**Harvey's "From Space to Place and Back Again"**

To answer the questions for this reading (unlike last week essay, I am answering the questions of assignment in accordance with the texts), in my case I believe it’s a good idea to depart from the definition of representation and imagination in anthropology. One of the classical approaches is that representations are elements to construct epistemology, which then produces the type of legitimate knowledge from the standing of those at power (see more in Said ‘Orientalism, Rabinow, 1985). There seems to be less work done on purely imaginations. Yet, if one considers the link between memory and imaginations then it is clear that in one cases imagination is altogether ignored (see more in Nora 1989) and in the other it is associated with the practices of *inscription*  and *incorporation* (see more in Connerton, 1989; Strathern 1990).

Having this delineation at hand, let’s have a look at Harvey’s interpretation of imagination and representation under the influence of Anderson’s ‘imagined communities’ (1983). Going back and forth between Heidegger and Marx, Harvey arrives to the conclusion that imagination is an integral part of a given space with its particularities and limitations. At the same time, to some degree, it depends on responsibilities and tactile constructions among people (p. 14). This is due to the fact that we live in a world of ‘universal tension between sensuous and interpersonal contact in place’ (ibid.). He, however, does not view imagination and representation separately but rather in Lefebvrian terms as constituents of ‘social practices’ (p. 23) coming to the surface to various extent. Harvey seems to identify discursively both domains as fluid givens, which otherwise reflects the Marxist understanding of imagination and representation ‘preceding production’ (quoted in p. 16). In Harvey’s understanding there is more a dialectical correlation between the two (p. 17). To illustrate, he gives an example of Times Square that was imagined once as a ‘pseudo-place’ on earth being an ‘authentic dwelling in the Black Forest’ (ibid.). While the constructed representation was completely different from that imagined. In other words it was linked to ‘everything … commercial, gaudy, promotional and speculative…’ (ibid.). So, he seems to take it farther than Marx from the speculative and unconscious to the localised (outside of reproduction and transformation) and produced ‘through the simple logic of… capital investment’ (p. 5). His illustration of Times Square though reaffirms Marx’ postulate on capitalisms’s tendency to defeat ‘space by time’ (quoted in Neil Smith, p. 114). As a matter of fact, it could be argued that he seems to view representation within *public* (Scott 1985) register and imagination – *hidden* one 23.

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**Neil Smith's Homeless/global: Scaling Places**

Harvey’s student Smith, studying the Homeless Vehicle (place for homeless) takes the tension further to the realm of scaling or ‘reinscribing and reorganising’ (p. 90). He explains scaling then as a domain that ‘fractures previous boundaries of daily intercourse, and establishes new ones. It converts other spaces previously excluded, into the known, the made, the constructed. In short, it redefines the scale of everyday life…’ (ibid.). He sees it not merely as ‘the production of space in the abstract, but the concrete *production andpreproduction fo geographical scale* [italicised by the author] as a political strategy of resistance’ (ibid.).

To illustrate the ways of building scales, Smith takes the example of the 4-hour riot of 1988 at Tompkins Square Park and Lower East Side in New York of evictees and homeless people. In particular, he believes that scales are initially created by means of localising spatial differentiation. Then, scale is made within a social process that is it ‘is produced in and through societal activity, which, in turn, produces and is produced by geographical structures of social interaction (p. 97). This does not mean however, that the struggle is complete. Scale becomes a locale for future political struggle of different level and kind.

Hence, in geographical and social understanding, scale is not merely ‘a spatial solidifaction or materialisation of contested social forces and processes… [it] is an active progenitor of specific social processes’ (p. 101). It envelopes and homes social activity. It includes ‘the sites of social contest, the object as well as the resolution of contest’ within body, home, community, urban, region, nation and global (ibid.). I believe the meaning of scales for me, as anthropologist, is in considering not only the headlines of the ‘irregular’ area, participants or subject chosen, for instance but also of those muted and veiled messages they carry at various stages. Those covered memos, correspondingly, seem to carry more accurate information and present reality in a less biased way. Scales then help me in taming my imagination and moulding my representation of the area, participants and the subject.

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Ethnographically, perhaps, Gordon’s depiction of Chungking Mansions, identified by him as ‘ghetto at the Centre of the World’ of ‘low-end globalisation’ could present scales in action. To begin with, by way of analysing political-economic circumstances, circulation of people, commodities, hopes and representations he implies on the linearity of the relationship between space and power. That is at various stages and points, power creates spaces. Particularly, the 17-store mansion capable of hosting 4000 people at a time and home to over 129 nations, in line with Gordon is a place for a single ideology, law and morale – ‘to make money’ (p. 101). Hence, no credentials, previous background or knowledge of Cantonese, local language, really matter. Within this frame, however, there are other power dynamics that dictate and stimulate thriving of this place.

Particularly, it is worth mentioning that those are both attracting and distracting power presence. From the point of view of people from developing countries this place is accessible unlike other developed countries. It is comparatively easy to obtain visa in addition to cheap housing and food (p. 16). In addition, welfare pays some HK$ 4000 (p. 88). It is a place, where nobody would punish for selling copy goods (p. 114). Yet, there is another side of the power that brings all these people to Chungking Mansions. For some, it is the only way to feed immediate and large families back home, some those who fail either go back home as “losers” while some become drug addict. For the other, it is the opportunity to realise their entrepreneurial abilities smothered by corrupt governments back home.

In this process of production of this special place people seem to engage to different extent. Certainly, on the one hand, there is interethnic and interpersonal interaction having English, as a lingua franca, for example (p. 94). At the same time some prefer when hiring for job, for example to stay within ethnic and religious boundaries (p.98) or organising their leisure time preferring particular channel. On the other hand, however, there is the engagement within timeframe: those here for temporary stay and work seem not to care as much as permanent dwellers, like Fahad Ali concerned about the reputation of the place.