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The Politics of Dyscape: Globalization, Community and Power of Place

Ngai Pun

Division of Social Science, Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

Abstract

This paper, first of all, aims to engage in a dialogue with the current studies on “globalization from below” in general, and “geographies of resistance” in particular. Having been attracted to the ideas of "globalization from below" or "resistance to globalization", this paper calls for a bringing back of agency onto the center of the studies - if not, the insights of globalization from below or resistance will be hollowed out. Steve Pile and Micheal Keith (1997) work hard to deconstruct a dyadic relationship between the geographies of resistance and the geographies of domination, from which the two never has to mirror each other and the geography of resistance should hardly been entrapped by the typology of domination. This paper, instead, would like to argue that in between the mirroring fissure, the borderland, there is a kind of minor scale whose existence is not reliant on the process of othering as de Certeau might put it, or a sort of heterotopia as Michele Foucault might argue, but always has its own logic, a logic that can never be stripped off its own essence. Situated my study in a Hong Kong community - Tsuen Wan, I tried to theorize a sort of underclass spatial form, a minor scale of resistance- dyscape. The term dyscape is coined from two words: dystopia and landscape. Instead of the using the word, dystopia, which implies too much pure imagination, and thus unreal when it juxtaposes to utopia, the term, dyscape is a kind of "spatial real", too real to be accepted in any mapping of domination. I would like to emphasize a kind of spatial form that is always there, though with its unpleasant presence. It is a kind of spatial form that the state never wants to see, wants them exist, and yet fails to remove them. It is a minor scale of resistance and always political contested, making the technology of domination always a dream, if not a lie, for the state, and revealing the most richness of everyday practices.