

Time-Space Compression in the Postmodern Condition

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This text has already been first published in D. Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity : An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Cambridge, Blackwell, 1990, pp. 284-307.



How have the uses and meanings of space and time shifted with the transition from Fordism to flexible accumulation ? I want to suggest that we have been experiencing, these last two decades, an intense phase of time-space compression that has had a disorienting and disruptive impact upon political-economic practices, the balance of class power, as well as upon cultural and social life. While historical analogies are always dangerous, I think it no accident that postmodern sensibility evidences strong sympathies for certain of the confused political, cultural, and philosophical movements that occurred at the beginning of this century (in Vienna for example) when the sense of time-space compression was also peculiarly strong. I also note the revival of interest in geopolitical theory since around 1970, the aesthetics of place, and a revived willingness (even in social theory) to open the problem of spatiality to a general reconsideration (see, e.g., Gregory and Urry, 1985, and Soja, 1988). [...]