

# Place, enchantment and social imaginaries: An experimental framework



Workshop *Radically Reimagining the Imagination?*  
SciencePo Paris, 20/09/2024

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# Presentation structure

1. **Research context**
2. **Three distant conceptual corpus**
  - Anthropology of Enchantment
  - Place, Place Studies and humanistic geography
  - Social Imaginaries within political philosophy
3. **Inter-contributions within an experimental framework**
4. **Applications and results**

# 1. Research context

- *Background*

Architect-sociologist, Built Arts and Urban Planning PhD

- *Research question*

Practises of transformation of places' social imaginaries

- *Site studies*

Urban fallows transformations

Bavière (Liège, Be) and Le Champ des Possibles (Montréal, Ca)





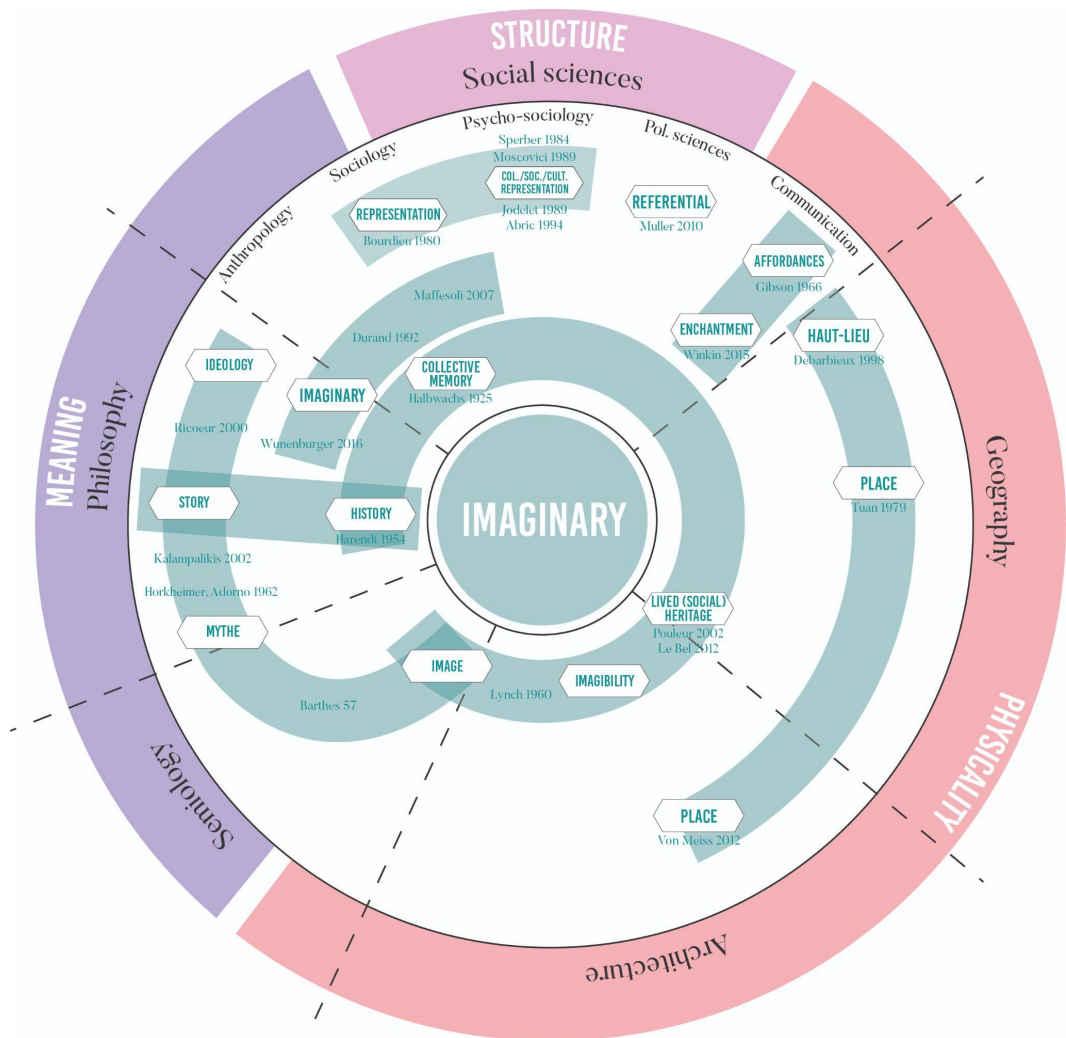
## 2. Three distant conceptual corpus

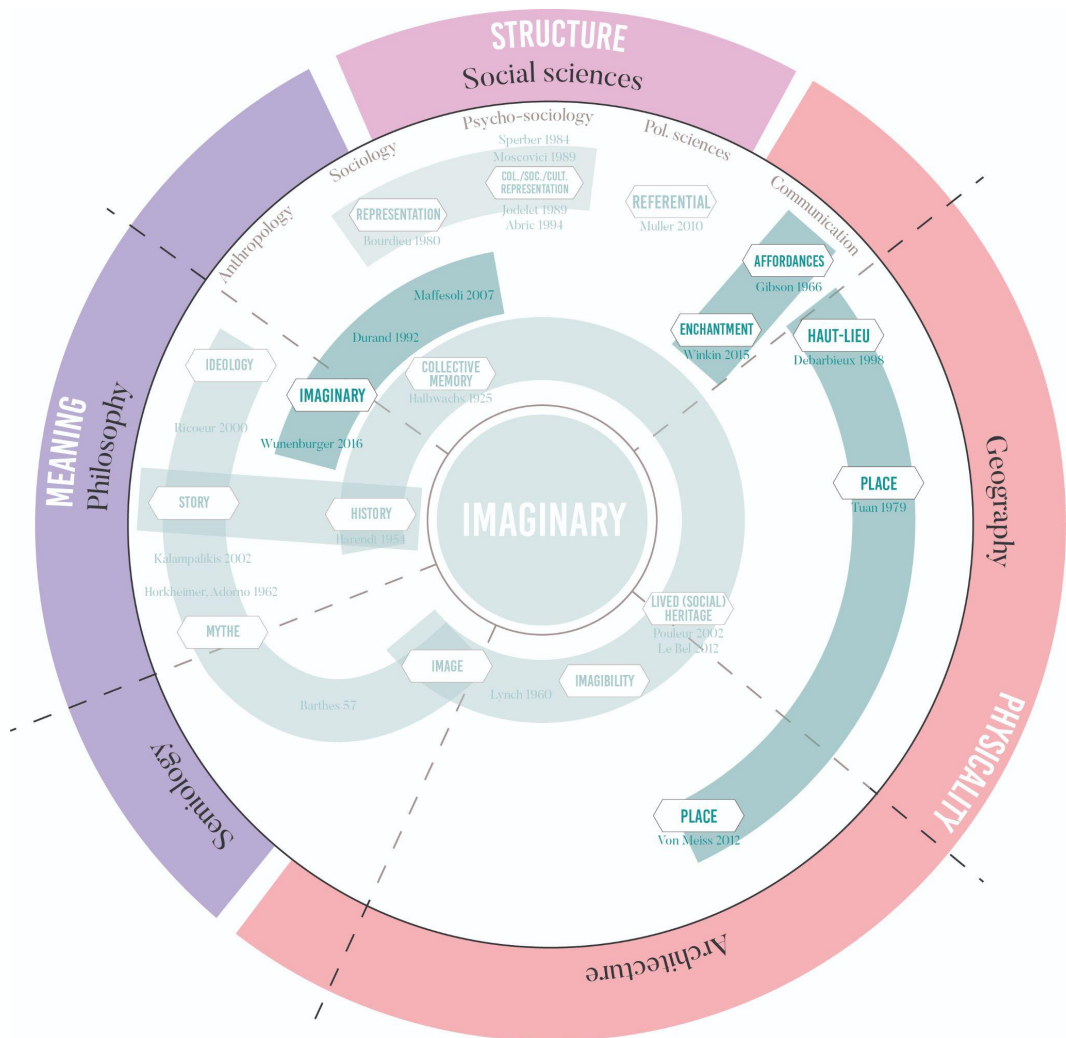
Bavière, Champ des Possibles in practice:

A diversity of images, memories, geographies, symbols and values.

→ How can we grasp a place's social imaginaries?

Exploration of different theoretical corpus







## 2. Three distant conceptual corpus

### A. Anthropology of Enchantment

- Voluntary Suspension of Disbelief x “Je sais bien mais quand même” (*As If*)
- Dispositives and dispositions (Winkin 2023)
- Engineers of enchantment

Problem: place only understood as spatial



Maybe you are going to do bad things. We don't know.

## 2. Three distant conceptual corpus

### B. Place, Place Studies and humanistic geography

- Place: “intersection entre un espace abstrait qui le contient et un objet dont il est l’emplacement” (Debarbieux 1993, 6)
- Humanistic geography: a refusal to positivism
- “Sense of place” (Tuan 1979) - Sensitive approach

Problem: became depoliticized/relativistic



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e réaliser le plus

Le Directeur,  
*Hanneman*

Hôpital de Bavière  
Boulevard de la Constitution, 63  
4020 LIÈGE (Belgique)

LE DIRECTEUR



Anecdote of the jar - Wallace Stevens, Oct. 1999

I placed a jar in Tennessee,  
And round it was upon a hill.  
It made the slovenly wilderness  
Surround that hill.

The wilderness rose up to it,  
And sprawled around, no longer wild.  
The jar was round upon the ground  
And tall and of a port in air.

It took dominion everywhere.  
The jar was gray and blue.  
It did not give of bird or bush,  
Like nothing else in Tennessee.



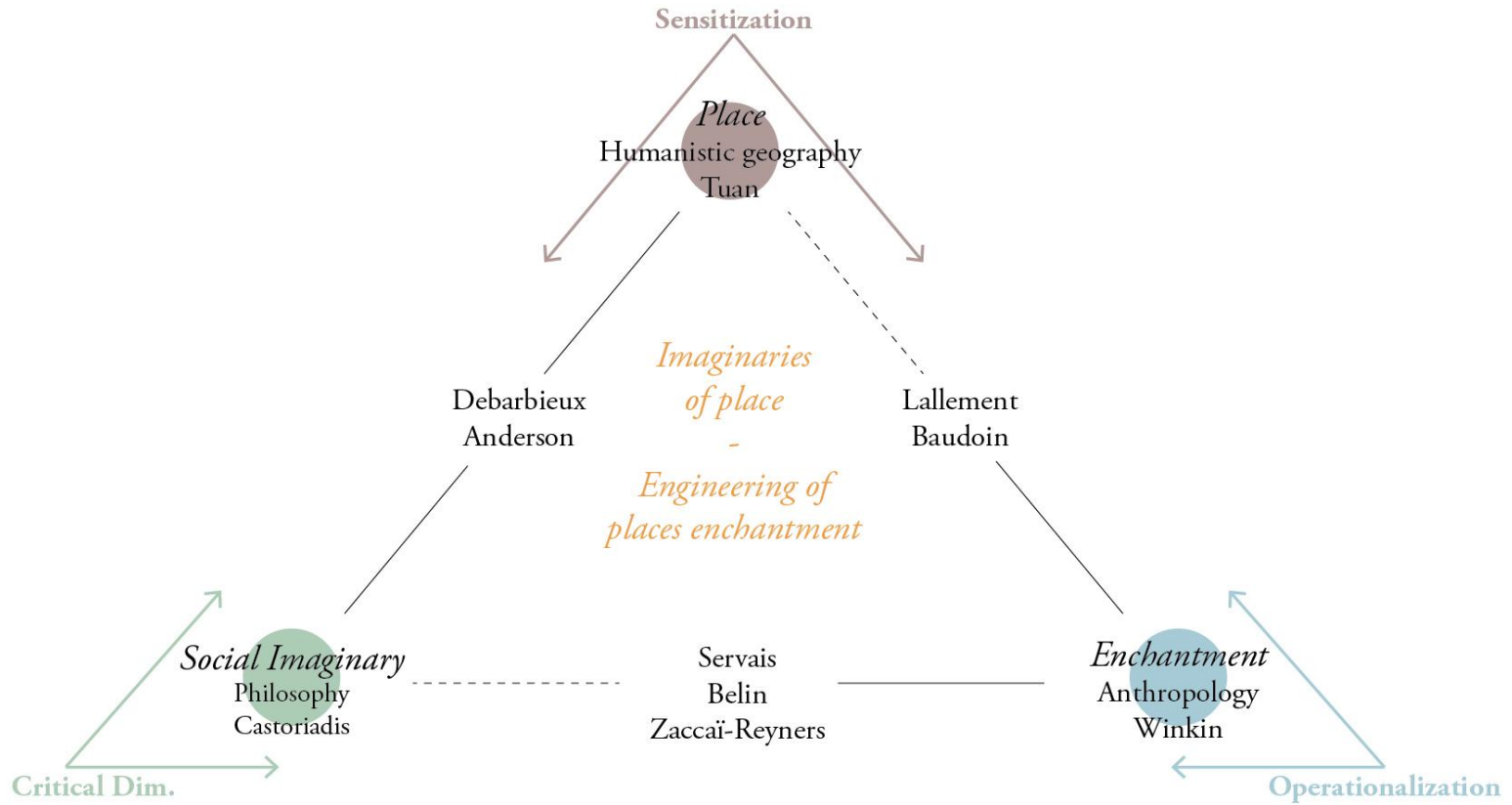
## 2. Three distant conceptual corpus

### C. Social Imaginaries within political philosophy

- “[...] création incessante et essentiellement indéterminée (social-historique et psychique) de figures/formes/images, à partir desquelles seulement il peut être question de “quelque chose”. (Castoriadis 1975, 8)
- Radical theory of creation pushing towards autonomy
- Imaginary as a social and political dimension

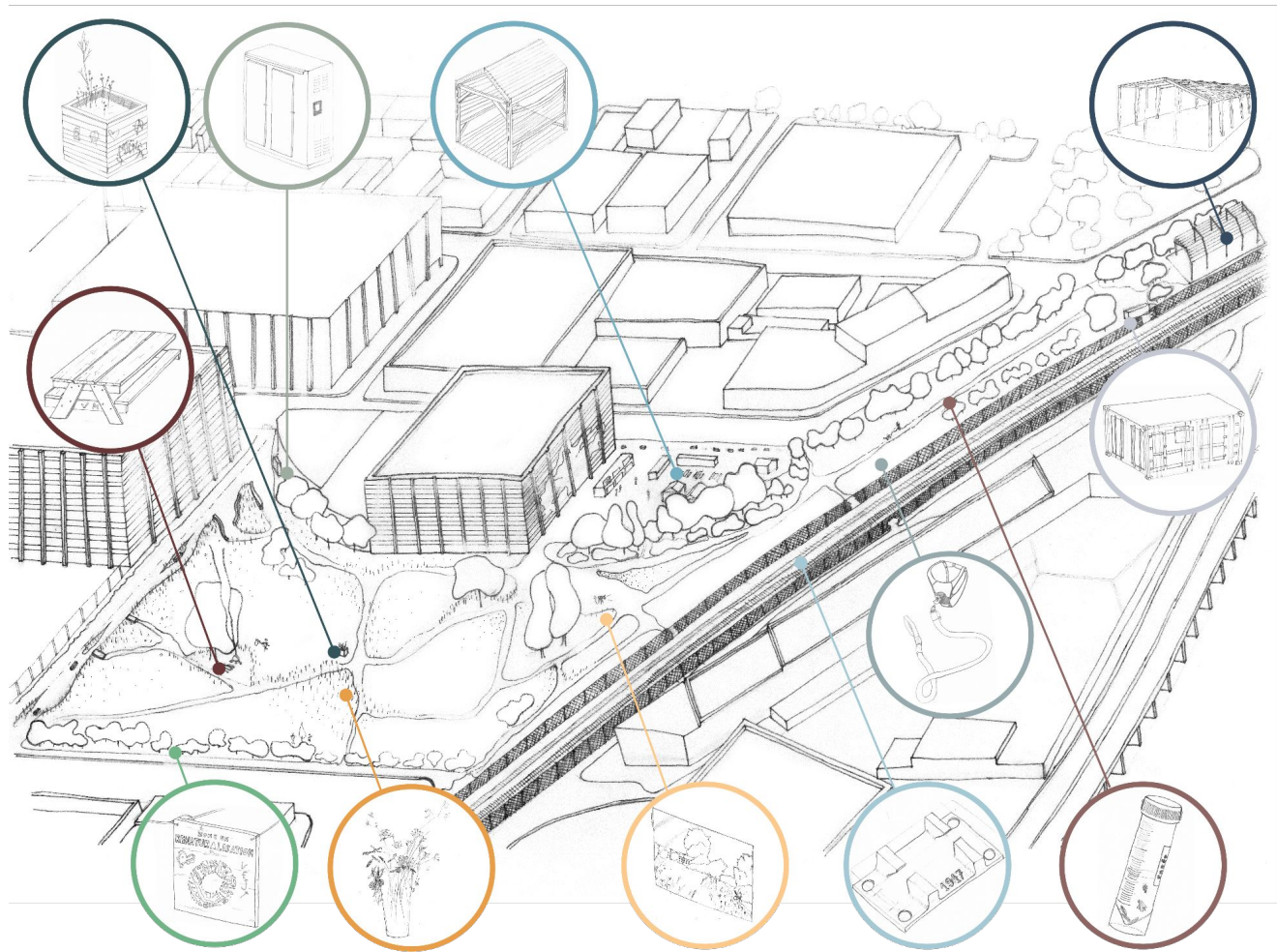
Problem: broad philosophical perspective  
→ Operationalization and spatiality ?





### 3. Inter-contributions within an experimental framework



## 4. Applications and results



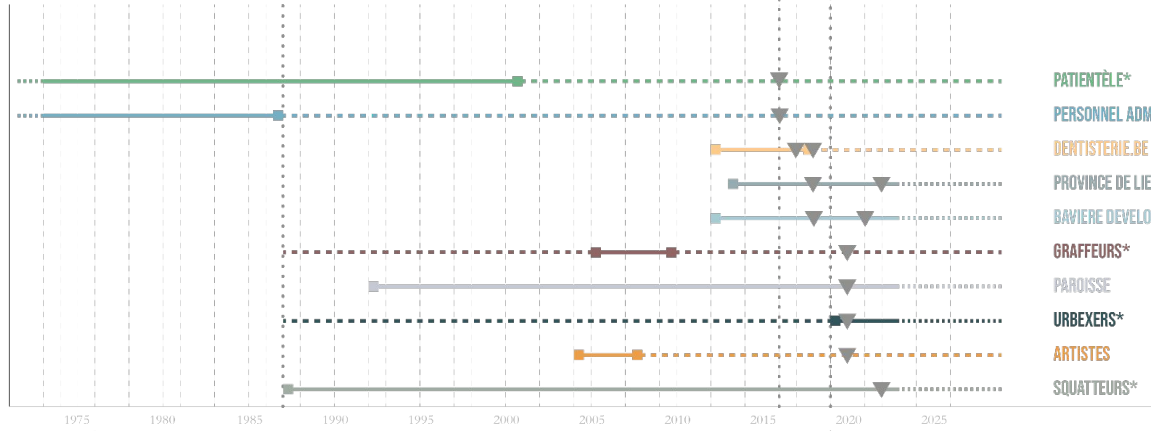


-  Existence par le lieu personnellement vécu par l'informateurice
-  Existence collective par le lieu constatée
-  Moment de rencontre de la recherche avec le collectif
-  Etiquette ex-nihilo

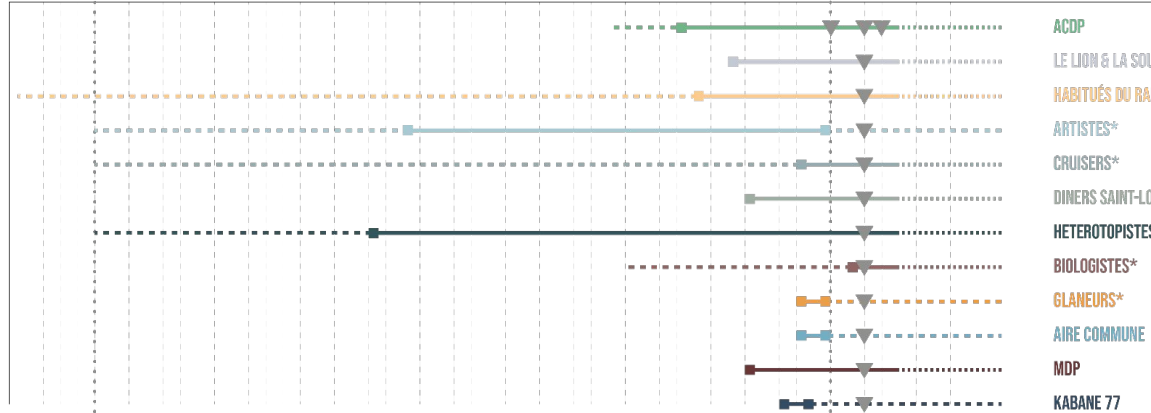
Fermeture de l'hôpital

Début de la thèse

Bavière



Champ des Possibles

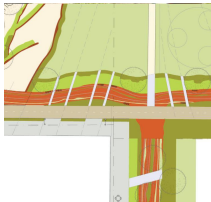


Fermeture de la cour









Imaginary  
Prolongation

**Fetishization**

«Aire Commune»

«{Baviè}RE»

**Reconversion**

«Cabiers des Impossibles»

Rail crossings

«Allô Bavière»

Imaginary  
Reduction

Gates

«Espace Bavière»

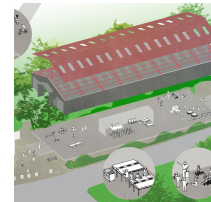
Imaginary  
Widening

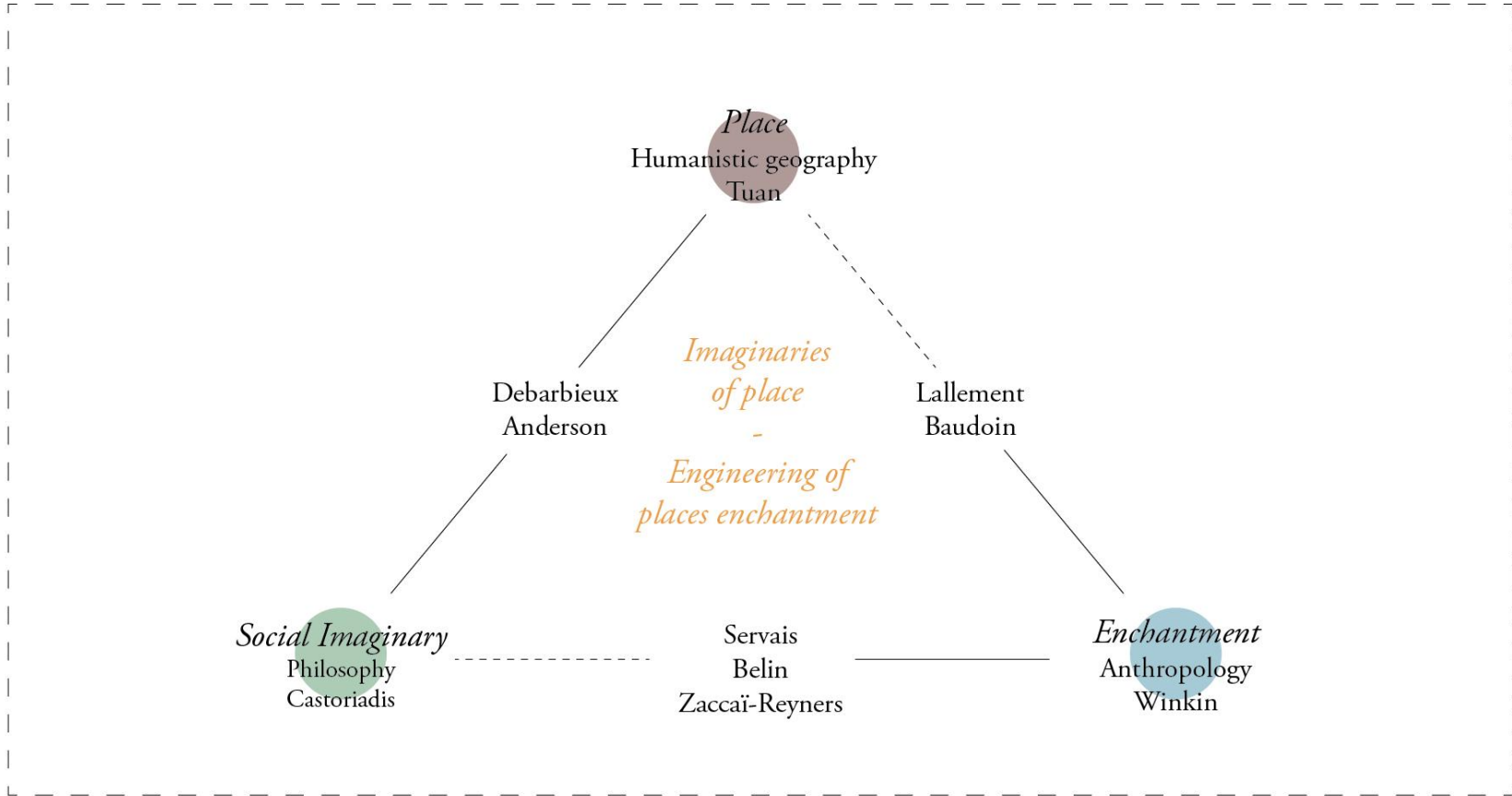
«Arsenic2»

**Banalization**

**Conversion**

Imaginary  
Replacement





Transaesthetic Society  
Serroy & Lipovetsky

# Conclusions

- Imaginary as a dynamic, abstract but accessible figure (not a fixed reproducible representation)
- Castoriadis: a philosophy for contemporary creative practises of society
- What type research of, and in the transaesthetic era?

