Urban Geography and Body Image

Urban geography

- Contemporary theories unravel the flaws of power and dominant ideologies.
- Why do people do what they do? – why is housing put where it is – why do people want a river view?
- Consumption and reproduction of capital – housing built for profit – needs spaces to reinvest – where is the social housing built?
- Consider the interplay between urban landscape and our self identity.

Body image

- Your mental image of how you appear to others
- The ‘look’ one has for others – how we want to appear, what we want to portray
- The way we feel in response to other and images – an automatic response? Programmed what to think
- Other senses – smell etc
- How resistant are we?

Extreme?

- The face is a reflection of the self – link beauty with moral goodness – physiognomic assumption – think we can read people – or treatment of people by the way that they look.
- Corollary – create beautiful appearance creates beautiful self? Is there value in appearance?
- Those who do not fit are therefore flawed and not good – physically and morally
- But we are about the ‘affective’ body – the unseen – change the body, change the self
- Why are things in an urban environment picked? To aid with image?

Consumer culture

- More overt – advertising, celebrity, models, pornography
- Less overt – retail images (video on plus size manikins), beauty, health, self-improvement (gyms, wellbeing centres, spas etc), brand, success
- Is it just something which lives on around us?
- Do these really have an impact on us and our notions of body image? If so why and how?
- Or do we just recognise them as fantasy and that the ‘superficial’ cannot replace more powerful values that define the self
- How are they embossed into the urban landscape?

The debate

Contemporary consumer culture has no impact on an individual’s body image.