processes of the circulation and accumulation of capital, and most especially capital within space, that seemed to capture the economic, cultural and political spirit of the late-1980s and made his analysis so different and insightful. I'll come to the basic aspects of his book shortly. But in the meantime, and by way of some necessary context, I will look at what constituted the economic, cultural and political *zeitgeist* when the book was published.

Although the term does not appear in his book, and was not anyway in general currency then, the process of *globalisation* that was fully underway in 1989 is what *Postmodernity* adroitly captures in its underlying economic and ideological dimensions. Globalisation was the pervasive sense of an ongoing *shrinking* of the planet into one capitalised and marketised space. Roland Robertson referred to this sensibility at the time as stemming from the 'compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole.'⁷ The cultural-aesthetic dimension of the process was significant, too, and especially so within what Harvey himself critiqued in the book as the 'deconstructionist' left: those theorists, artists and writers of the decade, and the decade before, who explicitly promulgated a postmodernity—or postmodernism—as the new spirit of the age.⁸ This left tendency was encapsulated in a 1983 collection, edited by Hal Foster, titled *Postmodern Culture*. Jean Baudrillard was the book's most celebrated and self-consciously postmodern contributor, and he theorised in his essay 'The Ecstasy of Communication,' and with satellite-delivered television in mind, that 'something has changed' and that the modern 'period of production and consumption gives way [now] to the ... period of networks, to the narcissistic and protean era of connections...'⁹

Before discussing points of Harvey's book in some detail, I need to put my coming critique of it into an even wider context, by outlining two important *political* and *ideological* events. We need to remember that 1989 was, as I said

before, an unusual year and was so in ways that were rather more salient than the publication of a book or the opinions of some deconstructionists. There is a saying in publishing, one that applies to many other walks of life, that 'it's all about timing', and so to appreciate more fully why the book caught the moment in the way that it did, we need to consider the year 1989 itself as part of the broader canvas, a year that would come to be one of modern history's turning points.

1989

The hinge political event in 1989 was the fall of the Berlin Wall. The dramatic occurrences of the 9th of November were the culmination of building economic and political crises that had been underway for at least a decade in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. This process had acquired significant momentum toward a *dénouement* with the appointment of Mikhail Gorbachev to the General Secretaryship of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union in 1986.¹⁰ The events in Berlin precipitated a rapid collapse of the Eastern European satellite states of East Germany, Poland, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria, whose elites already understood that under Gorbachev, the Soviet Union was not going to save them from themselves. The Soviet Union itself imploded over the month of August 1991, freeing the already restive Baltic States and various Soviet republics who would all, Russia included, look to the West and Western free-market capitalism as antidote to the suffocating and authoritarian state capitalism that was forced upon the region, its nations and its peoples after 1945. For Russia in particular, as the biggest and sickest of the shattered economies, a socially devastating 'shock therapy' treatment from the IMF would await.¹¹ Just a few months after the Wall's collapse, a bracing dose of Western market capitalism was now held generally to be the 'solution' to the economic crises afflicting the productive forces of the Warsaw Pact countries. These would now be integrated into the global circuits of capital dominated by the US, Japan, Germany, France, Britain, and the established sub-circuits of production and investment that sprawled from these centres toward southern Europe, South America and South-East Asia. Given that the Chinese economy had already begun to open up in 1979, then the fall of the Berlin Wall led to a process where 'globalisation' would actually mean *global*. And so, in a few short years, the geographic and spatial domain of capital grew very much larger.

The ideological event of 1989 began in rather more muted fashion. It was contained in a startling essay published in the summer edition of a usually unadventurous right-wing journal, the *National Interest*. Its author was Francis Fukuyama, deputy director of the US State Department Policy Planning Staff, and analyst for the conservative and government-funded RAND Corporation. This little-known political scientist shot suddenly to talk-show and lecture-circuit celebrity status with a novel theory that chimed clearly with

the 1980s' elite atmospherics of change then underway. The fall of the Berlin Wall a few months after its publication only heightened excitement and confidence within policy and think tank circles around the world about what this paper indicated. Fukuyama claimed that humanity had reached the 'end of History'.¹² The coming end of the Cold War, he insisted, was merely a surface manifestation of much deeper and wider shifts in the ideas that motivate late-modern international politics. With absolutism gone, with fascism dead, and with Soviet communism on its knees as he wrote, humanity had arrived at a new point of world-historical importance. The 'end of History' was not the end of ideology, but the *total victory* of a particular one, of liberal democracy. As Fukuyama put it:

...the century that began full of self-confidence in the ultimate triumph of Western liberal democracy seems at its close to be returning full circle to where it started: not to an 'end of ideology' or a convergence between capitalism and socialism, as earlier predicted, but to an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism.¹³

For many in the West, especially those in positions of economic and political power, Fukuyama's reasoning made perfect sense. It was clear to them that the trapped and ruined peoples of the Warsaw Pact countries merely wanted what the West could happily provide: the template for political freedom to choose their rulers, but most especially the economic freedom through free markets to buy Western consumer goods. In neoliberal theory the ending of the communist project and the integration of millions of people and dozens of nation states into global capitalism meant that a captive and poor worker in, say, Bulgaria, would soon be as free and as affluent as a worker in Britain. All that was needed were the kind of market reforms and privatisations that were then sweeping the West. Not only that, the new times would be peaceful, too. It was anticipated that the decades-long threat of nuclear war would be diminished through the so-called 'peace dividend' that would accrue through the careful and enlightened diplomacy between Western and ex-Warsaw Pact negotiators. And, directing 'dividend' type thinking to the masses more directly, Thomas Friedman, the widely influential *New York Times* columnist, and a left-leaning democrat besides, later mused in his best-selling book *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, whether (or not) it was significant that no country with a McDonald's franchise had ever gone to war with another similarly blessed.¹⁴ In the US, Ronald Reagan, the president who had commenced his first term at the beginning of the 1980s by stating that in times of crisis, 'Government was the problem' and free markets the solution, ended his second term with the highest approval ratings and lowest disapproval ratings of any president since Harry Truman.¹⁵ Reagan's successor George H.W. Bush immediately talked of a 'new world order'.

The world was at a crossroads in 1989. For those who believed in the positive power of markets and capital, the year heralded a new beginning. In the

East, the heavy hand of the state was being lifted from people's lives, as various politburos seemed at a loss to understand the waves of popular activism and organisation. And when not activating, millions watched TV shows and ads from West German, or Swedish, or Finnish broadcasters and dreamed of owning consumer goods that were not scarce, ancient and defective, and of enjoying food that was not primarily carbohydrates, and of a new generation of energetic and freedom-loving politicians they could vote for—if they so chose. In the West, Fukuyama would go on to write a best-selling book on the same 'end of History' subject and go on further to make the arguments in person in chat-shows that would beam to an even wider audience.¹⁶ Meanwhile, and building on this powerful and burgeoning neoliberal political and ideological momentum, Milton Friedman, icon of the neoliberal right, put the economic side of the argument in his typically hectoring and smart alec way in an 1989 *New York Times* Op-Ed, written just a couple of weeks after the people of Berlin sledgehammered the Soviet-built Wall:

Major premise: Socialism is a failure. Even lifelong Communists now accept this proposition. Wherever socialism has been tried, it has proved unable to deliver the goods, either in the material form of a high standard of living or in the immaterial form of human freedom.

Minor premise: Capitalism is a success. Economies that have used capitalism – free private markets – as their principal means of organizing economic activity have proved capable of combining widely shared prosperity and a high measure of human freedom.¹⁷

These were heady times for the 'borderless world' promoters of globalisation based upon the free movement of capital, products and services.¹⁸ However, many lifelong Marxists in the West, and many casual observers too—those who also believed that the socialisms of the USSR and China were fraudulent—were unable to accept that the ultimate victory of liberal capitalism (and the end of History) had actually come to pass. At some level of understanding, many felt that the capitalist universe was undergoing a deep crisis of which the present globalisation was simply a manifestation. The question was how to make sense of this volatile, turbulent and manifestly unequal process in the face of a powerful ideological discourse that claimed neoliberal globalisation to be the cure for the stagflation, unemployment and profitability traumas of the 1970s.¹⁹

The failure of post-war socialism was also a failure of orthodox Marxist theory in the West in that it could not adequately account for the planet-wide capitalism that a seemingly relentless globalisation was delivering. Harvey complained in *Postmodernity* that the 'significance of time-space compression', a concept that was crucial to understanding globalisation, was lost on most Marxists, and it was futurist and celebrity thinkers such as Alvin Toffler and Marshall McLuhan who had to do this theoretical spadework for them.²⁰ Not

only that, according to Harvey, the 1960s New Left in the US, Britain and elsewhere had lost its way as a practical political movement, and had become both subject and object of the ideology of postmodernity itself. Near the end of *Postmodernity* Harvey writes a section on the 'Crisis of Historical Materialism' and in it he laments the kinds of things that Jean Baudrillard had written of in my earlier quotation from his work, and which, by the way, also reads as something of a presage of our current age of identity politics:

The New Left was preoccupied with a struggle to liberate itself from the dual shackles of old left politics (particularly as represented by traditional communist parties and 'orthodox' Marxism) and the repressive powers of corporate capital and bureaucratised institutions (the state, the universities, the unions, etc.). It saw itself from the very outset as a cultural as well as political-economic force and helped force the turn to aesthetics that postmodernism has been about.²¹

Capitalism, its Spatial Limits and Postmodernity

So, what did those millions around the world who disliked neoliberalism, and who could see no salvation in 'actually existing socialism' or its New Left articulations, find so refreshing in *Postmodernity*? The main attraction of Harvey's book, coming when it did, and in the context just outlined, was that it looked at capitalism in a different way, through a highly original conjunction that Noel Castree has called 'capitalism and the geographical imagination'.²² The usually neglected subtitle of Harvey's book is: *An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. It more than hints at the traditional Marxist base-superstructure, or dialectical approach that its author adopts—but from a perspective that foregrounds space. Let us look, then, at the economic 'origins' before we consider the postmodern 'cultural change' that it implies in Harvey's work.

A theory of the interaction between capital and space was something that Harvey had already worked out in his 1982 book *The Limits to Capital*, a book that contains what he would later call his 'foundational' thinking.²³ Drawing from one of Marx's basic precepts, Harvey argues that *accumulation* is the central dynamic behind capitalism, and accumulation compels capital to expand to wherever it can be profitably deployed. This is a well understood aspect within Marxism. But thinking as a geographer, Harvey asked the question that was obvious to him: expand into what, and with what effect? His answer was, *space*—and it does so with increasingly profound consequences for the accumulation process.²⁴ Aligning his geographical imagination with the phenomenological imagination of Henri Lefebvre, Harvey cut through years of inattention to this sphere within Marxism by arguing that this space is not primarily abstract or mathematical, but *social*.²⁵ In his *The Production of Space*, Lefebvre calls this space formation 'spatial practice', and the form and function this takes stem

from the 'production and reproduction' characteristics of 'each social formation'.²⁶ In general terms the expansion or deployment of capital into space can be into fixed forms such as plant, machinery and workers. This can be relatively unproblematic for the accumulation process and can work for a time and until such times as plant, machinery, workers and so on need replacing. Importantly, it can work until *markets inevitably mature*. Capital therefore needs to be constantly able to find and exploit new markets, sources of raw materials, cheaper labour, etc. It must expand into an ever-widening *and connected* geographic space, to wherever opportunities may be found so that the immanent need to 'accumulate, accumulate!' as Marx put it, can be satisfied. Failure to do this, Harvey argues, leads to what he sees as the deeper problem, which is the tendency toward 'overaccumulation', the point at which accumulated capital can no longer be profitably invested, and where economic crisis must ensue.²⁷

Expansion at the system level is a never-ending process and has been so since the beginning of the industrial revolution. But as Harvey emphasised, this expansion has always been a temporary solution to accumulation and profitability, a systemic reflex to stave off the crisis that will always come at some stage within a certain geographic marketised area, when accumulation produces a surplus of capital relative to opportunities to employ that capital. Harvey calls this expansion the 'spatial fix' and, again following and quoting Marx, he argues that the expansion logic itself is no solution, but that it merely '...transfers the contradictions [of accumulation] to a wider sphere and gives them greater latitude'.²⁸ As he sums it up in *Limits*: 'There is, in short, no "spatial fix" that can contain the contradictions of capitalism in the long run.'²⁹

The dynamic of the expansion of capital into space—at least since the time when Marx and Engels outlined it in the *Communist Manifesto*—has tended to be seen as a theoretical issue or normative process, as opposed to a process that is teleological and political. Harvey thus raises a corollary to his earlier question: what happens when the physical space of the planet into which capital expands, is used up? This is the central issue in *Postmodernity*. Moreover, the building crisis of space that Harvey had identified in the 1970s and 1980s had two major consequences: economic and cultural (or base and superstructural). To understand the logic behind this Harvey directs much of his attention in chapters six and seven of *Postmodernity* to capitalism's mode of production, which is reflected in what he terms the 'regime of accumulation and its associated mode of social and political regulation'.³⁰ The 'regime of accumulation' in question is Fordism, a system of 'mass production for mass society', which emphasised planning, regulation, standardisation, and the development of relatively inflexible systems of factory production and information bureaucracy into which both unskilled labour as well as the more professional and specialist occupations would eventually be integrated. This began with Henry Ford's production-line factories in Dearborn, Michigan, in 1914, and was quickly taken up across the industrial world in order to produce anything from bomber aircraft to electric kettles, and from insurance policies to television schedules.

So deeply did the logic of Fordism permeate Western economies and life, especially after World War Two, that it developed into rather more than an economic regime of accumulation. Fordism colonised the consciousness of social and cultural life, too. As Harvey writes:

Postwar Fordism has to be seen ... less as a mere system of mass production and more as a *total way of life*. Mass production meant standardization of product as well as mass consumption; and meant a whole new aesthetic and a commodification of culture...³¹

Fordism was a historically-specific form of capitalist production that engendered a historically-specific form of social and cultural (as well as political) life. It reached its 'high Fordism' peak during the 'golden age' economic boom of 1945–1973, a period which constituted the longest uninterrupted boom in capitalist history.³² The Fordised 'way of life', based upon fairly stable careers spent in fairly predictable forms of production and reproduction of labour power and management structures, created an historically unprecedented way of life, one where the boom-and-bust cycle appeared for some to be over, and capitalism's volatility and anarchy seemed to have been tamed.³³ For many, Fordised capitalism looked like the answer to modernity's problems and articulated a productive mode able to create a happy balance between what Marshal Berman termed 'modernisation as adventure, and modernisation as routine.'³⁴ Harvey goes further, however, by arguing that 'high Fordism' created the illusion of 'a new aesthetics and psychology [and] a new kind of rationalised, modernist and populist democracy.'³⁵

For those millions in the West who lived through those long post-war decades, or who were destined to be born into it, i.e. workers, economists, students, politicians, people in unions, in political parties, in all kinds of institutions, the 'total way of life' had a feeling of permanence about it. And for as long as profits from the boom continued to flow, then the *modus vivendi* of regular jobs paying regular wages in order to lead regular lives in the growing cities and suburbs was an economic and cultural bargain that had become institutionalised in the new social contract that was capitalist late modern social democracy. That this system ultimately served capitalism in that it created the increasingly one-dimensional social system that Herbert Marcuse excoriated in the 1960s was another matter. This was abstract theorising that most people did not concern themselves with when they had rising living standards to pacify them.³⁶ Nonetheless, the dominance of this social system was far from total, and 'the 1960s' was also to become a byword for a decade of political confrontation and social frustration. As Harvey explains:

In spite of all the discontents and all the manifest tensions, the centre-pieces 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 the 'benefits' of mass production and consumption further afield. Material living standards rose for the mass of the population in the advanced industrial countries, and a relatively stable environment for corporate profits prevailed. It was not until the sharp recession of 1973 shattered that framework that a process of rapid, and as yet not well understood, transition in the regime of accumulation began.³⁷

The 'sharp recession of 1973' was in fact a profound and global one, and most especially in the Anglosphere.³⁸ Its effects upon profit acted as a catalyst for an economic and political offensive by Anglosphere capital against the perceived causes of the crisis, which as the growingly influential neoliberal intellectuals and politicians, such as Milton Friedman and Keith Joseph³⁹ asserted, was the Fordist regime of accumulation itself. In the late-1970s and on into the 1980s, *restructuring* became the term that would provide ideological cover for the attack on the Fordist 'way of life'. As economic historian Joyce Kolko put it: 'The whole concept of restructuring':

...really gathered force after the recession and during the recovery of 1976–80, when the world economy passed into a period of slow growth and stagflation. A new vocabulary emerged to define the illness, the prognosis and the prescription – *rigidities, imperfections, adjustment, restructure*. And such euphemisms were rapidly translated into policies aimed directly at the working classes in every region of the world.⁴⁰

Such were the ideological buzzwords that, when put into practice, would bring about the end of a mode of production that had underpinned social democracy for a generation. The assault, largely victorious, created a neoliberal antidote to the crisis that came to be known as post-Fordism. Or, to paraphrase Harvey, neoliberalism created the *condition of post-Fordism* that was achieved through the imposition of *flexible accumulation*. This is Harvey:

Flexible accumulation ... is marked by a direct confrontation with the rigidities of Fordism. It rests on flexibility with respect to labour processes, labour markets, products and patterns of consumption. It is characterized by the emergence of entirely new sectors of production, new ways of providing financial services, new markets, and, above all, greatly intensified rates of commercial, technological, and organisational innovation.

And in the context of globalisation:

Organized labour was undercut by the reconstruction of foci of flexible accumulation in regions lacking previous industrial traditions, and by

the importation back into the older centres of the regressive norms and practices established in these new areas.⁴¹

The ‘cultural change’ that is postmodernity rose up from these ‘origins’ in what was the wholesale reconstruction of the Fordist regime of accumulation. There is no need to rehearse the definitions and propositions regarding this aspect of postmodernism here, save to say that across the broad left in the Western societies there was a new preoccupation with ideas that were already present within French poststructuralism—introducing concepts such as undecidability, fragmentation, difference, diversity and so on. For Harvey these contributed to the left’s intellectual malaise—an ideological miasma that was the consequence of the successful implementation of flexible accumulation and the post-modern philosophy that would essentially vindicate the society that emerged from it. He saw a political pragmatism enveloping much of the left as well. Here, previously self-evident categories such as reality, the foundations of knowledge, the sense of self-hood, Enlightenment progress and so on, were now increasingly considered, as Christopher Norris phrased it at the time in his critique of postmodernity, as merely ‘... fictive, transient constructions out of this or that currently prevailing discourse.’⁴² Coupled with the spreading force of neoliberal economic restructuring, the idea that the left was too addled by postmodern thinking to analyse it properly or do anything much about it practically, was a dispiriting scenario to be confronted with in 1989.

The need for something to hold onto was what Harvey’s *Postmodernity* offered those who refused to accept that 1989 signalled the end of History, or that all that remained for a progressive politics was what Fukuyama had termed the ‘struggle for recognition’ within the new ‘realm of [liberal] freedom’ was something to hold on to.⁴³ This ‘struggle for recognition’ was a political struggle that could fit neatly within the emergent identity politics of the postmodern left; and it was something that constituted no threat to the logic of unconstrained capital accumulation on a global scale. And so above all, Harvey’s analysis offered *hope* in the context of a Marxist teleology *which did have an end-point* and one that could be *empirically discerned*.⁴⁴ His political economy of space seemed to show that the process of capital accumulation, and the need for it to constantly expand into new space in order to begin the process again, had objective limits. The ‘limit’ was geographic space itself. Harvey imagined that the geographical imagination had uncovered a (or *the*) contradiction within capital in the concept of the limits of the physical space of the planet—an empirical and almost mathematical contradiction that would eventually bring capitalism to its final crisis at some point over the ‘long run’. This constituted more than hope. It was something akin to scientific certainty, where the only thing that socialists, students and workers needed to do was to recognise it and prepare for it. At the very end of *Postmodernity*, Harvey entreats that socialists need to initiate ‘a renewal of historical materialism and of the Enlightenment project’. He finishes by stating that:

... we can begin to understand postmodernity as an historical-geographical condition. On that critical basis it becomes possible to launch a counter-attack of narrative against the image, of ethics against aesthetics, of a project of Becoming rather than Being, and to search for unity within difference, albeit in a context where the power of the image and of aesthetics, the problems of space-time compression, and the significance of geopolitics and otherness are clearly understood. A renewal of historical-geographical materialism can indeed promote adherence to a new vision of the Enlightenment project.⁴⁵

This was hope-filled stuff in the context of a rampant process of neoliberal globalisation, where there was a retreat into what Stanley Fish, echoing Fredric Jameson, called the 'interpretive communities'⁴⁶ of the universities, and where the remnants of the revolutionary left still clung to essentially Leninist solutions. The ideology that is the condition of postmodernity was fully entrenched by the decade of the 1990s. But Harvey's reputation as one of the world's foremost living Marxist theorists continued to give hope that instilled the conviction that all was not lost, no matter how dark the situation seemed. That was then. Why do the prospects for renewal, over three decades into the 'long run', seem even more remote today?

The Question of Technology

That there is a gap in *Postmodernity* should have been evident in 1989. It's even more apparent today, but it is one that Harvey refuses to acknowledge, as evidenced in his 2017 book, *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*.⁴⁷ The issue is technology,⁴⁸ but more particularly *digital* technology and the expression of its unique logic through the networked computer. This book will deal with these questions in detail. To end this part of it, I will consider why it is that Harvey barely engages with technology at all beyond a few standard phrases from Marx.

Noel Castree is a geographer and a Marxist. He is also editor of *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*,⁴⁹ and so he is in a good position to render some useful insights into his subject's strengths and weaknesses. There are many strengths, and we have already seen some of them. However, Harvey is an oddly inflexible and incurious thinker when it comes to thinking outside of his particular brand of Marxism. Castree observes that, unusually, Harvey relies to a very great extent upon his own reading of Marx, eschewing many orthodox and major post-classical readings and interpretations, such as those of Gramsci and Althusser, preferring what he himself describes as the direct 'tutelage of Marx and with very little reference to the rest of the Marxist tradition'.⁵⁰ This is an odd thing for a theoretician to say. Nonetheless, an effect of this intentionally narrow intellectual line is that although Harvey's work is holistic and

wide-ranging, it is ‘conceptually and empirically thin’, as Castree puts it, and with a tendency towards writing at the level of the high-abstract as opposed to the concrete.⁵¹ Large tracts of post-Classical and neo-Marxist thinking on the evolution of the capital socio-technical relation are thus only touched upon or go unexplored altogether. For instance, in his scattered references to technology in *Postmodernity*, and latterly in his 2017 work *Marx and Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*, Harvey pays due respect to Marx’s insight on the matter, namely that:

technology discloses man’s mode of dealing with Nature and the process of production by which he sustains his life, and thereby also lays bare the mode of formation of his social relations, and of the mental conceptions that flow from them.⁵²

But Harvey sees this ‘one-liner’, as he calls it, as not implying a ‘technological determinism’ in Marx, and in any case, he continues, to see technology as prime-mover of capitalism ‘misses the point’—the real point being that capitalism co-opts the freedom potential of technology for its own ends. In other words, it’s about who *controls* technology, capitalists or a wider democratic and socialist society, and not about the determining effects of technology per se.⁵³ I will say more later about the idea of technological determinism in relation to Marx’s above quote in particular, because a particular theorisation of the concept permits us to see the determining power of digital technology in the context of nature and the human-technology relation that is at the centre of my argument on digitality. However, Harvey’s almost scriptural allegiance to Marx’s *Capital* for his theorising about the capitalist world means that he steers clear of such thinkers as Georg Lukács, and his idea of *reification* as a specific (and more problematic and generalised) form of alienation stemming from the human relationship with technology in the context of capitalism. For Lukács, reification is much more pervasive and negative and constituted the ‘crucial problem of the age in which we live’, affecting not only the working classes at the point of production, but every level of society.⁵⁴ Lukács was highly pessimistic concerning what technology ‘discloses’, and his theorisation would influence, for example, Theodor Adorno and Herbert Marcuse, who viewed capitalist technology as a profound and one-dimensional social process within which all humans are destined to exist as alienated moderns. This was a perspective that Harvey’s classical and optimistic Marxism would be unwilling to accommodate. He goes so far as to equate ‘reification’ with ‘post-modernism’, as an epiphenomenal process as opposed to a core productive effect of capitalism itself.⁵⁵

Similarly, if Harvey were less dismissive of the ‘silliness’⁵⁶ of Jean-François Lyotard’s writing as symptomatic of the postmodern genre, then he might have had cause to reflect upon the latter’s theorisation on the logic of social and cultural change in respect of computerisation and communication technologies.

Social and cultural fragmentation is the issue here. In his 1979 work *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*, Lyotard gives a prescient account of the fragmentation of 'knowledge in computerized societies,' and thus an account of the diminishing prospects for a socialist culture and future along the lines Harvey's *Postmodernity* envisages. For Lyotard, computerisation is making serious inroads into the creation and production of knowledge as a commodity, especially in schools and universities. Knowledge is now produced to be sold, he writes. It is and will be consumed so to be valorised in a new process of production, where the objective is primarily exchange. Knowledge therefore ceases to be an end in itself and loses its 'use-value.'⁵⁷ Lyotard goes on to argue that:

Knowledge in the form of an information commodity indispensable to productive power is already, and will continue to be, a major—perhaps the major—stake in the worldwide competition for power. It is conceivable that the nation-states will one day fight for control of information, just as they battled in the past for control over territory, and afterwards for control of access to and exploitation of raw materials and cheap labor.⁵⁸

Diagnosing this attitude, Harvey writes that 'There is more than a hint in Lyotard's work ... that modernism has changed because the technical and social conditions of communication have changed.'⁵⁹ The paragraph ends here, as if there is nothing more to be said. However, that Lyotard's predictions of the commodification and fragmentation of knowledge and of the central importance of information as both commodity and technology have come to pass in our networked society, is beyond doubt. Then and now, however, Harvey continues to argue that the prime mover, and thus the source of potential freedom within capitalism, is not technology per se, but who owns and controls it. This notion had a stronger basis in the context of Victorian era industry with its analogue machines, but Lyotard speaks of a fully 'computerized society' that through networks of information transforms both modernity and culture.⁶⁰ However, for Harvey to accept this argument, or to have seen any merit in Lyotard's work at all concerning the transformatory power of the computer upon culture, politics and society, would have undermined his whole classical edifice.

Another significant gap in *Postmodernity*—and a gap also in the Marxist *oeuvre* more generally until recent times—is an attention to media.⁶¹ Again, the oversight is strange, but also expected if we factor in Harvey's purist brand of Marxism. CNN was launched in 1980, MTV a year later, and satellite communications had been connecting the mediasphere since the early 1960s. I will say more on media technology, but for now I will consider what its omission in Harvey means for his thesis. The non-engagement with the work of Antonio Gramsci, as I touched on above, is significant in its own terms, in terms of the Marxism that Harvey espouses.⁶² But it's also significant with respect to the

influence Gramsci has had over media studies and how this connects to technology, culture and ideology in a postmodern context. Gramsci's path-breaking work on hegemony was, beginning in the 1970s, extended into a whole genre of media and cultural studies by Stuart Hall and the Birmingham School. Once more, the idea of cultural fragmentation is the salient one here. It is well-known that Hall, influenced by the 'culturalist' Marxist, Raymond Williams,⁶³ developed his Encoding/Decoding model for making sense of the mass media of television and what Hall saw as its 'monological codes,' codes that had to be subverted through a critical reading of its ideological content.⁶⁴ Hall viewed culture as being shaped not only by ideology, but also by technology, and like Raymond Williams tended to view television in negative terms, in terms of its 'schizophrenia'-inducing effects. As John Corner observes, the Birmingham School, generally speaking, saw television as, intrinsically, a 'bad object' which has to be subverted as it:

routinely encourages, if it does not actually instil, 'bad' forms of subjectivity in viewers by mechanisms frequently conceptualised in terms of the subconscious, psychodynamic 'positioning' which the viewing of dominant forms of television entails as well as in terms of content.⁶⁵

Harvey's *locus classicus* approach means that *Postmodernity* overlooks Hall, for example, a major Marxist thinker at the time, and by so doing gives little thought to the role and function of mass media as a force for the shaping and the changing of cultural forms in the mass society. And Harvey sustains this elision, notwithstanding the fact that in the 1980s globalising media were having a transformative effect upon attitudes toward the revolutionary potential of the computer. Hall's concept of media hegemony was an active and instructive theory in that decade—and it had real-world applications. For example, the celebrated Apple Macintosh ad '1984' promoted the new desktop computer overtly in terms of a technology of freedom. Its dramatic Orwellian narrative made explicit links to an emergent Californian Ideology (represented here by Apple, from Silicon Valley) that depicted computing as saviour from the Fordist totalitarian state. Television was the vector for this ad, 'the most famous Superbowl ad of them all'.⁶⁶ Read through Hall, one could see that it transmitted one of the most powerful monological codes yet to a nation and to a world being ideologically primed for a new age through new technologies that most had not yet experienced first-hand. The structure and narrative of the ad was a direct and powerful example of the postmodern ideology that Harvey was to critique as empty in 1989; yet he chose to ignore it, notwithstanding the fact that he surely must have known of the ad and its impact, as he was employed as an academic at Johns Hopkins in Baltimore for much of the decade.

But as we saw in the writing of Jean Baudrillard—a year before the Apple ad in his 1983 'Ecstasy of Communication' essay—the social and cultural fragmentation that is immanent in networked computing was already being identified

and theorised. He writes that the individual has become 'schizophrenic'—both cause and consequence of postmodern culture—and one who is 'open to everything in spite of himself [and] living in the greatest confusion.' Baudrillard closes his essay by looking toward the function of the networked computer where the individual is: '...now only a pure screen, a switching centre for all the networks of influence.'⁶⁷ It was a networked view (of fragmentation) that Stuart Hall caught up with in 2011 when writing about neoliberalism as a hegemonic process that (refracted through the technology of the internet) fragments and relativises culture under the illusion of freedom:

The mobile phone, fast broadband connection and a Facebook entry are now 'necessities of life,' even in places where millions do not have them or actually know what they do. News information, views, opinions and commentaries have been, as they say, 'democratized' i.e. flattened out by the internet, in the illusion that, since internet space is unregulated, the net is 'free'; and one person's view is as good as another's in the marketplace of opinion. We know more about the trivial and banal daily round of life of other people than we do about climate change or sustainability.

They are far from alone, but we can see that Hall and Baudrillard dare to go where Harvey doesn't in their theorisation of capitalism in the changed context of technology. In this view, the capital–technology interaction shapes an essentially formable human culture. New modes of communication can create new ways of being and seeing. And the culture of 'class consciousness' that Harvey's ideas so depend upon may, in a generation, be wiped clean like a slate and, as technology develops, so the more distant does the prospect of a culture developed in the Victorian industrial age become. And so, cramped by his self-inflicted 'direct tutelage' from the written word of Marx as primary guide, Harvey is unable to grasp the full consequences of technological and cultural change.

Why does all this matter? Who writes about postmodernity or post-Fordism any longer, anyway? Well, thanks to Google's Ngram program which searches for word-frequency in millions of books, you can see precisely how many actually do—and this can tell us something about the hegemonizing course of a concept over time. If you type in the 'postmodernity' and 'post-Fordism' keywords you will see a parallel trajectory for both: emerging in the 1980s, rising to a very high spike around the mid-1990s, and then dropping like a stone thereafter. Ngram's little graphs indicate that the processes they designate, *as ideologies*, have been hugely successful. The ideologies did not disappear. Instead their logic has bedded down into culture and society to become something normative and invisible to shape our belief-systems, our 'mental conceptions of the world,' as Marx put in his consideration of the effects of technology. Postmodernity has slipped from prevailing discourses but, as an ideological 'condition,' it thrives. To paraphrase Terry Eagleton in his treatise on ideology: the success of an ideology is for people to not recognise it as such.⁶⁸ The 1990s were when

the revolution in information and communication technologies really began to insert itself into economic, social and cultural life. Networked computers connected these often-disparate spheres into a globalised whole, and as this connective process thickened and became more intensive and extensive, then a newly-dominant *commodity of information* could supply its own ideology as the pervasive reality of everyday digital life.

None of this would matter so much if we were operating over Harvey's 'long run' temporal frame, where the inevitable crisis of over-accumulation would reach its end-point, at some point, of planetary saturation by under-employed capital. The task for those seeking a world beyond the rule of capital would then be to organise and prepare for the final showdown, with Harvey's ideas able to articulate the analysis that would lead to, as he puts it in the final paragraph of *Postmodernity*, a 'renewal' of historical materialism, to seek 'unity within diversity' and to 'promote adherence to a new version of the Enlightenment project'.⁶⁹

Again, why does this matter today? It matters, because digital technology represents much more than a technological revolution like the Jacquard Loom of 1802, or the Ford assembly line of 1914 did. Digital computing represents for the first time in history a revolution carried out by means of a new *category* of technology, one that has upended much that Marxist historical materialism or Harvey's space economy of late capitalism taught was the perspective through which to understand the social relations of production. Unconsciously, these theories based themselves on a relationship with a technological category, the analogue, that was assumed to evolve towards greater capacities of efficiency and productivity. It was hardly considered that the dominance of the analogue form would be challenged. And so from the time of the industrial revolution until today, we have looked at technology from many perspectives but ignored an important, if not central one: that a technology, especially the foundational technologies of modernity—from the wheel to the steam and combustion engines, and from the ship to the airplane—is an analogue of something in nature and/or in our bodily capacities. For almost the whole period of modernity, there was little point dwelling upon this aspect, because for much of that time there was nothing to compare and contrast the analogue state with. This led to an incuriosity about our relationship with analogue technologies that have equivalency with nature and the human body, so we never asked, 'what do our technologies say about us?'⁷⁰ To which the answer would be: that *we are also analogue*—analogue creatures with capacities that are/were bounded by our own physical and cognitive limitations within the context of physical time and space. The technological transition from analogue to digital will be the focus of the next chapter.

Digitality has profound consequences for Harvey's political economy of space, and its logic constitutes one of the central problems for the socialist and Enlightenment project. In his time-space compression idea, Harvey suggested, via Marshall McLuhan, that planet capitalism is shrinking dramatically, and

that this 'has had a disorienting and disruptive impact upon political-economic practices, the balance of class power, as well as upon cultural and social life.'⁷¹ This is doubtless true, and the impact reverberates negatively today for those billions who do not benefit from a neoliberal-driven revolution made possible by networked computing. However, in his analysis Harvey keeps his eye on how the shrinking of space through time negatively affects people, and positively benefits flexible accumulation, through its new productive-organisational forms. In so doing he misses the central effect of time-space compression as far as the accumulation process goes: the creation of a whole new dimension of space—a *virtual space* that is unlimited and therefore the potential repository and generator of unlimited accumulation.

* * *

It is an arresting thought to contemplate that the phase of postmodernity (underscored by post-Fordist flexible accumulation) has endured longer than the phase of post-war Fordism itself. The mode of production and consumption that had become a 'whole way of life' that could be depicted in a Norman Rockwell painting that exuded security, dependability and durability seems now as distant and illusory as the Rockwell imagery itself. Post-modernity—or digitality—shows few real signs of an economic catastrophe that would bring down the capitalism that it sits atop. Cycles of the realisation and devaluation of capital come and go. The crisis of 2008 spelled disaster mainly for the already poor and already disenfranchised—and spelled austerity for the rest. More than a decade on, and as Wall Street booms again, many who lost their livelihoods have found new ones, but almost always with degraded and often degrading terms and conditions.

Capitalism's resilience (if it can be called that) stems not only from the leading central banks' ability to add digital noughts to the balance sheets of commercial banks to keep them afloat, and hence keep liquidity in the system, but also from the virtual dimension where rising levels of corporate profit can find ready outlets. The suppleness of capital is what neoliberalism demanded through the institutionalisation of flexible accumulation. But this institutionalisation took its toll on the sources of organised resistance that still existed in the 1970s and 1980s. In his 2016 book *How Will Capitalism End?* Wolfgang Streeck noted, and not in a gleeful, anticipating way, that: 'There is a widespread sense today that capitalism is in a critical condition, more so than at any time since the Second World War.'⁷² Streeck, like Harvey in 1989, calls for organisation and resistance, beginning in the universities through what he terms a new 'public sociology.'⁷³ This seems (at best) unlikely. Organised resistance requires a culture for it to grow in, and there is no sign of this anywhere in the Western societies, beyond their fringes. This means that a chronic system can run (chronically) for many decades more yet, with only sclerotic and scattered oppositions facing it.⁷⁴ In politics, there is no alternative to organisation, but it is

necessary first to identify the primary obstacle to democracy and freedom at this point in history. Counterintuitive, perhaps, but the first step is to see what has become invisible in plain sight—the condition of digitality. The untamed logic of digital technology must be recognised for what it is and brought under democratic control. Then, conceivably, the organisational foundations—technological, economic and social—can be laid for a more meaningful resistance to the now-frenzied rule of capital.

Notes

- ¹ David Harvey (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- ² Seumas Milne (1995) *The Enemy Within*. London: Pan Books.
- ³ Noel Castree (2007) ‘David Harvey: Marxism, Capitalism and the Geographical Imagination’, *New Political Economy*, 12(1), 97–115, p.103.
- ⁴ David Harvey Wikipedia Entry: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Harvey#Life_and_work.
- ⁵ Harvey (1990) *The Condition of Postmodernity*. <http://www.anthrocvone.org/PeoplesandCultures/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/harvey.pdf>. Noel Castree (2007) notes that Harvey’s *Postmodernity* is the ‘the most widely read and cited analysis of the topic authored by a Marxist’, ‘David Harvey: Marxism, Capitalism and the Geographical Imagination’, p.101.
- ⁶ Review quotes from Book Depository website: <https://www.bookdepository.com/Condition-Postmodernity-David-Harvey/9780631162940>
- ⁷ Roland Robertson (1992) *Globalization; Social Theory and Global Culture*. London: Sage Publications, p.8.
- ⁸ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.350.
- ⁹ Jean Baudrillard (1983) ‘The Ecstasy of Communication’ in *Postmodern Culture*, Hal Foster (ed.). London: Pluto Press, p.127.
- ¹⁰ Jonathan Steele (1996) ‘Why Gorbachev Failed’ *New Left Review* I/216, March-April, pp.141–152.
- ¹¹ Naomi Klein termed the IMF’s ‘transition’ of the Russian economy into a western one, a neoliberal-inspired ‘shock doctrine’. See her (2007) *The Shock Doctrine: The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. London: Penguin, pp.218–245.
- ¹² Francis Fukuyama (1989) ‘The End of History?’ *The National Interest*, No 16, pp.3–18.
- ¹³ *Ibid.* p.3.
- ¹⁴ Thomas Friedman (1999) *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*. New York: Anchor Books, pp.248–249.
- ¹⁵ Gerhard Peters (1999–2017) ‘Final Presidential Job Approval Ratings.’ in *The American Presidency Project*, John T. Woolley and Gerhard Peters (ed.). Santa Barbara, CA: University of California. Available from the World Wide Web: http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/data/final_approval.php.

- ¹⁶ BookTV C-Span (1992). For one of the first discussions on Francis Fukuyama's *The End of History and the Last Man*, discussions that continue to this day, with most recently the '25th anniversary' of the book's publication in 2017, see the broadcast, 17th January 1992: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vZWJETpfbzM>. Fukuyama's thesis continues to be a kind of lodestone for those seeking to make a point about the transformation in international relations such as the 1990s, and Fukuyama as a political philosopher continues to be widely influential in the political mainstream of the Anglosphere.
- ¹⁷ Milton Friedman (1989) 'We have Socialism-QED' *New York Times*, 31st December: <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/19/opinion/19opclassic.html>
- ¹⁸ Typical of the breathless ambition of many in the business class was Ken'ichi Omahe's (1990) *The Borderless World*. New York: Harper Perennial.
- ¹⁹ For an excellent contemporaneous account of how the crises of the 1970s were 'solved' see Joyce Kolko's (1988) *Restructuring the World Economy*. New York: Pantheon Books.
- ²⁰ *The Condition of Postmodernity*, pp.353–354.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*
- ²² Noel Castree (2007) 'David Harvey: Marxism, Capitalism and the Geographical Imagination.'
- ²³ David Harvey (1982) *The Limits to Capital* Oxford: Blackwell. p.337, n.4.
- ²⁴ The geographic or spatial dimension of capital accumulation had been the object of concern by Marxist thinkers before, of course. Most notable was the Annales School in France, featuring Ferdinand Braudel, Marc Bloch and others, who in turn inspired Immanuel Wallerstein and his widely influential 'world systems theory'. See his 1974 *The Modern World-System*. New York: Academic Press. These, however, were historians and tended to look back. More relevant for our purposes is the work of Scott Lash and John Urry, especially their book *The End of Organized Capital* (Cambridge: Polity Press), which came out in 1987 and was oddly missed or ignored by David Harvey. I will have more to say on this book later.
- ²⁵ Harvey, *Limits to Capital*, p.372. n.1.
- ²⁶ Henri Lefebvre (1991) *The Production of Space*. Oxford: Blackwell, p.33.
- ²⁷ Harvey, *Limits to Capital*, Chapter 7.
- ²⁸ *Ibid.*, p.414.
- ²⁹ *Ibid.*, p.442.
- ³⁰ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.121
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, p.135 (emphasis added)
- ³² See Andrew Glyn et al. (1990) 'The Rise and Fall of the Golden Age' in *The Golden Age of Capitalism: Reinterpreting the Postwar Experience*, Stephen A. Marglin and Juliet B. Schor (eds) Oxford: Oxford University Press, p.67 & 122.
- ³³ Marc Levinson (2016) *An Extraordinary Time: The End of the Postwar Boom and the Rise of the Ordinary Economy*. New York: Basic Books.

- ³⁴ Marshall Berman (1982) *All That is Solid Melts into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Verso, p.243.
- ³⁵ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.126.
- ³⁶ Herbert Marcuse (1991) *One-Dimensional Man*. Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- ³⁷ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.140.
- ³⁸ Giuliano Garavini (2011) 'Completing Decolonization: The 1973 "Oil Shock" and the Struggle for Economic Rights', *The International History Review*, 33:3, 473–487.
- ³⁹ Keith Joseph was a cabinet minister in the Thatcher government who had previously founded and run the Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) in 1974 with the express goal of promoting free-market and neoliberal policies in the British economy and around the world.
- ⁴⁰ Joyce Kolko (1988) *Restructuring the World Economy*, p.31. (emphasis in original).
- ⁴¹ Harvey. *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.147.
- ⁴² Christopher Norris (1992) *Uncritical Theory*. London: Lawrence and Wishart, p.95.
- ⁴³ Francis Fukuyama (1992) *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: The Free Press, Chapter 7 & p.289.
- ⁴⁴ Harvey wrote another well-received book on the idea of hope in his *Spaces of Hope* (2000) (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press) that argues that the uneven development of neoliberal globalisation (another contradiction) provides the 'spaces' in cities and regions where the organisation and resistance on a socialist basis, from those who suffer most for the neoliberal depredations, can take place.
- ⁴⁵ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.359.
- ⁴⁶ Stanley Fish (1980) *Is there a Text in this Class? The Authority of Interpretive Communities*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- ⁴⁷ In 2017 Harvey published *Marx, Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*. (London: Profile Press.) The title identifies clearly the book's concerns; nonetheless 'media' is mentioned only three times, and the digital computer, the most consequential technology of our age, is discussed only in terms of the global production chain and the fact that, for example, the Apple computer is made in China, but that profit from its sale is realised in the USA (p.199).
- ⁴⁸ Harvey devotes an entire chapter to 'The Question Concerning Technology' in his 2017 book *Marx and Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*. However, it is entirely derivative of Marx in *Capital* and is devoted to questions of labour and value and the 'technological fetish'. Ultimately, Harvey argues, as he does also in *Postmodernity*, that we need to assert democratic control over technological development to 'look for practical technological paths that address the crying need for new social relations, new mental conceptions, new relations to nature and all the other transformations that will

- be required to exit from the current morass', p. 126. About how this control is to be asserted, again, as in *Postmodernity*, little is said.
- ⁴⁹ Noel Castree and Derek Gregory (eds) (2006) *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*. Oxford: Wiley Blackwell.
- ⁵⁰ Castree (2007) 'David Harvey: Marxism, Capitalism and the Geographical Imagination', p.103.
- ⁵¹ *Ibid.*
- ⁵² David Harvey (2017) *Marx and Capital and the Madness of Economic Reason*. London: Profile Press, p.112.
- ⁵³ *Ibid.*, pp.112–113.
- ⁵⁴ Georg Lukács (1990) *History and Class Consciousness*. London: The Merlin Press, p.xxii.
- ⁵⁵ In his discussions on 'alienation' in *Postmodernity* (he refers to 'reification' only three times), he does so in connection with aesthetics, such as in art, literature, film, etc. Moreover, he does so through the lens of the main Marxist theoretician of 'postmodernism' Fredric Jameson, a theorist whom he draws from more than any other thinker except Marx. See pp.54–55 and *passim*.
- ⁵⁶ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.117.
- ⁵⁷ Jean-François Lyotard (1979) *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp.4–5.
- ⁵⁸ *Ibid.* p.4.
- ⁵⁹ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.49.
- ⁶⁰ *Ibid.* p.3.
- ⁶¹ An indication of this disciplinary lack of attention is that the *Dictionary of Marxist Thought*, which seems last to have been published in 1998, even then had no entry for 'media'.
- ⁶² For a writer who sees postmodernism as primarily ideological, it is notable that he mentions Gramsci's basic idea of ideological hegemony only in passing. See *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.113.
- ⁶³ Raymond Williams (1990) *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. London: Routledge.
- ⁶⁴ Stuart Hall (1973) *Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse*. Birmingham: Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies.
- ⁶⁵ John Corner (1997) 'Television in Theory' in *Media, Culture & Society*, 19(2), 247–262, p.251.
- ⁶⁶ Directed by sci-fi producer-director Ridley Scott, '1984' was shown only once, during the Superbowl broadcast. This apparently only added to the ad's mystique and power and it was winning awards as recently as 2007. Rebecca Solnit, writing in *Harper's* magazine in 2014, stated that '1984' 'was made in an era of considerable anxiety about the future.' But also that the ad 'is the beginning of Silicon Valley's fantasy of itself as the solution, not the problem — a dissident rebel, not the rising new Establishment.' See Solnit,

'Poison Apples' *Harper's*, December 2014. <https://harpers.org/archive/2014/12/poison-apples/>

⁶⁷ Jean Baudrillard, 'Ecstasy of Communication', p.133.

⁶⁸ Terry Eagleton (1991) *Ideology: An Introduction*. London: Verso, p.47.

⁶⁹ Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.359.

⁷⁰ To answer this question, I will be drawing on the work of Arnold Gehlen, notably, his *Man in the Age of Technology*, first published in German in 1950.

⁷¹ *The Condition of Postmodernity*, p.284.

⁷² Wolfgang Streeck (2016) *How Will Capitalism End?* London: Verso, p.47.

⁷³ *Ibid.*, pp.237–253.

⁷⁴ The historian Timothy Snyder sees the Millennial generation as a 'generation without history'. See his *On Tyranny*. New York: Tim Duggan Books, p.126.