A place, according to David Harvey, is a social process which has to be simultaneously represented and imagined – the construction of spaces depends on the dialectic that plays out between experience, perception and imagination which forms the matrix on which the social relations of class, gender, community, ethnicity or race can then operate. (Harvey: 1993:17). For him, imagination thus is an integral part of the construction of a place, it is that which lifts a place from being a mere physical space to an “authentic place of representation” (Ibid:18). He deems this definition of place as a middle ground that can be achieved in between Marxian and Heideggerian concepts of space and agrees with Anderson that “communities and places cannot be distinguished in the realms of discourse ‘by their falsity/genuineness, but [only] by the style in which they are imagine’” (Ibid: 16. He illustrates his point with the story of Times Square in New York which was a product of the political economy and yet goes on to be appropriated through the years by the population and became an “authentic place of representation. (Ibid: 18). Yet, later in the same work, he emphasises the difficulty of projects such as the Multifuctionopolis in Australia or the city of Chandigarh in India. He rues that it is difficult to reconcile these projects with the sense of security and familiarity that attachment to a place can bring, (Ibid:16) while completely eschewing the factor of time which he accounts for in the case of the Times Square. It is interesting that while he recognises the role of imaginative time invested by the populacne in creating the Time Square as it exists today, he does not account for the same when discussing projects that he finds utopian (Ibid:16). He thus takes Anderson’s idea of the imagined community only to contain it within that which is familiar, restricting, in the process, the scale of imagination.

The concept of the scale, as per Neil Smith, is a social process the production of geographical scale a ‘” potentially intense political struggle” (Smith:1993: 97). Consequently, his classification of scale becomes problematic when applied to practice. He explains that the construction of scale “is not simply a spatial solidification…Scale is an active progenitor of specific social processes… scale both *contains* social activity and at the same time provides an already partitioned geography within which social activity takes place” (Ibid: 101). The difficulty with this definition is that, for example, if the concept of Smith’s national scale is applied to the region depicted on an Indian political map as Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, it would be difficult to assign a nationality to the region itself – the political state of India lays a claim on it, as does Pakistan. Furthermore, a certain part of the population holds Kashmir itself to be their nation. Which nation would that national scale then adhere to when concerned with the POK?

Which scale would the trade carried out at Chungking Mansions, Hong Kong, fit into? The global scale, because of the varying nationalities of the people who exist within that space? Often, as the Mathews points out, ethnic groups contain themselves within a tight circle, remaining ignorant of even their neighbours (Mathews: 2011:27). Taking into account this active alienation of the visible other, would their economic engagements then align within the scale of community? There are people in India who think of their villages as their “desh” - their country, their nation. These men, women and children are not bound within a single social situation and can be found across large cross sections of society. How do we then situate their eco-politico engagements within the spectrum of Smith’s scales? Which ‘nation’ or ‘community’ or ‘region’ should be considered?

Which imagined community are we to recognise when assigning a certain scale to a place, or deeming a geographical space a place?

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