5 Space, lived culture, and affectivities in stirring imagination

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Introduction

These promptings of enquiry necessarily take me into recent insights surrounding the complexity and nuance that is human life and how that living emerges in swirls of practice, memory, space, and time, along with a scatter of so-called wider, but often more incidental, influences marked in things like advertising, graffiti, or street signs, vibrating notions of class, ethnicity, gender, and age. Thus, cultural studies theorist and empirical researcher John Fiske (1989/2010) adroitly pursued the ground-breaking insight that situated popular culture is being made through human lives, not through outwardly influencing product promotions but based on cultural appropriations of those popular products within the context of everyday life.

In a deeper, more politically intent way, the cultural critic Raymond Williams pursued this kind of opening-up insight in terms of relations between everyday lives and more structural powers in his work on the *structure of feeling* that expounds that “culture is ordinary” (Williams, 1965). Williams considered and insisted that ideas, feelings, and values are always in process. So often, semi-popular writing on film, music, and other media “induction” of culture seems to be oblivious to the depth and quality of this whole range of cultural understanding. Moreover, is it not also more likely that high-scale media may produce and influence, mainly when it meets already existing tendencies towards a way of feeling, a connection in one’s memory, a current awareness at other moments, and components of living?

In this chapter, I examine more recent contributions to our making sense of how imagination emerges, how creativity emerges and relates to imagination, and how both phenomena fit within a nuanced complexity of living. Of course, it is also necessary to introduce into this mixture or swirl of real life the possible influences of highly invested and stylized media by way of television, film, everyday newspapers, and popular and archival classical music as well as popular photography and other new art forms, literature on paper, and online. Yet in this chapter, my goal remains to illuminate our increasingly obfuscated everyday living as human beings (rather than consumers or tourists, just living people) and how this everyday context produces myriad

resonances that may affect what we do and how we feel, in terms articulated as affectivities, atmospheres, and worlding. In other words, where does the multiplicity of difference amongst media “fit” in the embroilment of our lives?

Creativity is performative; it happens in living; it appeals because it is vital, a dynamic through which people live, individually and collectively. Hallam and Ingold explained: “creativity is a process that living beings undergo as they make their ways through the world. . . . This process is going on, all the time, in the circulation and fluxes of the materials that surround us and indeed of which we are made – of the earth we stand on, the water that allows it to bear fruit, the air that we breathe” (Hallam & Ingold, 2007: 2).

In this discussion, I focus upon the multiplicity of things, events, memories, actions, and performativities in which individuals are engaged, through which their imagination may be stimulated or ablated, stirred, or flattened. Closely akin to the notion of imagination sits the idea of creativity, and it is through this couplet, imagination and creativity, that the discussion progresses, with close attention to that swirl in and through which imagination and creativity may occur, may happen. Imagination, like creativity, is not located merely in the sphere of “cultural industries” or “creative people”. Indeed, much of the time, contexts exemplified in “the media” flicker and affect but do not determine.

In particular, these considerations engage the anthropological thinking of Stewart (2007, 2011) on the atmospheres of everyday and far away space; philosophical work by Massumi (2002) and Manning (2009) on how affectivities occur, including engagement in tourism; and more tourism-explicit theorists who have made a number of distinct contributions to understanding tourism as an essentially human and also intersubjective process (e.g. Crossley, 1996). The anthropologist Ingold has tracked the occurrence of creativity that brings us close to locating imagination. Others, mainly anthropologists, close to making sense of the imaginative character and being-tourist are Hazel Andrews (2011), de Botton (2002), Ed Bruner (2005), and Sally Ness (2016), whose work individually and collectively is engaged with the *humanizing* of what we make of doing tourism and its hybrid or pervasive sites and practices of the imagination. I bring together progress in human geography, especially cultural geography, that further enlarges the significance of human action.

Throughout the pages that follow lies an insistence to critique the familiar emphasis, exemplified in tourism, of business as *the* producers of imagination. In the book *The Media and Tourist Imagination*, we first sought to challenge this duality (Crouch et al., 2005). The word *Tourist* in the title sets the scene for this refusal to find the tourists mere bystanders waiting for a fix. Here, my discussion works with insights that have been developed since. The section that immediately follows goes directly to the matter of locating.

Locating our thinking too

The idea of *locating* could be taken to invite an approach that fixes the moment of being, of existence, whether human or other-than-human, as something that *occurs* in time and space. Or indeed, to focus a moment, it seeks a demarcation of the spatial in relation to an occurrence and indeed vice versa. There is, however, a more flexible way in which being located may affect the imagination. Imagination is not fixed but *occurs*, rather like creativity.

Hallam and Ingold (2007) focus upon the notion of cultural improvisation, which makes creativity universally available. There is a sense here, too, that perhaps because of the omnipresence of formalized, industrialist, and commercialized culture, as in film and kinds of musical and artistic performance, the everyday occurrent creativity may be submerged, obscured, even obliterated moment to moment by highly invested, often pseudo-crafted, mediated pressures. They change our thinking of creativity. Moreover, their ideas contrast with the notion that what people do in life is organized through a fixed plane of routine procedures. We are all able to be creative much of the time. Two further characteristics of creativity, and I argue this stretches comfortably to imagination, arise. The habitual and routine require adjustment and response, as the world and the way we feel at one moment and another. Our response to materials; tools; music; or an old, familiar photograph can be felt to take on another significance altogether. Doing tourism is performative and playful. Its adult play can reveal imagination and creativity. Taken seriously, play creates the desire to explore, to try something out – indeed, to “go further” in becoming (Crouch, 2010a: 63–82).

A more energetic, lively reading of creativity emerges from discussions of Deleuze and Guattari (1988). They do this in a way that brings our thinking around imagination into direct contact with space, at the same time sustaining the experience of living that includes affections. Their notion of space accommodates both place and space as a continual variation and an imagined rock of intimately felt reliability. That discourse is significant in terms of locating, too. Whilst locating imagination is our task as observers and interpreters of its emergence, as this chapter unfolds, our human relations with space in all its forms and characteristics turn out to be important and energetic components.

Spaces and/of imagination

For Deleuze and Guattari (1988), space consists of and exists in vitality and energy. Space is not merely here or there, as points with distances between, nor is it fixed in and by overriding governments, territories, and other structures. Space is more than their materials and their physical and metaphorical assemblage. Space is more and more understood as contingently related in flows, energies, and the liveliness of things – always in construction rather than fixed and certain. A space here or there may be felt to be constant,

consistent, and uninterrupted, but that feeling is subjective and contingent. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari argue that subjectivity works within the intensive capacity to affect and to be affected. They use the term *spacing* to introduce a fresh way of conceptualizing these process-dynamics of the unstable way in which space and life relate and participate in a world of vitalism. Spacing occurs in the gaps of energies amongst and between things: in their comingling. Their interest thus emerges in the middle of things, in the in-between (Crouch, 2010a: 11–18).

As human beings, we act in ways that seek to engage the vitality of space. We are constantly seeking to go further, containing a sense of potentiality, and yet at the same time, we seek to hold on, to treasure and to be contained, having the feeling of being alive. As space emerges in our experience, practices, feelings, spaces, and affects commingle. We may project semi-conscious shapes and colours onto space, demarcating it as a “location”, but this is unavoidably of at least practical subjectivity. Thereby, it is partly ours but partly also shared. Space may be affected by what a friend may have said, a fleck of memory of somewhere else, an earlier moment in this space, a television programme or a story we came across at random, or a film or sound we happen to have heard, positively or negatively.

I have been profoundly affected by the writing of another anthropologist, Kathleen Stewart, with regard to affect and atmosphere. In one of her recent papers, she describes these “atmospheric attunements” as follows:

Attention to the charged atmospheres of everyday life. . . . How circulating forces are generated as atmospheres per se, how they spawn worlds, animate forms of attachment and detachment and become the live background of living and living through things. Writing through several small cases selected out of countless potentially describable moments and scenes in which of something happening becomes tactile. I try to open a proliferative list of questions about how forces come to reside in experiences, conditions, things, dreams, landscapes, imaginaries, and lived sensory moments. How do people dwelling in them become attuned to the sense of something coming into existence of something waning, sagging, dissipating, enduring, or resonating with what is lost or promising? I suggest that atmospheric attunement are palpable and sensory yet imaginary and uncontained, material yet abstract. They have rhythms, valencies, tempos, and varied and changing lifespans. They can pull the sense into alert or incite distraction or denial.

(Stewart, 2011: 445)

Typically, Stewart silently informs us of her “research method” that nets the myriad components of lives and doings in observations and open conversations as well as hearing the background and the off-stage.

Stewart appeals because her abstractions work in articulating, sometimes even poetically, an ability to engage and relate numerous elements occurring

in existence. Similarly, her space is fleshy, felt, malleable, shifting. “Things flash up – little worlds, bad impulses, events alive with some kind of charge” (Stewart, 2007: 68). Memory, across diverse and multiple spacetimes, can be jogged into new affectivities in the performative character of our actions (Crouch, 2003). Space is relational, subjective but also personal. The significant late geographer Doreen Massey articulated space to be a relative product or interrelations, connected through identities and entities that provide it with directions, scale, meanings, borders, and difference (Massey, 2005). A “contemporaneous plurality . . . predicated on the existence of plurality” (ibid: 9), contingent upon those temporary moving relations that shape it by means of literature, metaphors, mathematics, art, and poetry. Space is a “simultaneity of stories-so-far” (ibid). It is Massey’s “plurality” that calls attention to the multiplicities of attitudes, feelings, remembering, directions, and happenstances that swirl in the moments of touring, which we may abbreviate as *flirting with space*, the feel of the possibility of becoming combined with uncertainty, the implicit if possibly agonizing hope of playfulness, contingent enjoyment, frustration, anxiety, and hope. In spacing, our emotions become alive in the tactility of our thought; any day, we can discover our life and its spaces anew (Crouch, 2005: 23–35, 2010a: 1–10). Numerous outward contexts (i.e. mediated from beyond our own lives) exist and may affect, yet not as primary or privileged but commingling unevenly with our ever-fluid memory, imagination and desires. These are all contexts that roll from moment to moment, gather, and break.

Feeling, space, and knowing

The art-influenced philosopher Erin Manning (2009) takes this approach further. “(A) feels the world. Watch her reading a book; she touches it, puts her face into it, listens to the pages rustling, smells it, looks at it. Becoming-bodies feel – with the world. Don’t mistake feeling for emotion. Emotion is the rendering of an affect, feeling is its force” (ibid: 219). What is outward, a film, a book, a song, is meshed in and amongst our lives and feelings. Respectively, they do not take position in line, nor do they work in succeeding layers of significance and signification. Movement is foregrounded in diverse multiple atmospheres, not scales or layering in the sense of consecutively settled strata but sliced, dripping, and chopped into each other, commingling perhaps. What we call “the media” finds itself somewhere amongst these energies and movements in our lives. Manning argues a further animation of space:

This feeling – with its proprioceptive, immediately linked to our sense of balance, to our ability to *space* space. We don’t need to put our hands on the walls to feel them, or to touch the ground to know where it is. Touch crossed with vision and sound field the environment, opening it to the relational multiplicity of movement, sensation, and space-time commingling.
(2009: 49)

Atmosphere momentarily coagulates as the settings and contents of living and is full of life, as is space though spacing. The geographer Ben Anderson, like Stewart, finds that what matters about atmosphere is the ways in which it is actually lived, engaged, and made some sense of. Atmospheres change, multiply, contradictorily, amoebically (Anderson, 2009); so do the components and relations of the affective. Crucially, we may not be aware of being affected. Massumi puts it like this: “Affect as a whole, then is the virtual co-presence of potentials . . . our living bearing numerous possibilities in however modest ways that can merge, co-relate, affect. These potentials, as unexpected and unimagined possibilities, occur not only in our own self but in our relations with others, including the other-than-human and materialities” (Massumi, 2002: 203). In a direct consideration of art, Turions (2013) puts it this way: “Affect proved to be an elusive concept. . . . Rather the force of manipulation that an artwork carries . . . a tactic we use to press on each other” (also see Crouch, 2014, 2015).

Cultural geographer Hayden Lorimer emphasizes, too, the influence and affects we can find in our relation to “other than human” life (Lorimer, 2006). The philosopher Jane Bennett (2010: 109) argues:

to acknowledge the non-human materialities as participants in a political ecology is not to claim that everything is always a participant, or that all participants are alike. Persons, worms, leaves, bacteria, metals and hurricanes have different types and degrees of power, just as different persons have different types and degrees of power . . . but surely the scope of democratisation can be broadened to acknowledge more non-humans in more ways in which we have come to hear the political voices of other humans.

As we gather and listen to, hopefully with sensitivity and depth, the responses of our “participants”, it becomes clear that imagination emerges in us; it floats amongst things; it can be borrowed. Amongst these flecks emerge words, multiply expressed, and feelings become currency. As human beings, we do not need to leave capacities of imagination or creativity to the media and others particularly skilled – or not – in order to understand the imagination of tourism or anything else. . . . To do so makes a political as well as intellectual error in rendering importance, and power, by assuming what is thought important actually is. Moreover, we need to fragment the power to imagine and recognize its immanent presence in the complex whole of participants, energies, and atmospheres called life.

Towards tourism and its filmic affectivities

It is commonly presumed that where people go, and what they do there, is in response to particular mediated forms of knowing – in film, music, or other dominant contemporary cultural forms. Their imagination is stirred

by it; their journey is shaped by its content; their potential for certain kinds of activities at particular times ruled by fashion. . . . In this way of thinking, people are positioned as recipients of imagination rather than making imagination themselves and consciously deciding to accept, appropriate, or reject these projected imaginations.

It is presumed that their journey is primed by the possibilities of the media. There is a prevalent idea that, in our time, perhaps the most powerful of such “inducements” rests in, or is owned by, film, expressed in the extreme term of film-induced tourism (Beeton, 2005), music-induced tourism, and so on. Familiar presumptions in cross-disciplinary contributions to the role of tourism in contemporary culture habitually locate cultural affects outside the intimacy of individuals’ lives. In such a scenario, tourist imagination is constituted from “the outside”. It follows that being-tourist is a matter of separation from everyday life and its living. Tourism equals escape, a labelling that immediately prioritizes the businesses’ image of wonder in what, even more strangely, is applied to anywhere one may visit or go, whether that be a church, temple, rocky beach, mountain, local lake, or sea. Each is habitually characterized as a tourism product, each habitually transformed into a “destination image”. Even if the “destination” is powered by, for example, dance events, these destinations are still the product of human activity – and human imagination – but not of the tourism industry. So whose imagination is actually at work?

That the word “induced” seems to be applied to an act and affectivity of any media is bemusing, rendering a character of giving birth (cf. Beeton, 2005). At its core, the word “induced” implies to bring about, to persuade, to convince, even to cause. In this discussion, I seek to examine what happens surrounding the doing or practice of tourism, being tourist, and so on. I am particularly concerned with entering and evaluating the nuance and complexity, indeed of feeling, as well as knowing, in which the individual (a part-time tourist, of course) engages. Enhancing such insight promises a fuller understanding of what is at play.

Thinking like this shares character with John Urry’s (2011) widespread idea of the tourist gaze, the infectious enthusiasm for a one-dimensional reading of what people do and how they “consume” place based on certain “injected” media images; in the extreme, perhaps, the notion of beaches, mountains, even mosques, churches, temples are being constituted by tourism institutions as tourism products, a rather far-fetched notion by any standard. One more notion in a linked panoply of errors amongst tourism studies that may deserve fuller understanding is the romancing of mobilities, as though the whole world was on a big trip (Urry, 2007; Cresswell, 2006). In his defence, Urry proclaimed that distinctiveness amongst social groups born of strategies of mobilities is as important in understanding and explaining society as ethnicity, gender, class, and age in terms of social structure and difference (Urry, 2007). So often each of these “understandings” plays to the notion that much is led by business alone. People are enumerated in

huge surveys that identify “truth” by statistical presumption. The tourist gaze hardly squares with the nuance and complexity of flirting with space; Manning’s enlightenment concerning feeling; and Stewart’s atmospheres, affects, and attunements. The latest edition of *The Tourist Gaze* does take into consideration early critique on the notion of the tourist gaze but fails to progress to these enlightenments offered by Manning, Stewart, and others (Urry & Larsen, 2011).

In this chapter, the ideas of space and spacing are examined to consider how this character of emergence of imagination may involve some commingling with space and spacing. The ways and extent to which imagination may be brought forward by impulses and assertions, encouragements or accidents, may involve other ways of imagining, an imagining that may arise from energies and affects closer to individuals’ lives.

Moreover, the pursuit of the multiplicity of actors, not merely participants surrounding and producing imagination, requires some attention to both imagination and another energy of things in relation, creativity, and considerations of the origin, purpose, and affectivities of play. In handling spacing, placing and positioning the multiple flows of moments rather than in fixed points of imagination rather than locating being merely a linear recourse to popping each component into a sequential position, individuals engage these flows with uneven and sometimes commingling acts of spacing (Crouch, 2010a, 2017).

I worked on a project with a professional photographer and film maker in an exploration of the possibility of projecting a re-imagination of locations of tourism attraction. Richard Grassick was a founding member of the Newcastle-based Amber Films. Sharing attitudes towards the overburden of particular filmic and otherwise promotional efforts to bind a region of Britain into a particular narrative, we set out to make in the first place a documentary-style photographic narrative of everyday lives in homes, workplaces, local community venues, pubs, and so on, as “People of the Hills” (Grassick & Crouch, 1999; Crouch & Grassick, 2005). The dominant narrative of the locality is “The Land of the Prince Bishops”, whose importance dates from the best part of a millennium ago and whose influence survives in land ownership, castles, and power in local cultural reference. The contemporary regional corporate presentations project and promote a dominant culture and context through which visitors will – so they hope – experience ideas and values and maybe discover imagination: a “tourist product”, though produced over nearly a millennium.

Supported by local funding, the Hills project might be understood or “consumed” [sic] as another facet of things to get into a visitor itinerary. Or it may be found as an alternative set of voices in the land, inscribing the daily lives, feelings, and attitudes of individuals working and living in the locality and their enjoyments and pastimes, pressures and concerns. This was only a small project but one that might be inspiring for others interested in multiplying the facets of experience and knowing

amongst visitors whilst at the same time lending empowerment to local people beyond the marginal income from tourist letting. Throughout the project that stretched over more than two years, photographs and voices of the photographed were taken to many different venues in villages surrounding the area and its people photographed, enabling feedback and mutual participation. Projects such as this make possible a stir of locals' and visitors' imaginations; prompts, alternative attitudes, or atmospheres of almost-familiar locations that challenge other, prevailing commercial producers of imagination. Thankfully, recent years have seen increasing examples of similar artistic interventions in encouraging these open, collective, and grass-roots types of imagining place (Crouch, 2010a: 103–117).

Compare how the anthropologist Ed Bruner (2005) recounts the way individuals tend to talk about “home” when they are, supposedly, “away”. Another anthropologist, Hazel Andrews, identifies the doings of particular groups of English visitors on charter trips to Magaluf with an assertion, a realization of Englishness, in, for example, all-day English breakfasts and, alas, sexist and racist events, that they feel denied back home, thereby feeling they can “hold on” to their identity whilst “away” from “home” (Andrews, 2011). Ness downplays the familiar “casting” of Yosemite in the glow of nation as a component of “home”. Instead she identifies how, in walking and climbing, visitors to Yosemite National Park feel what matters there through the bodily “performance”, knowing the feel of the rocks and tracks in a multiple range of performativities combined in a doing informed by previously spending time in similar sites or previous visits to this same location (Ness, 2016). In this they, too, discover becoming, a “going further”, going beyond, outside a mediated script. In each of these examples, the significance of “home” is in its near-inducement of individuals' choice of tourism location. The location of their imagination is in everyday activities, connections, practices. Embedded in this, perhaps, is the significance of holidays spent visiting friends and relatives, often unrealized as the most popular form of vacationing.

Engaging with Colapietro's observation on the multiplicity of affectivities, Ness (2016: 23) explains:

The shift from representation to mediation reinforces the dance-like character of the pragmatic sign, rhetorically conceived. . . . Asserting that the play of relationships-in-movement in which all kinds of signs participate agentively can matter – can “bear fruits”, or make differences . . . even when play entails nothing that could be identified as representational. Signs . . . do not have to “stand for” to make sense. They can move (in-)formally as well.

For Tim Winter, the experience of Angkor Watt is mixed with being together with friends and family members. “Being there” is constituted by

the feeling of having other people around and by memories from elsewhere (Crouch, 2010b). He situated his approach as follows:

Constructing an account of the tourist encounter around a subject centred temporality reveals the dynamics which facilitate the formation of a series of collective identities. More specifically, it will be seen that in addition to being rendered meaningful through the presence of imagined pasts and futures, an encounter with Angkor actually serves to give meaning to an abstract Cambodian history.

(2007)

As the philosopher Alain De Botton (2002) skilfully narrated, autobiographically, we take our lives with us when we go away: relationships, ideas, feelings of belonging and wanting to “get away”. I recall a *Guardian* newspaper travel editor remarking to me informally at a conference in the United Kingdom a quarter-century ago that most people seem to want to know they will be largely secure when away from home: times of meals, even television schedules. The media, including film, unmistakably can contribute to the shaping of our anticipation of holidays. These join an enormous diversity of features, impulses, and affectivities that constitute our feel and grasp of what we may like to do, whom we may like to be with, and where we may do so.

However, along with the notion of tourism being, even in very specific cases, predominantly film-induced, the too-easy label of such a thing as a “tourism bubble” similarly can be disrupted. The experience and practice of a holiday does not dispense with everyday life for the holiday duration. It may be unthought for a while, just as many moments, feelings, and events can be in any day we live. It is vital for our enquiries to do as these investigations have done: to go beyond finding how and how much this or that mediation affected and effected decisions and liking for kinds of trips, that way dramatizing what it selects. The rich challenge is to go beyond these and do so more deeply, relating different impulses, unpicking the complexity and nuance in life. Hence a more involved “research method” is required, one that *relates* rather than *isolates*.

Living happens in fluid, uncertain, and changing moments and memories. This everyday character of living, with its various time trajectories, is contextual, too – it shapes our ongoing feelings about life. It is amongst the multiplicity of things, events, memories, actions, and performativities through which we discover in a habitual and unrehearsed way and through which we move from “being” to “becoming”, in which individuals are engaged and amongst others share, that we might term the art of “flirting with space” (Crouch, 2010a).

Concluding observations

Our doings, relations, and identities constitute and give character to the dynamic web that is culture. Another commingling, another resistance or

avoidance, another creativity occurs. Thus, the liveliness of space is dynamic: iterative, variously felt, existing. It is into this pulsating mixture, this milieu, this atmosphere, that outwardly produced events and their media implant. Numerous multiple contexts flicker and nudge, not as primary or privileged but as part of our living, commingling with our ever-fluid memory, imagination, and dreaming desires. We listen to friends and exchange our memories of stories, even from childhood, envision the future and evoke spaces we knew, know, and might like to know. These moments are all contexts that roll moment to moment and gather and break. In these processes and practices, we become. We become creative, we imagine; we may imagine with the connection or disconnection that a new impulse, a film, a sound may incite as a stone in the water, as it slips into our living.

If we seek to discover the impact of, for example, an imaginative film or musical score, we should do so by starting with the question whether each may have been felt to be influential on a decision we may make. Inevitably, that focuses on the film or musical score and privileges this object on which we have chosen to focus. By prioritizing and privileging that object, its popularity is enhanced. But in the end, it may have been only one affect amongst numerous others. It is important to acknowledge and to celebrate everyday imagination and its spurs to creativity; let's acknowledge the everyday imagination that makes those affects possible in the first place.

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