



**A CRITICAL READER**

**EDITED BY  
NOEL  
CASTREE  
& DEREK  
GREGORY**

# **DAVID HARVEY**

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**David Harvey**

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# David Harvey

## A Critical Reader

*Edited by Noel Castree and Derek Gregory*



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# Introduction: Troubling Geographies

*Derek Gregory*

There is something troubling about geographies . . .

Harvey 2000c

## Destinations

David Harvey's work can be read in many ways, but whatever else it may be, it is surely both an affirmation and a critique of the power of geographical knowledges. The plural is deliberate. Although Harvey's early writings traced and extended the frontiers of a formal if necessarily fuzzy Geography, he came to realize that geographical knowledges cannot be confined to any one discipline. They are produced in multiple locations, inside and outside the academy, and they shape multiple publics, for good and ill.<sup>1</sup> If 'geography is too important to be left to geographers', as Harvey has repeatedly claimed, he has also insisted that the potency of geographical knowledges does not reside in the accumulation of data in inventories or gazetteers, or even in their selective diffusion through the corridors of power and the circuits of the public sphere. It resides, rather, in the use of ideas – if you prefer (and Harvey does prefer), concepts and theories – that produce a systematic and ordered representation of the world that is sufficiently powerful to persuade others of its objectivity, accuracy and truth. When I describe Harvey's work as an affirmation of the power of geographical knowledges, I do so because he insists that geography matters, that it makes a difference to critical analysis, and because he believes that concepts of space, place

<sup>1</sup> See David Harvey, 'Cartographic identities: geographical knowledges under globalization', in his *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001) pp. 208–33; idem, 'Geographical knowledges/Political powers', in John Morrill (ed.), *The Promotion of Knowledge* (*Proc. British Academy*, 122 (2004)) pp. 87–115.

and landscape unsettle and dislocate mainstream social theory to such a degree that they open up altogether different perspectives on the world. And I describe it as a critique because the development of Harvey's project has distanced him from concepts whose purchase is limited by the calculus of spatial science or whose provenance lies in Continental European philosophy, and because his purpose is to invest the emancipatory potential of other concepts in the materialization of a truly human geography.

This introduction is a rough guide to Harvey's project, written in the first instance for those who may be unfamiliar with the details of his work, and I will argue that his writings in their turn provide a sort of guidebook to the turbulent landscapes of modern capitalism. Not only is there a spatial systematics to his project, a series of itineraries shot through with critical recommendations and evaluations, but there is also something panoramic, selective and authoritative about his view of the world. This is not an unassailable position, however, and the perils of proceeding like this were underscored by one of Harvey's favourite novelists, Honoré de Balzac, when he introduced the *Comédie humaine*. 'The author who cannot make up his mind to face the fire of criticism', he wrote from Paris in 1842, 'should no more think of writing than a traveller should start on his journey counting on a perpetually clear sky.' Fortified by that observation, I propose to map some of Harvey's routes (and roots), and provide some critical signposts to other paths and other destinations that are explored in more detail in the chapters that follow.

### Co-ordinates

While it would be a mistake to collapse Harvey's work into a single journey, two key texts frame his project and reveal a remarkably consistent template: *Explanation in Geography* and *The Limits to Capital*. These are usually read as opposing contributions, separated by the transitional essays of *Social Justice and the City* that recorded Harvey's movement from spatial science to historical materialism. This is a perfectly valid interpretation, but for all the differences between them, I think that there are also a number of revealing continuities.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> For a cogent contextual reading of the transition, see Trevor Barnes, 'Between Deduction and Dialectics: David Harvey on Knowledge', this volume; for further discussion of the continuities that span it, see Eric Sheppard, 'David Harvey and Dialectical Space-Time', this volume.

*Explanation in Geography*, published in 1969, was written against the background of two revolutions. The first was the 'Quantitative Revolution' that convulsed geographical inquiry in the 1960s. This is a shorthand expression (a misleading one at that) for a concerted movement away from traditional regional geography towards a formal spatial science. The study of world regions as building blocks in a global inventory was criticized for its reduction of geographical inquiry to a mundane exercise in compilation and cartography, and in its place a new geography equipped with properly scientific credentials was to be devoted to the search for generalizations about spatial organization in both nominally 'human' and 'physical' domains. Harvey was no observer standing on the sidelines. He occupied a central place in the experimental reconfiguration of the field, and had made several avant-garde contributions to spatial analysis.<sup>3</sup> That spatial science was self-consciously experimental bears emphasis; much of this work was highly speculative, inquisitive, pragmatic, and conducted with little or no awareness of (or even interest in) wider philosophical and methodological issues. If *Explanation in Geography* can be read as an attempt to provide a warrant for those endeavours, however, it also sought to retain the flexibility required by their frontier character. For Harvey insisted on a 'vital' distinction between philosophy and methodology. He claimed not to be concerned in any direct way with philosophical arguments about the 'nature' of geography (though he plainly had views about it) or with the ways in which philosophers of science had established criteria for what he called 'sound explanation'. His focus was on the application of these criteria to geographical inquiry, on the 'logic of explanation', which prompted him to distinguish between 'those aspects of analysis which are a matter of logic and those aspects that are contingent upon philosophical presupposition'.<sup>4</sup>

But it was not possible to uncouple philosophy and methodology as conveniently as this implied. Indeed, Harvey's entire project was based on a central philosophical claim. He rejected the tradition of exceptionalism that

<sup>3</sup> See, for example, David Harvey, 'Theoretical concepts and the analysis of land use patterns', *Ann. Ass. Am. Geogr.* 56 (1966) pp. 361–74; idem, 'Geographical processes and point patterns: testing models of diffusion by quadrat sampling', *Trans. Inst. Br. Geogr.* 40 (1966) pp. 81–95; idem, 'Some methodological problems in the use of the Neyman Type A and negative binomial probability distributions in the analysis of spatial series', loc. cit., 43 (1968) pp. 85–95; idem, 'Pattern, process and the scale problem in geographical research', loc. cit., 45 (1968) pp. 71–7.

<sup>4</sup> David Harvey, *Explanation in Geography* (London: Edward Arnold, 1969) pp. 3–8.

could be traced back to Kant's foundational distinction between different knowledges, and which had received its canonical disciplinary statement in Hartshorne's *The Nature of Geography* in 1939, because he believed that the division had both marooned Geography and History outside the mainstream of scientific progress and also separated them from one another. Unlike the sciences that organized the world into categories on the basis of logical classifications (equivalence, similarity, affinity), and which thus allowed for replication and generalization, Geography and History were supposed to be predicated on physical classifications: that is, on observations of phenomena that occurred together, as singular and unique constellations in either space or time. Against this, Harvey focused on the delineation of a recognizably scientific method, grounded in the philosophy of science in general and positivism in particular, that could underwrite the search for an order (in spatial structure and sequence) beneath the particularities of place. The sense of 'grounding' was crucial: Harvey's project was a foundational one, anchored in bedrock, and he rejected what he called 'extreme' versions of logical positivism precisely because they claimed that knowledge 'could be developed independently of philosophical presuppositions'. The approach that he outlined in *Explanation* derived from Braithwaite, Carnap, Hempel, Nagel and other philosophers of (physical) science who had established the deductive-nomological model as what he termed 'the standard model of scientific explanation'.<sup>5</sup> Again, standardization was essential: for Harvey, like most of his contemporaries, there was only one ('the') scientific method capable of sustaining the production of systematic and generalizable geographical knowledge.

*Explanation* was about more than the projection of these methods onto the terrain of geographical inquiry. Its conceptual fulcrum was space, which Harvey identified as 'the central concept on which Geography as a discipline relies for its coherence'. But for this coherence to be realized, he argued, a double transformation was necessary: space had to be transformed from the planar categories of Euclidean geometry, and its materializations had to be transformed by process ('the key to temporal explanation'). From the very beginning, therefore, one of Harvey's central concerns was to establish the connection between spatial structure and process. The issue had emerged out of his doctoral research on agricultural change in nineteenth-century Kent, a study in traditional historical geography, but Harvey subsequently

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 29–30. This is the only explicit reference to positivism in the whole book but despite Harvey's hostility to these 'extreme' versions of logical positivism, *Explanation* – like most of spatial science more generally – was fully consistent with the protocols of positivism.



reformulated the question in the lexicon of modern location theory. If, as now seemed likely, it was simply impossible to infer generative process from geometric form, then how could a process-based geography be developed? Although he never put it quite like this, how could History and Geography be convened within a plenary, integrated – in a word, unitary – science of terrestrial change? Harvey's principal methodological objective in *Explanation* was to identify modes of spatial analysis that would displace the conventional conception of space as a 'container' (absolute space), and build from but ultimately transcend other geometries of spatial form by setting them in motion. At the time, Harvey took this to be a matter of translation, a means to move between Euclidean (form) and non-Euclidean (process) languages, but the more important point is that processes of geographical transformation were at the very heart of Harvey's project from the outset.<sup>6</sup>

Harvey would later describe Bhaskar's prospectus for a non-positivist social science as a work of 'intimidating difficulty and intensity', but one might say the same of *Explanation*. I was reading Geography at Cambridge when it was published, and even for someone being expertly schooled in spatial science, locational analysis and systems theory it was an unusually demanding text. But it was also unsatisfactory, not least because I was also being taught an historical geography that took Harvey's central question – geographical transformation – with the utmost seriousness, but which also required a close engagement with the empirical, in the field and the archive, that modulated its theoretical dispositions and advanced an analysis of the dynamics of space-economies and landscapes in substantive terms. 'By our theories you shall know us', Harvey had concluded, but I had become drawn to an historical geography that was less about knowing 'us' – forming the disciplinary identity that, to my surprise, still haunted

<sup>6</sup> 'A study of process is not the prerogative of the historical geographer alone', he had written two years earlier, and yet 'an unfortunate gap has developed between the scholarly studies of the specialist historical geographers . . . and the analytical techniques of human geographers concerned with contemporary distributions': David Harvey, 'Models of the evolution of spatial patterns in human geography', in R. J. Chorley and Peter Haggett (eds.), *Models in Geography* (London: Methuen) pp. 549–608: 550. The emphasis on process explains both Harvey's admiration for and his distance from one of the architects of the modern discipline of Geography, Alexander von Humboldt (1769–1859). Harvey clearly admires the systematicity of Humboldt's project, most evident in the multi-volume *Cosmos*, but insists on the need to transcend Humboldt's Kantian view of geographical knowledge 'as mere spatial ordering [to be] kept apart from the narratives of history': David Harvey, 'Cosmopolitanism and the banality of geographical evils', *Public Culture* 12 (2000) pp. 529–64: 554.

Harvey at the very end of *Explanation* – than it was about knowing the world. In fact, he later attributed the limitations of the book to its preoccupation with language, and distanced himself from the formal language systems that structured spatial analysis in favour of ordinary language systems capable of capturing the substance of social practices. You could see the problem in the closing chapters of *Explanation*, where the systems to be modelled remained spectacularly unidentified, so many empty boxes to be tied together, and where their geography had all but disappeared. It had been a long journey down the yellow brick road, and I was left with the uncomfortable feeling that there was nothing behind the wizard's curtain.

As Harvey was soon to remind his readers, however, Marx had warned that there was no royal road to science. *Explanation in Geography* had been written against the background of another revolution of sorts, one that animated the academy but which also filled the streets: the anti-war and civil rights movements in the United States and the events of May 1968 in France, Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Harvey confessed that he had been so preoccupied with methodological issues that he had been more or less detached from these events, and they find no echo in the austere pages of *Explanation*. But soon after its publication, and coinciding with his move from the UK to the United States, Harvey began to explore the ethical and political dimensions of geographical inquiry that had been suspended during his ascetic pilgrimage through the philosophy and methodology of science. His initial forays were recorded in the essays that compose *Social Justice and the City*. This was a much more subversive book than *Explanation* and it had much more of an impact inside and outside the discipline. Harvey gave a lecture based on one of the early essays in the book to an undergraduate conference I attended at Bristol, and the effect was electric. There is always something thrilling about Harvey's performances – I've never seen him read from a prepared text let alone a series of overheads or slides – but this was more than a matter of style: the intellectual apparatus, the political passion and the urban texture were all a long way from the abstracted logics of *Explanation*. Later essays widened the gap, until it must have been difficult for many readers to believe that the two books had been written by the same author. Harvey's denunciation of the trivial pursuits of spatial science (the 'clear disparity between the sophisticated theoretical and methodological framework we are using and our ability to say anything really meaningful about events as they unfold about us') and his exuberant endorsement of the power of historical materialism ('I can find no other way of accomplishing what I set out to do') fused to shock what was one of the very last disciplines in the English-speaking world to take Marx's writings with the seriousness they deserved. And yet, despite Harvey's desire to spark

a 'revolution in geographical thought', he continued to insist on the importance of science (though he now defined it in different terms and understood it as an intrinsically social practice) and reaffirmed the need to provide systematic theorizations of space and spatial transformations (though he now insisted 'there are no philosophical answers to philosophical questions that arise over the nature of space – the answers lie in human practice').<sup>7</sup>

*Social Justice* was only a bridgehead; Harvey knew he needed to do much more work on Marx. I choose my words with care: the object of his studies, and of the various reading groups and courses in which he was involved, was Marx not Marxism. 'I wanted to see how far I could get', he explained, 'from within the framework laid out in Marx's *Capital*, *Theories of Surplus Value*, the *Grundrisse*, and some of the ancillary writings on political economy.'<sup>8</sup> It took him the best part of a decade, and the result was *The Limits to Capital*, published in 1982. This emphasized two central dimensions. First, echoing his earlier insistence on systematicity, Harvey argued that Marx's visionary contribution was 'the capacity to see capitalism as an integrated whole', as a dynamic and dialectical totality. Harvey's previous attempts to exorcise the demons of fragmentation through appeals to systems theory (in *Explanation*) and structuralism (in the coda to *Social Justice*) had been as diffuse as they were formalistic, but he now grounded his arguments in a focused and forensic rereading of Marx's critique of political economy. The discipline, rigour and clarity of Harvey's exposition have been noted by many commentators, though, as I will explain later, these qualities are not universally admired!<sup>9</sup> Second, reinforcing his focus

<sup>7</sup> David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City* (London: Edward Arnold, 1973; Oxford: Blackwell, 1998) pp. 13, 17, 128. The pathbreaking effect of *Social Justice* was recognized by an appropriately forward-looking conference commemorating the twentieth anniversary of its publication: see Andy Merrifield and Erik Swyngedouw (eds.) *The Urbanization of Injustice* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1996).

<sup>8</sup> David Harvey, 'Retrospect on *The Limits to Capital*', *Antipode* 36 (2004) pp. 544–9: 544; see also Alex Callinicos, 'David Harvey and Marxism', this volume.

<sup>9</sup> It is a measure of the rigour of Harvey's exegesis that it should have attracted the equally rigorous commentaries published in the 'Symposium on *The Limits to Capital: Twenty years on*', *Antipode* 36 (2004): the essays by George Henderson, 'Value: the many-headed hydra' (pp. 445–460) and Vinay Gidwani, '*The Limits to Capital*: questions of provenance and politics' (pp. 527–543) in particular are models of serious, scrupulous intellectual engagement, and there are (sadly) precious few books in the field that could attract or sustain such consideration. See also Bob Jessop's careful excavation of *Limits* in 'Spatial Fixes, Temporal Fixes and Spatio-Temporal Fixes', this volume.

on spatial transformations, Harvey argued that Marx's analysis of the dynamics of capitalism as a mode of production, in contradistinction to the pinhead formulations of neoclassical economics, was predicated on (that is, assumed and depended on) the production of a differentiated and integrated (urbanized) space-economy.<sup>10</sup> This was a contribution of unsurpassed originality. The spatial problematic remained latent within Marx's own corpus, and none of the (very few) writers who had thus far registered the production of space under capitalism – including most prominently Henri Lefebvre – had integrated its turbulent landscapes within the logics of capital accumulation.<sup>11</sup> While Marx prioritized time (in the labour theory of value) and historical transformation (in the creative destruction of successive capitalisms) – these were the limits to *Capital* in Harvey's title – Harvey showed that the volatile production of space was at once the solution (or 'spatial fix') and dissolution of capitalism (hence the limits to capital).

If Harvey had shown how space could be built into the framework of historical materialism, as what Perry Anderson has called 'an ineliminable element' of its deductible structure, this was not the last word on the matter, and Harvey never presented it as such (quite the opposite); in fact, he considers the third-cut theory of crisis to be the least satisfactory part of his argument. I know many geographers who were dissatisfied by the closing chapters of the book too, not least because they had expected a detailed reconstruction of the uneven geographies of capital accumulation and circulation. But two decisions had foreclosed that possibility: Harvey's determination to stay close to Marx's own writings rather than trace the subsequent advances of Marxist political economy or economic geography more generally (there are scattered commentaries on some key contemporary controversies, but these are usually relegated to the footnotes); and Harvey's decision to divest the argument of its complicating 'historical content' and instead present his theorizations as a series of 'empty boxes' (his term). These are both serious limits to *Limits*, to be sure, and yet even

<sup>10</sup> This is not the only difference between neoclassical economics and historical materialism, of course. I remember Harvey being taxed at a conference by a cocksure critic who insisted on the superior analysis afforded by the neoclassical trinity of land, labour and capital. Turning to the board where he had developed a complex circuit diagram in the course of his presentation, Harvey showed that the categories he had worked with were landlords, labourers and capitalists. His rejoinder was unforgettable: 'You are telling us you are happier dealing with things than with people.' The emphasis on social relations (and hence on social change) is of vital importance to Harvey's project.

<sup>11</sup> See my discussion of Harvey and Lefebvre in *Geographical Imaginations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1994) pp. 348–416.

on these reduced terms the scale of the task is such that I sympathize with Harvey when he wryly notes the common tendency ‘to criticize texts for what they leave out rather than appreciate them for what they accomplish’.<sup>12</sup>

In a thoughtful commentary on these questions, Trevor Barnes records how much he admired *Social Justice* for its ‘unfinished quality’ – the sense of Harvey arguing not only with others but with himself – whereas *Limits* seemed to him to be preoccupied by a ‘search for definitiveness’ and a sense of closure.<sup>13</sup> In this too, *Explanation* echoes in *Limits*. But when I suggest that the connections between the two provide the foundations for Harvey’s subsequent work, I do not mean to imply that the development of his project has been fully formed around them. Science and systematicity, space and transformation have remained its watchwords.<sup>14</sup> But, as I now want to show, Harvey has also used them to illuminate other paths that have opened up new views over new landscapes.

### Directions

Two new directions seem most significant to me, one conceptual and the other substantive. Although Harvey has continued to remain close to Marx’s critique of political economy, he has also registered the importance

<sup>12</sup> David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1982; London: Verso, 1999); idem, ‘Reinventing Geography’ (interviewer: Perry Anderson), *New Left Review* 4 (2000) pp. 75–97; idem, ‘Retrospect’.

<sup>13</sup> Trevor Barnes, “‘The background of our lives’: David Harvey’s *The Limits to Capital*”, *Antipode* 36 (2004) pp. 407–413.

<sup>14</sup> The absence of any consideration of Harvey’s work from a collection of essays on social theory and space – edited by two geographers – is bizarre (especially when one considers some of the other subjects of their critical acclaim): see Mike Crang and Nigel Thrift (eds.) *Thinking Space* (London: Routledge, 2000). Harvey’s focus on ‘space’ has been unwavering, and its centrality is confirmed by his ‘Space as a Keyword’, this volume. That said, another, looser thematic can be traced through his project: ‘nature’. Although this too is a keyword for both Geography and historico-geographical materialism, Harvey accords it much less systematic discussion. The model of science set out in *Explanation* was derived from a particular reading of the physical sciences, but the question of nature remained submerged in Harvey’s work, breaking the surface only in a clutch of essays on population and ecology (in which Marx sees off Malthus) and in a section of the Paris studies (where Harvey provides a tantalizingly brief account of aesthetic and scientific appropriations of a distinctively urban ‘nature’ in Haussmann’s Paris). It receives its most sustained treatment in his *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996). See Bruce Braun, ‘Towards a New Earth and a New Humanity’, this volume.

of other writings, notably the luminous *Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon*, that were more attentive to the significance of cultural and social relations. I suspect that the vivid prose of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* helped renew Harvey's interest in narrative as a means of conveying the sense that, as Marx famously put it in that pamphlet, 'people make history, but not just as they please nor under conditions of their own choosing', and perhaps it also played a part in his newfound interest in the capacity of the modern novel to capture the urban condition. 'I find myself most deeply impressed', Harvey wrote in *Consciousness and the Urban Experience*, by 'those works that function as both literature and social science'.<sup>15</sup> The finest writings to flow from Marx's pen (and Engels's too) have that same extraordinary power to evoke as well as explain. In addition, Harvey has provided a rereading of the account of primary ('primitive') accumulation found in the first volume of *Capital*, where Marx traced the erasure of non-capitalist economic forms, the supercession of petty commodity production and the final emergence of wage-labour as the dominant modality of the capitalist economy. In *Limits*, Harvey had mapped the circuits of expanded reproduction with precision – the dispersed and distributed exploitation of living labour – and, like Marx, had relegated primary accumulation to the formative stages of the transition from European feudalism to capitalism. But Harvey has since recognised the continued salience of primary accumulation, which – precisely because the process is ongoing – he prefers to call 'accumulation by dispossession', and he has shown how its violent predations are insistently inscribed within contemporary globalizations.<sup>16</sup>

These developments have done more than advance Harvey's project in a conceptual register, for they have also involved a series of substantive considerations that has considerably widened and deepened the scope of his historico-geographical materialism. The *Eighteenth Brumaire* was the date in the French revolutionary calendar when Bonaparte staged his coup d'état in 1799, and Marx drew an ironic parallel between the original mobilization and its 'farcical' repetition by Bonaparte's upstart nephew, Louis Napoleon, in 1851. The subsequent tensions between imperial spectacle and

<sup>15</sup> David Harvey, *Consciousness and the Urban Experience* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1985) p. xv.

<sup>16</sup> See Nancy Hartsock, 'Globalization and Primitive Accumulation', this volume. Cf. Michael Perelman, 'The secret history of primitive accumulation and classical political economy,' *The Commoner 2* (2001); Massimo De Angelis, 'Marx and primitive accumulation: the continuous character of capital's 'enclosures',' loc. cit.; Werner Bonefeld, 'The permanence of primitive accumulation: commodity fetishism and social constitution', loc. cit. These essays are all available at <http://www.thecommoner.org>.

the spectacle of capital provided the epicentre for Harvey's study of Second Empire Paris, originally published as an extended essay in *Consciousness* and recently reissued as *Paris, Capital of Modernity*. The revised version is studded with additional images, many of them drawn from contemporary photographs and prints, but Harvey's interest in cultural forms is most visible in the mirrors he places between Baudelaire's attempts to capture the fugitive traces of modernity, 'the transient, the fleeting, the contingent', and the whirlwind world of Marx's capitalist modernity where 'all that is solid melts into air'. The same analytic is evident in Harvey's critique of *The Condition of Postmodernity*, where the lessons of the *Eighteenth Brumaire* and Second Empire Paris are invoked to draw the contours of modernism and capitalist modernity. But Harvey's primary purpose there is to establish a connection between the volatile cultural formations of postmodernism (in architecture, art, cinema and fiction) and the basal emergence of a new regime of flexible or post-Fordist accumulation. Beginning in the early 1970s, he argued that the logics and disciplines of flexible accumulation had recomposed the circuits of expanded reproduction, and that this was not only coincident with but also causally implicated in the rise of postmodernism as a cultural dominant.<sup>17</sup> There are passages in the book that seem to tremble on the edge of a discussion of primary accumulation, but Harvey was clearly unaware of its contemporary (and contemporaneous) significance. Since then, he has argued with others that 'accumulation by dispossession became increasingly more salient after 1973, in part as compensation for the chronic problems of overaccumulation arising within expanded reproduction'. Harvey's belated awareness of the continuing significance of what Marx had called a 'reserve army of labour' is inseparable from the army of reservists that was called up after 9/11 to serve on the frontlines of American Empire in Afghanistan, Iraq and elsewhere in the world, and the connection he makes between the two armies enriches the critique of the global couplings of neoliberalism and neoconservatism that he provides in *The New Imperialism*.<sup>18</sup>

<sup>17</sup> David Harvey, 'Paris, 1850–1870', in *Consciousness* op. cit., pp. 62–220 and revised and reissued as *Paris, Capital of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 2003); idem, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989). For a discussion of the trope of 'mirroring' that I use here, see Meaghan Morris, 'The man in the mirror: David Harvey's "Condition" of postmodernity', *Theory, Culture and Society* 9 (1992) pp. 253–279; Gregory, *Geographical Imaginations* op. cit., pp. 398–400. But see my cautionary remark on mirroring below, p. 17.

<sup>18</sup> David Harvey, *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) p. 156.

These developments are of great interest, but they raise two issues of considerable moment. First, in the pursuit of these other paths, how far have the co-ordinates Harvey established in the trajectory from *Explanation* to *Limits* continued to guide his project? Can his work still be read through the same grid? Second, in extending the conceptual and substantive boundaries of his project, to what degree has Harvey integrated the theoretical with the empirical? What is the connection between these registers? These questions provide the framework for the rest of this chapter.

### Ariadne's Threads

Science and systematicity, space and transformation: the four threads that I have suggested guide Harvey through the labyrinth of capitalism. The first two enable him to map its logic and reveal the structures of capital accumulation that persist into our own present. The last two enable him to set its geographies in motion and show how the dynamics of capitalism are embedded in its turbulent spaces. I will consider each in turn.

Harvey's interest in Paris was aroused by the year he spent in the French capital in 1976–7. He had planned to spend his time learning more about the debates that were taking place in French Marxism, but he ended up becoming less and less interested in them and 'more and more intrigued by Paris as a city'. Soon he began to wonder how 'the theoretical apparatus in *The Limits to Capital* [might] play out in tangible situations'. The model for his investigations was Carl Schorske's account of late Habsburg Vienna. Harvey was captivated by what he saw as Schorske's extraordinary ability to convey 'some sense of the totality of what the city was about through a variety of perspectives on material life, on cultural activities, on patterns of thought within the city'. This was precisely his own problem: 'How can some vision of Paris as a whole be preserved while recognizing, as Haussmann himself so clearly did, that the details matter?' In a later essay, incorporated within the extended version of the Paris study, Harvey even describes Walter Benjamin's Arcades Project – the multiple files in which the Marxist critic sought to re-present Paris as the capital of the nineteenth century – as an unfinished attempt to tease out 'persistent threads that bring together the whole and render some vision of the totality possible'. But the priority Harvey accords to seeing Paris as a totality is brought into boldest relief in his celebration of what he calls Balzac's 'synoptic vision'. The novelist's greatest achievement, so Harvey argues, was his ability 'to get beneath the surface appearance, the mad jumble, and the kaleidoscopic shifts' of early nineteenth-century Paris; to 'penetrate the labyrinth' and



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