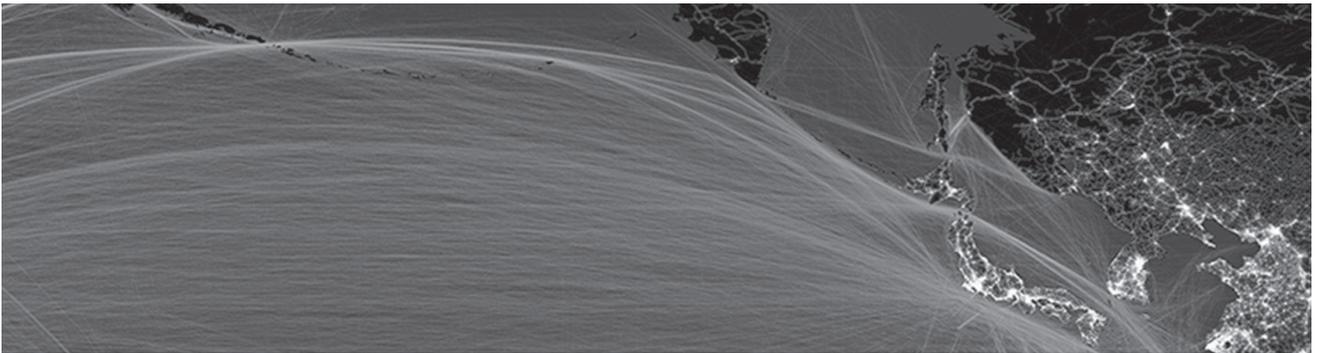


The SAGE Handbook of
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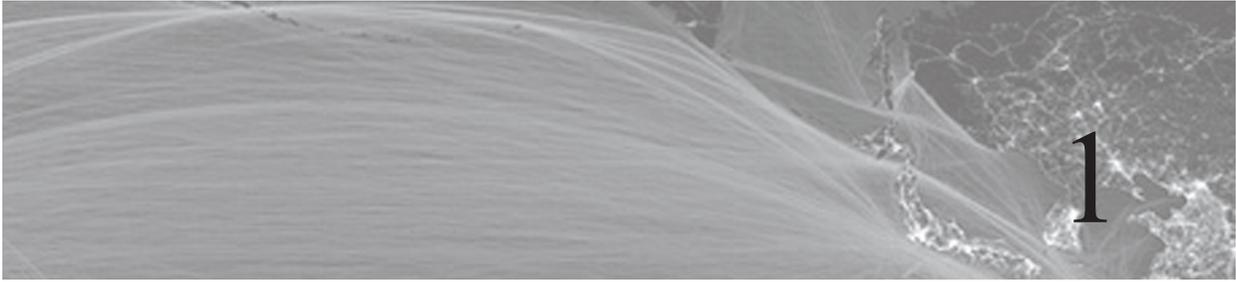
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Place

Tim Cresswell

INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this chapter is to sketch out an approach to place that takes us beyond an opposition between confining, bounded, 'reactionary' senses of place that focus on rootedness, attachment and singularity on the one hand and a distributed, open, 'progressive' sense of place that focuses on flows, connections and networks on the other. A secondary purpose is to provide an overview of the history of existing theories of, and approaches to, place. Too often we make claims to new theoretical approaches by either ignoring or disparaging older traditions. Here I want to insist on the productive continuities and overlaps between the new and old. In sum, the chapter provides a meso-theoretical interpretative framework for the analysis of place and places in contemporary life.

The chapter is written in a different way from the conventional academic paper/chapter. It takes its inspiration both from Walter Benjamin's use of montage in *The Arcades*

Project (Benjamin, 1999) and the idea of a 'commonplace book' used by Bruce Chatwin in *The Songlines* and by William Least Heat Moon in *PrairieEarth* (Chatwin, 1988; Heat Moon, 1991). Montage has been used with varying success by geographer Allan Pred (1995). He used montage in order to interrupt the business-as-usual construction of metanarratives in theory. He did this in a far more experimental mode than what follows, breaking up his text such that it had the appearance of poetry. My aim is clarity; his was often to disturb it. Nevertheless, there is something of the spirit of Pred in this chapter.

*Through assembling (choice) bits
and (otherwise neglected or discarded)
scraps,
through the cut-and-paste reconstruction of
montage,
one may bring alive,
open the text to multiple ways of knowing
and multiple sets of meaning,*

*allow multiple voices to be heard,
to speak to (or past) each other
as well as to the contexts from which
they emerge
and to which they contribute. (Pred,
1997: 135)*

A commonplace book is, essentially, a collection of wisdom, usually on a certain theme. In many ways, *The Arcades Project* is an ideal-type modern commonplace book. Appropriately enough, compiling a commonplace book is called ‘commonplacing’ – producing a literary topos. What follows is more commonplace book than it is montage.

The text is divided into paragraphs, each of which contains a stage in the construction of a meso-theory of place. Many of these paragraphs are direct quotations and are in italics. The paragraphs accumulate into an argument.

Method of this project: literary montage. I needn't say anything. Merely show. I shall purloin no valuables, appropriate no ingenious formulations. But the rags, the refuse – these I will not inventory but allow, in the only way possible, to come into their own: by making use of them. (Benjamin, 1999: 460)

The chapter is illustrated by information gleaned from archival research around the 100-year history of a particular place – the Maxwell Street Market in Chicago. In so far as this exercise is haunted by the spirit of Walter Benjamin, the Market serves as my Paris arcades. The archival ‘nuggets’ are presented in a different font.

Maxwell Street was the site of North America’s largest open-air market for much of the twentieth century. It was at the heart of a densely populated area of Chicago inhabited by successive waves of immigrants from Europe (East Europeans, Jews, Italians, etc.) and from elsewhere in the United States (African Americans from the South). Many of these immigrants set up stalls and stores along Maxwell Street and nearby streets from the 1880s onwards. The street and its

market were gradually transformed by the construction of the Dan Ryan expressway in the 1950s and, from the mid 1960s, by the location and development of the University of Illinois at Chicago campus. The market was finally closed and relocated in the mid 1990s (Cresswell and Hoskins, 2008).

To recap, there are three parallel elements in this chapter: my own construction of a syncretic theoretical framework for the analysis and interpretation of place, a ‘commonplace book’ element of theoretical reflections on place and elements of place by other writers and, finally, a stream of moments from the extended archive of Maxwell Street. These three elements rarely directly refer to each other. My intention is for the text to be open enough for readers to draw a diverse array of possible readings that might inform their own approaches to place.

LOCATION, LOCALE, SENSE OF PLACE

Place is best known to geographers as a meaningful segment of space. In the humanistic tradition it is most often contrasted with the more abstract idea of space. While the former is richly suggestive of meaning and attachment, the latter is more generally associated with abstraction and action.

Place, here, is defined as a portion of space that has accumulated particular meanings at both the level of the individual and the social. This is the classic definition provided by Yi-Fu Tuan of place as a field of care and centre of meaning (Tuan, 1977). To Tuan, place is a pause in the wider world of space, which, in his terms, is a more abstract field of action.

Open space has no trodden paths and signposts. It has no fixed pattern or established human meaning; it is like a blank sheet on which meaning may be imposed. Enclosed and humanized space is place. Compared to space, place is a calm center of established values. Human beings require both space and place. Human lives are a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom. (Tuan, 1977: 54)

According to John Agnew, place consists of three elements: location, locale and sense of place. Location refers to objective position within an agreed spatial framework, such as longitude and latitude (Agnew, 1987). Location also allows us to situate ourselves in relation to other locations that are given distances away in a certain direction. Location is the answer to the question of 'Where?'.

The roadways from curb line to curb line of the following streets: West Maxwell Street from the west line of South Union Avenue to the east line of South Sangamon Street, except the roadway of South Halsted Street; West 14th Street and West 14th Place, from the west line of South Halsted Street to the east line of South Sangamon Street. (Legal Definition of the Maxwell Street Market in the Municipal Code of Chicago, quoted in *Diagnostic Survey of Relocation Problems of Non-Residential Establishments, Roosevelt-Halsted Area, 1965*. Institute of Urban Life, Loyola University for the Department of Urban Renewal, City of Chicago, p. 21)

Nowhere, unless perhaps in dreams, can the phenomenon of the boundary be experienced in a more originary way than in cities. To know them means to understand those lines that, running alongside railroad crossings and across privately owned lots, within the park and along the river-bank, function as limits; it means to know those confines, together with the enclaves of the various districts. As threshold, the boundary stretches across streets; a new precinct begins like a step into the void – as though one had unexpectedly cleared a low step on a flight of stairs. (Benjamin, 1999: 88)

Locale refers to the physical and social context within which social relations unfold. Locale refers, in one sense, to the landscape of a place – its physical manifestation as a unique assemblage of buildings, parks, roads and infrastructure. Locale also refers to place as a setting for particular practices that mark it out from other places. These include the everyday practices of work, education and reproduction amongst others. We often know a place, in some sense, as a locale – a unique combination of things and practices within which life unfolds.

The latter facility is an open-air market where, on a busy day, more than a thousand individual proprietors arrange their merchandise on temporary stands, at the tailgate of their trucks, or simply on the pavement, in the expectation of selling some of them to passing pedestrians... Many of the operators sell second-hand merchandise, and bargain-hunters come to Maxwell Street from all parts of the Chicago area, and even from locations outside the State. The entrepreneurs who operate in the Maxwell Street Market constitute a location problem which differs from that of the in-store retailer in several aspects.... (*Diagnostic Survey of Relocation Problems of Non-Residential Establishments, Roosevelt-Halsted Area, 1965*. Institute of Urban Life, Loyola University for the Department of Urban Renewal, City of Chicago, p. 3)

Sense of place refers to the subjective side of place – the meanings that attach to it either individually or collectively. This has been the focus of humanistic geography that first put place at the centre of philosophically informed human geography.

Another half block and he was past the shops and into real Maxwell Street. The entire area took its name from the great open-air flea market that has once lined both sides of Maxwell Street for blocks, packed with immigrants trying to turn that first buck in the new country. Maxwell itself was little more than an alley now, a narrow dusty street of vacant lots and crumbling sidewalks. But along these curbs and back lots for the length of Maxwell and Liberty, and up and down both sides of Peoria and Thirteenth Street, and all the way to the viaducts and railroad tracks to the south, people were selling things. (Raleigh, 1994: 55)

Place is not a scale. It can be thought of as much as a way of thinking or approach to the world as an ontological thing in the world. An old rocking chair by the fireplace can be a favourite place to someone who endows it with meaning or who associates it with a set of familiar practices. Placeness is thus an attribute of things across scales.

The Maxwell Street Market is a place, but it is more than a place; some people would call it a tourist attraction, or an institution, because they have never seen any other open-air market where large numbers of vendors compete with one another for trade, and haggle with their customers

over price. (*Diagnostic Survey of Relocation Problems of Non-Residential Establishments, Roosevelt-Halsted Area, 1965*. Institute of Urban Life, Loyola University for the Department of Urban Renewal, City of Chicago, p. 21)

GATHERING/WEAVING/ASSEMBLING

Another way of thinking about place is as a gathering of materialities, meanings and practices. Such an idea – the idea of gathering – lies at the heart of a long tradition in geography – the tradition of regional geography or chorology. In this iteration, geography was and is seen to involve the study of areal differentiation – the way things are different in different places. Geography was about how things came together uniquely in particular places and regions.

[Geography] interprets the realities of areal differentiation of the world as they are found, not only in terms of the differences of things from place to place, but also in terms of the total combination of phenomena in each place, different from those at every other place. (Hartshorne, 1939: 462)

While various systematic concepts are based on a sense of equivalence across space, place relies on the idea of a coming together of things once and once only. To some, this kind of thinking marks out geography and history as special, fundamental disciplines where geography deals with how things coalesce in place and history explores the way things coincide temporally.

This focus on the way in which places gather ‘phenomena’ is long-standing in geography but has found different, and more philosophical, expression in recent work. The role of places in gathering is prominent, for instance, in the phenomenological approach to place of the philosopher Edward Casey.

Places gather: this I take to be a second essential trait (i.e. beyond the role of the lived body) revealed by a phenomenological topo-analysis. Minimally, places gather things in their midst – where ‘things’ connote various animate and inanimate entities. Places also gather experiences and histories, even

languages and thoughts. Think only of what it means to go back to a place you know, finding it full of memories and expectations, old things and new things, the familiar and the strange, and much more besides. What else is capable of this massively diversified holding action? Certainly not individual human subjects construed as sources of ‘projection’ or ‘reproduction’ – not even these subjects as they draw upon their bodily and perceptual powers. The power belongs to place itself, and it is a power of gathering. (Casey, 1996: 24)

This fact of gathering makes place complicated as a concept and as a thing in the world. Places are where things (objects, memories, emotions, discourse) gather. This suggests a horizontal action of drawing in things from the outside – a relation between an inside that gathers and an outside from which things are gathered. It also suggests a constant dynamic sense of things on the move as they are gathered. Places, in this sense, are open rather than closed, a fact that leaves open the questions of why and how particular places gather particular things at particular times.

Place has been approached through the metaphor of weaving. This is another way of describing the gathering qualities of place: place as a textile, a unique texture, where the threads of the world combine. The particularity of place is produced from the things it brings together.

*A place’s ‘texture’ thus calls direct attention to the paradoxical nature of place. Although we may think of texture as a superficial layer, only ‘skin deep’, its distinctive qualities may be profound... . Etymologically, texture is associated with both ‘textile’ and ‘context.’ It derives from the Latin *texere*, meaning ‘to weave’, which came to mean the thing woven (textile) and the feel of the weave (texture). But it also refers to a ‘weave’ of an organized arrangement of words or other intangible things (context).* (Adams et al. 2001: xiii)

Robert Sack has taken this idea of place as a loom the furthest. He has described the way in which place draws together the woof and weft of different realms into a weave. Realms of society (and the moral), nature (and the empirical) and culture (and the aesthetic) are gathered and woven in places.

The best way to model how place functions as a tool is to think of it along the lines of a loom. As something like a loom, place helps us weave together a wide range of components of reality. The weave itself is the landscape and the projects that the place helps support. What does it draw together? In other publications, I have argued that the major components (or spools of thread) come from three domains: the empirical, the moral and the aesthetic. All of these are part of reality, and place helps us weave these empirical, moral, and aesthetic domains together. (Sack, 2003: 41)

If place constantly weaves the social, the natural and the cultural together, then we need a *geographical* theory of place that is not consistently deferred to some other theoretical realm such as the social (as in much of radical geography) or the natural (as in the powerful tradition of environmental determinism).

Indeed, privileging the social in modern geography, and especially in the reductionist sense that 'everything is socially constructed', does as much disservice to geographical analysis as a whole as privileging the natural in the days of environmental determinism, or concentrating only on the mental or intellectual in some areas of humanistic geography. While one or the other may be more important for a particular situation at a particular time, none is determinate of the geographical. (Sack, 1997: 2–3)

Place, then, is both a (real) thing in the (real) world and a way of thinking about the world that foregrounds the geographical rather than the social, the natural or the cultural.

One sentence, several sentences, a paragraph, can't sum up Maxwell Street. Its rowdiness defies a terse statement. Its lewdness escapes a brief summary. Maxwell has been called 'Jewtown', the 'ghetto', the 'melting pot'. It is all this and much more. Everything that is low and foul can be found there. And much that is fine and noble, sympathetic and generous. Clean youths and pretty girls. Innocent kids playing tag and 'red-light.' Genteel old people. (Willard Motley Papers, Northern Illinois University Special Collections, Box 13, Folder 42)

Assemblage theory should not come as a surprise to geographers – it should not come as a surprise that unique and sufficient wholes can be made from an assemblage of parts.

In *A New Philosophy of Society*, Manuel DeLanda outlines his approach to assemblage theory. He does this with reference to what we geographers might recognize as spaces and places at a range of scales from the body to the nation state. DeLanda is no geographer and appears unaware of the last century of theorizing place in geography and beyond. Yet his work, and the work it derives from, has become popular with geographers and other theorists of place (Dovey, 2010; McFarlane, 2011; McFarlane and Anderson, 2011).

Community networks and institutional organizations are assemblages of bodies, but they also possess a variety of other material components, from food and physical labour, to simply tools and complex machines, to the buildings and neighbourhoods serving as their physical locales. (DeLanda, 2006: 12)

An assemblage is a unique whole 'whose properties emerge from the interactions between parts' (DeLanda, 2006: 5). The ways in which these parts are combined is not necessary or preordained but contingent. Individual parts can be removed and become parts of other assemblages. Places (and, indeed, markets) are good examples of assemblages.

What would replace, for example, 'the market' in an assemblage approach? Markets should be viewed, first of all, as concrete organizations (that is, concrete market-places or bazaars) and this fact makes them assemblages made out of people and the material and expressive goods people exchange. (DeLanda, 2006: 17)

It's a throwback to the Tower of Babel with the haggling over process being carried on in a dozen tongues. Barkers, pitchmen and spielers shout their wares over the blare of radios perched on windowsills of dirty, tired-looking buildings elbowing each other like the stands on the street.

The screech of live chickens adds to the din of organized confusion.

...

From a side street comes the high-pitched voice of a revivalist, wailing a hymn into a microphone. A man sits cross-legged on the sidewalk – adjusting the dials for the loud-speaker while swaying in rhythm to the song.

Maxwell is a street of a thousand smells. The pungent odor of garlic, sizzling hot-dogs, spoiling fruit, aging cheese and pickled fish blend in a unique aroma. ('Maxwell St. has Air of Baghdad Bazaars', Oscar Katov, *Sun Times*, 24 May, 1951)

A familiar example. My home is a place. It is made from red bricks, breeze blocks, terracotta tiles, windowpanes, copper wires, plastic outlets, wooden floorboards, cotton curtains, a stainless steel hob and oven, mortar and glue, things we eat, notes on the fridge. This list could go on. Together, the full contents of this list make my house in Acton. The way that they are assembled make my house different from a supermarket or a football stadium and even, in details at least, different from other houses in the street. It is an assemblage that is always changing too – the food in the fridge is rarely the same as the day before, cracks grow in the plaster, weeds push out from between paving stones in the back garden. I could take out elements of this assemblage, yet the assemblage would remain despite the change in parts. My house is a discrete thing – an assemblage – made by the relation between parts and the things we do with those parts. All places can be thought of in this way.

... the concept of territorialization plays a synthetic role, since it is in part through the more or less permanent articulations produced by this



Figure 1.1 Corner of Maxwell and Halsted Streets, Chicago, Illinois, April 1941
Photographer: Russell Lee, Library of Congress

process that a whole emerges from its parts and maintains its identity once it has emerged. (DeLanda, 2006: 14)

Central to DeLanda's notion of assemblage are two dimensions, or axes, which he derives from Deleuze and Guattari. One axis concerns the role played by components of a whole. It is an axis that has *expressive* roles at one end and *material* roles at the other. The second axis, unsurprisingly favoured by geographers, concerns the degree to which assemblages are stabilized around the coherent identity or, alternatively, are destabilized and made unclear.

... the former are referred to as processes of territorialization and the latter as processes of deterritorialization. One and the same assemblage can have components working to stabilize its identity as well as components forcing it to change or even transforming it into a different assemblage. In fact, one and the same component may participate in both processes by exercising different sets of capacities. (DeLanda, 2006: 12)

If we return to the assemblage and place that is my house, we can see that there are forces at work that stabilize its identity. These range from the laws that make it my property to the maintenance that is needed to stop it falling down. Meanwhile there are the forces of deterritorialization – the entropy that means that it is always slowly falling down.

Take, for example, the building you walk through/within – what is the speed of flux that is keeping it assembled? It seems permanent, less ephemeral than you, but it is ephemeral nonetheless: whilst you are there it is falling down, it is just happening very slowly (hopefully). (Dewsbury, 2000: 487)

So in the first place, processes of territorialization are processes that define or sharpen the spatial boundaries of actual territories. Territorialization, on the other hand, also refers to non-spatial processes which increase the internal homogeneity of a neighbourhood. Any process which either destabilizes spatial boundaries or increases internal heterogeneity is considered deterritorializing. (DeLanda, 2006: 13)

Places both gather and disperse. They collect things from outside and are thus constituted through their relations to the world beyond.

But things are always also escaping place. Places, therefore, are in process. They are becoming and dissolving on a daily basis.

MATERIALITIES, MEANINGS, PRACTICES

So what is it that gathers in place? Three sets of things come to mind: materialities, meanings and practices.

Despite the character resulting from the unique series of facades along Maxwell Street and the color and life emanating from the juxtaposition of a multitude of signs, sidewalk tables, hawkers and an infinite variety of merchandise, the preponderant number of buildings and temporary stalls along the street area are dilapidated and have long since outlived their usefulness. Thus, it appears that a new physical setting for the Maxwell Street Market should be created and preferably in conjunction with the proposed relocation of the shopping center. (Roosevelt-Halsted: Proposals for Renewal, Department of Urban Renewal, City of Chicago, August 1966, pp. 12–13)

Places have a material presence. Perhaps the first thing we think of when we think of a place we have not been to is some of the things that constitute it. This is particularly true of buildings and monuments. New York has the Empire State Building, Paris has the Eiffel Tower. Every place has a material (solid, concrete) landscape, some remarkable, some less so.

The largest impression is one of a junked-up neighborhood – the stands – basements and lofts filled with nondescript things.

...

The architecture and structure of the brick building show that this was once a first class neighborhood.

...

The buildings kneel to the street. (Willard Motley Papers, Northern Illinois University Special Collections, Box 13, Folder 42)

In his attempt to record a place as thoroughly as possible, George Perec starts with the buildings of Saint-Sulpice in Paris.

There are many things in Place Saint-Sulpice; for instance: a district council building, a financial building, a police station, three cafés, one of which sells tobacco and stamps, a movie theatre, a church on which La Vau, Gittard, Oppenordt, Servandoni, and Chalgrin have all worked, and which is dedicated to a chaplain of Clotaire II, who was bishop of Bourges from 624 to 644 and whom we celebrate on 17 January, a publisher, a funeral parlor, a travel agency, a bus stop, a tailor, a hotel, a fountain decorated with the statues of four great Christian orators (Bossuet, Fénelon, Fléchier, and Massillon), a newsstand, a seller of pious objects, a parking lot, a beauty parlor, and many other things as well. (Perec, 2010: 3)

But places have more of a material presence than just their landscape. They also have the multitude of things that pass through them. My home as a place has all the stuff of my family's everyday life – books, toys, food, waste, souvenirs, flowers bought for the weekend then added to the compost. Urban places, and particularly marketplaces, connected as they are to the wide world beyond, are teeming with things that do not stay long.

We begin in the thick of things (Desilvey, 2007: 403).

Wire-fencing in various size rolls; lighted compasses; a bench drill press; spices in industrial-sized containers; refrigerator/freezers; glazed ceramic tiles in boxes; a telephone-answering machine; long-stemmed glasses and crystal goblets;



Figure 1.2 Shop on Maxwell Street, Chicago, Illinois, April 1941
Photographer: Russell Lee, Library of Congress

gloves (ski and regular); automobile wheels and tires; underwear; jeans; jackets and jump suits; battery chargers; a snow blower; notebooks and paper for school; baseball trophies; skates (ice and roller); and comforters. (*Chicago Tribune*, 30 October, 1981, npn)

Things suggest tangibility. They tend towards the solid. Things differ from objects in that they have not yet been represented or 'objectified'.

There are many intersections in the ways of ongoing flux, places of steady but impermanent homeostasis.

These are called things.

Thing (Old English): an assembly, a gathering

Thingan (Old English): to invite, to address

Althing (Icelandic): the parliament (McKay, 2012: 55)

Things travel. They circulate within and beyond places. As they do so they acquire and discard meaning. Things in a place help to make that place what it is, in part because of what they bring from elsewhere.

In doing the biography of a thing, one would ask questions similar to those one asks about people: What, sociologically, are the biographical possibilities inherent in its 'status' and in the period and culture, and how are these possibilities realized? Where does the thing come from and who made it? What has been its career so far, and what do people consider to be an ideal career for such things? (Kopytoff, 1986: 66)

In addition to the materialities of the built landscape, and the multitude of objects that exist in and pass through places, there are other kinds of materialities at work in place. It is important not to conflate the material with the solid, tangible, concrete. The invisible currents of air, for instance, are every bit as material as concrete and also contribute to the gathering of place.

Thus it seems that we have human minds on the one hand, and a material world of landscape and artefacts on the other. That, you might think, should cover just about everything. But does it?

Consider, for a moment, what is left out. Starting with landscape, does this include the sky? How about sunlight? Life depends on it. But if sunlight were a constituent of the material world, then we would have to admit not only that the diurnal landscape differs materially from the nocturnal one, but also that the shadow of a landscape feature, such as a rock or tree, is as much a part of the material world as the feature itself. For creatures that live in the shade, it does indeed make a difference. What, then, of the air? When you breathe, or feel the wind on your face, are you engaging with the material world? When the fog descends, and everything around you looks dim and mysterious, has the material world changed, or are you just seeing the same world differently? Does rain belong to the material world, or only the puddles that it leaves in ditches and potholes? Does falling snow join the material world only once it settles on the ground? As engineers and builders know all too well, rain and frost can break up roads and buildings. How then can we claim that roads and buildings are part of the material world, if rain and frost are not? (Ingold, 2007: 3–4)

Places are made up of materials and their properties. These materials, which are gathered, include more than landscape and artefacts. Smells, for instance, form characteristic parts of place as invisible stimulants interact with the sensors in our nose and brain. Waves of sound, like smells, are part of the assemblage that gathers to form distinctive places.

I'm fascinated by relationships of bells and music, for example, a church bell with the same resonant decay time as one of the oldest organs in Finland. Or bells and space, for example, when walking with a shepherd in Italy and hearing, a kilometer away, the funeral bells from the church overlapping the bells of his 50 sheep. These are historically layered relationships in sound, like the way belled flocks move through the countryside, making place audible... . Or the way time bells and chimes make communities audible. And the particularity of interactions of these kinds of bell sounds with cars and motorbikes, with televisions and radios, and all the sounds of the modern world. (Feld and Brenneis, 2004: 469)

Barkers, spielers, pitchmen, and hucksters shout their wares while radios boom and customers haggle in a dozen languages. Merchandise drapes from awnings, spills over sidewalk stands and creaking pushcarts, litters the pavement and walks

wherever the hawkers elect to take their stand. There is the sharp odor of garlic, sizzling redhots, spoiling fruit, aging cheese, and strong suspect smell of pickled fish. Everything blends like the dazzling excitement of a merry-go-round. ('Business is always good on Maxwell Street', Lloyd Wendt, *Sunday Tribune*, 9 October, 1947, npn)

Put another way, we cannot simply rein things in and root them. It is not enough to use the 'material' and 'materiality' in such a way as to invoke a realm of reassuringly tangible or graspable objects defined against a category of events and processes that apparently lack 'concreteness'. Rather, we only begin to properly grasp the complex realities of apparently stable objects by taking seriously the fact that these realities are always held together and animated by processes excessive of form and position. (Latham and McCormack, 2004: 704–705).

One possible way of approaching place is to describe its visible material contents – to provide a kind of catalogue or list. There would be some theoretical and poetic merit in such an attempt, if only in revealing the foolhardiness of such a project. At some point interpretation becomes part of the endeavour. Places are also places because of the meanings that are produced through acts of representation. Places are both represented (by poets, photographers, politicians and others) and are themselves representational.

Materialities are attached to meanings and vice versa. Meaning has always been central to the geographical analysis of place. Places are locations with meaning. Things, smells, sounds – all become part of worlds of meaning as humans attempt to make sense of them. The ways in which this happens are almost infinite.

Nominalism – the act of naming – is an important part of the creation of meaning in place. Simply naming a place can make it be a place rather than a mere location.

Generic terms are not as powerful evocators of place as are proper names. To call a feature in the landscape a 'mount' is already to impart to it a certain character, but to call it 'Mount Misery' is to significantly enhance its distinctiveness, making it stand out from other rises less imaginatively called. The proper name and the geographical

feature so merge in the consciousness of the people who know both that to change the name is to change, however subtly and inexplicably, the feature itself. (Tuan, 1991: 688)

The true expressive character of street names can be recognized as soon as they are set beside reformist proposals for their normalization. (Benjamin, 1999: 519)

You might look for a whole week by consulting lampposts on the West Side and you wouldn't find 'Maxwell Street.' The hand of the iconoclast has been busy with West Side tradition and the street to which the famous police station gave dignity is simply and flatly West Thirteenth Place.

But the Maxwell Street Station is still there, and the street is still called Maxwell Street by everybody but the postman. ('Literally, Maxwell Street No Longer Exists', *Chicago Tribune*, 20 September, 1895, npn)

Places are sites where stories gather. Individual stories (telling a story without a place would be experimental in the extreme), collective stories, official stories, subversive stories.

... narratives about people's places in places continuously materialize the entity we call place. In its materializations, however, there are conflicts, silences, exclusions. Tales are told and their meanings wobble and shift over time. Multiple claims are made. Some stories are deemed heretical. The resulting dislocations, discontinuities, and disjunctions work to continually destabilize that which appears to be stable: a unitary, univocal place. (Price, 2004: 4)

In addition to materials and meanings, places are marked by practice. People, in combination with objects, are always doing things. To many observers this has been the most important defining feature of place – a choreography of habits and rhythms that makes a place distinctive. Places gather practices.

A half-full 96 goes by

New lights turn on in the café. Outside the dusk is at its height

A 63 goes by, full

A man goes by, pushing his Solex

A 70 goes by, full

A half-full 96 goes by

Extra-fresh eggs NB goes by

It is five to six

A man took out a dolly from a blue van, loaded it with different cleaning products, and pushed it down rue des Canettes. Outside you can barely even make out the faces anymore

Colors blend: a grayness that it rarely lit.

Yellow patches. Reddish glows.

An almost empty 96 goes by

A police car goes by and turns in front of the church square

An empty 86 and a moderately full 87 goes by

The bells of Saint-Sulpice begin to ring (Perec, 2010: 3)

There is a long history of writers engaging with place as a *choreography*: Jane Jacobs' account of sidewalk life in Manhattan, Michel de Certeau's urban stories, David Seamon's description of 'place-ballets' and Henri Lefebvre's theorization of rhythm while looking down on a Paris square (Jacobs, 1961; Seamon, 1980; de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 2004).

Maxwell: – its 12:30 at night. Two youths have driven in from southern Illinois to buy white mice for a circus game. Places closed. Ask me when they open. Then ask cop. Crippled negro staggers down middle of street. An auto almost hits him. He yells – 'kiss my ass!' at the top of his voice. Another car has to swerve to avoid him. Again he yells. Cop – not 10 feet away, keeps talking to the youth as if he hasn't seen or heard the negro. Anything goes.

...

The market extends between low, dilapidated tenements, the 1st floors of which are used as stores and shops of all descriptions. What space is left in the middle of the street is thronged with unending streams of pedestrians – a surging mass of bargain hunters. Weary old men, haggard women stand behind the carts. (Willard Motley Papers, Northern Illinois University Special Collections, Box 13, Folder 42)

The ways in which a place emerges from practice is never entirely predictable but does

have some measure of orderliness to it. Some practices are timetabled and regular (going to work, the school run). Others are less predictable (the skateboarder, the protester). Some kinds of practice appear to conform to what Pred called 'dominant institutional projects', others seem to directly oppose them. Still others simply meander around in irreducible ways (Pred, 1984).

'To dwell' as a transitive verb – as in the notion of 'indwelt spaces'; herewith an indication of the frenetic topicality concealed in habitual behavior. It has to do with fashioning a shell for ourselves. (Benjamin, 1999: 221)

On 14th Street a small card table, manned by two men in their mid-twenties, was filled with magic tricks and novelties. These men stated that although they had been operating for only six weeks, they have attended every Saturday and Sunday during this time. Both of these men have other jobs which are their principal sources of income. One of the men is also a magician and on occasion performs for various groups for pay. Certainly the brisk pace of sales at this stand was primarily due to the fact that one of the young men was performing magic tricks to induce customers to stop. (*Diagnostic Survey of Relocation Problems of Non-Residential Establishments, Roosevelt-Halsted Area, 1965.* Institute of Urban Life, Loyola University for the Department of Urban Renewal, City of Chicago, p. 39)

Places gather materialities, meanings and practices. Together, these produce unique assemblages. Territorializing forces pull them together into tight, bounded knots that produce areal differentiation and the possibility of difference. Deterritorializing forces work to pull them apart. This process of territorialization and deterritorialization works across a horizontal plain of flows and connections.

THE VERTICAL AND THE HORIZONTAL AXES

The emphasis on place as a singular collection of things in the natural and human worlds has travelled hand-in-hand with a focus on the vertical axis of rootedness and

belonging. Such approaches to place are indebted to Heidegger and his insistence on the processes through which people become rooted. This sense of rootedness is achieved through being in place, building and dwelling. Heidegger's log cabin in the Black Forest links him to the cosmos and to the earth as nature. The important axis here is a vertical one.

Let us think for a while of a farmhouse in the Black Forest, which was built some two hundred years ago by the dwelling of peasants. Here the self-sufficiency of the power to let earth and heaven, divinities and mortals enter in simple oneness into things, ordered the house. It placed the farm on the wind-sheltered mountain slope looking south, among the meadows close to the spring. It gave it the wide overhanging shingle roof whose proper slope bears up under the burden of snow, and which, reaching deep down, shields the chambers against the storms of the long winter nights. It did not forget the altar corner behind the community table; it made room in its chamber for the hallowed places of childbed and the 'tree of the dead' – for that is what they call a coffin there: the Totenbaum – and in this way it designed for the different generations under one roof the character of their journey through time. A craft which, itself sprung from dwelling, still uses its tools and frames as things, built the farmhouse. (Heidegger, 1993: 300)

Central to most approaches to place is the sense that it is unique and particular – 'here' is separate and distinguished from 'there'. A place's location, locale and sense of place all contribute to this sense of singularity, as do the unique gathering of material, meaning and practice. This is one aspect of place (its vertical axis): a sense of depth and boundedness.

Place is latitudinal and longitudinal within the map of a person's life. It is temporal and spatial, personal and political. A layered location replete with human histories and memories, place has width as well as depth. It is about connections, what surrounds it, what formed it, what happened there, what will happen there. (Lippard, 1997: 7)

Places also exist on a horizontal axis. They are connected to other places and, in part,

derive their identities from these connections. They overflow their bounds giving them width.

On a busy Sunday, as many as a thousand of these stands may be in operation, a number which results in the spreading of the market to adjoining streets not covered by the legal definition, and utilizing almost double the area provided by the municipal ordinance. (Definition of Maxwell Street Market in Legal Code of City of Chicago from 1912. *Diagnostic Survey of Relocation Problems of Non-Residential Establishments, Roosevelt-Halsted Area, 1965.* Institute of Urban Life, Loyola University for the Department of Urban Renewal, City of Chicago, p. 21)

Home was the centre of the world because it was the place where a vertical line crossed with a horizontal one. The vertical line was a path leading upwards to the sky and downwards to the underworld, the horizontal line represented the traffic of the world, all the possible roads leading across the earth to other places. Thus, at home, one was nearest to the gods in the sky and the dead in the underworld. This nearness promised access to both. And at the same time, one was at the starting point and, hopefully, the returning point of all terrestrial journeys. (Berger, 1984: 56)

Maybe the first [lesson] was that the very term place is problematic, implying a discrete entity, something you could put a fence around... What we mean by place is a crossroads, a particular point of intersection of forces coming from many directions and distances. (Solnit, 2007: 1)

Places are (in part) relational. They are produced through relations with multiple elsewheres. On the one hand, we have an idea of dwelling that is based on the habitual repetition of 'here'; on the other, we have the idea of place that articulates processes that originate beyond it.

The difficulty in reflecting on dwelling: on the one hand, there is something age-old – perhaps eternal – to be recognized here, the image of the abode of the human being in the maternal womb; on the other hand, this motif of primal history notwithstanding, we must understand dwelling in its most extreme form as a condition of nineteenth century existence. (Benjamin, 1999: 220)

Instead, then, of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations

and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be the street, or a region or even a continent. And this in turn allows a sense of place which is extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrated in a positive way the global and the local. (Massey, 1994: 155)

Around Halsted and Maxwell Streets swarmed the Chicago ghetto, with many thousands of Jews from Russia and eastern Europe, who spoke no English, who arrived with tickets pinned to their clothes and placards hung around their necks. Street and tenements teemed with bearded patriarchs and their families. Stores sprang up with pullers-in on the walks and everywhere were pushcarts which sold everything from garlands to garlic to women's drawers. The Jewish wave followed closely on the Irish, and with Blue Island Avenue the dividing line, there were wonderful ruckuses that kept the Maxwell Street Station house humming. (Lait and Mortimer, 1950: 60)

The horizontal plain focuses our attention on how places gather people, things, ideas, practices from elsewhere. This, in turn, means thinking about mobility and its relation to place. Mobility has often been portrayed as the other of place – as place's enemy. In this sense, place is undone by mobilities – a surplus of mobilities makes an authentic relationship to place impossible (Relph, 1976). But place needs mobility. Mobile practices constitute the choreographies that make places particular. Some places, such as ships or even airplanes, are themselves moving. Thinking place means thinking mobilities, considering which mobilities are encouraged and which are forbidden. Which mobilities act to territorialize and which act to deterritorialize?

This emphasis on the horizontal plane of connections in place raises some questions that have not been satisfactorily grappled with. There is little in the formulation of a progressive sense of place to tell us why places become connected in the way they do. Is there something 'there' – in place – that leads to these connections? Are there qualities of place that make it more or less likely

to connect in the ways that they do? One answer to this is to point to previous networks and connections that are likely to have created a context for present ones. This avoids answering the question and simply delays it (infinitely). The question (and the answer) raises the question of temporality.

TEMPORALITIES

It is not that what is past casts its light on what is present, or what is present its light on what is past; rather, image is that wherein what has been comes together in a flash with the now to form a constellation. (Benjamin, 1999: 462)

Places are always changing. And yet, at the same time, there is a sense of continuity in even the most rapidly changing place. In addition to the vertical axis of 'here'ness and the horizontal axis of flows and connections, we need also to think about time. How does a place at a moment in time (say, 1920) relate to what is assembled at the same objective location years later (say, 2012)? A theory of place needs an account of temporal change.

'You used to sell things down there?'

'Yes, sir. Just one more way to get by. Tryin' to make a dollar. Sam, he didn't have much to sell, last I heard.' O.C. looked out the little window. 'Some folk down there just be selling junk, just trying to get by. It's not what it used to be, Maxwell Street.'

'I remember.'

'Gonna be gone soon, all of it.' (Raleigh, 1994: 40)

Traditional accounts of dwelling in a singular place locate a place's identity in its (singular) history – 'this place is where x happened'. Dwelling is dwelling in time as much as in place. It is often this notion of temporality that forms the basis of museums, memorials and heritage parks. But temporalities are also effects of the way places act as nodes for mobilities and other kinds of flow. Duration can be a relational achievement.

I have suggested that places are assemblages, gatherings, of materiality, meaning

and practice. Each of these has temporal dimensions. At first glance (at least to me) the material world has the best chance of enduring. Solid buildings, roads and parks gather inertia. Only the most powerful forces can erase them. Meanings, insubstantial things, can easily change, and yet we know that some collective meanings become remarkably intransigent – despite the attempts at place-branding, it is not easy to transform a place with negative meanings into a place with positive ones. Practices appear to be the most fleeting of all. Each occurrence of a practice, each thing that happens in place, happens in exactly that way only once. Its singularity is impossible to capture. And yet, some practices become habits and routines. When repeated over and over they create a powerful sense of place.

Solid landscapes appear to be enduring. Limestone, slate roofs, red bricks, mortar – however weathered and suffering from entropy, have a sense of being there for the long term.

Buildings stabilize social life. They give structure to social institutions, durability to social networks, persistence to behavior patterns. What we build solidifies society against time and its incessant forces for change... Brick and mortar resist intervention and permutation, as they accomplish a measure of stasis. And yet, buildings stabilize imperfectly. Some fall into ruin, others are destroyed naturally or by human hand, and most are unendingly renovated into something they were not originally. (Gieryn, 2002: 35)

719 W. Maxwell Street

This building was originally constructed by Mrs. Roma Stein as a two-story brick store and dwelling in 1881. In 1903, then owners Farber and Wittenberg, who also owned the building next door, hired Alexander L. Levy to design a one-story addition for the building. Since that time the building had numerous other alterations including the removal of the third story in 1934. Although the building retains some architectural details, it no longer conveys its historic appearance and would likely be deemed a non-contributing feature to a potential historic district. (Report of a Phase 1 Archaeological Survey of the Maxwell Street Area in Cook County, Illinois, prepared by Archaeological Research, Inc. for the University of Illinois-Chicago, Chicago, Illinois)

It is exactly this stubborn nature of the solid concreteness of the built landscape that makes it a potential nuisance for the smooth circulation of capital. One way of thinking about this solid aspect of place is as ‘fixed capital’ or even as ‘dead labour’. Outside of a Marxist framework, the durability of ‘things’ has been accredited with the ability to simply ensure ‘duration’.

The produced geographical landscape constituted by fixed and immobile capital is both the crowning glory of past capitalist development and a prison that inhibits the further progress of accumulation precisely because it creates spatial barriers where there were none before. The very production of this landscape, so vital to accumulation, is in the end antithetical to the tearing down of spatial barriers and the annihilation of space by time. (Harvey, 1996 [1975]: 610)

Everything in the definition of macro social order is due to the enrolment of nonhumans ... even the simple effect of duration, of long-lasting social force, cannot be obtained without the durability of nonhumans to which human local interactions have been shifted. (Latour, 1994: 51)

The past continues to exert its influence on the present through this material presence and the inertia it represents. And yet even the most solid part of place is, in fact, (slowly) melting into air. Even a piece of the landscape as apparently unchanging as a public monument is just a very protracted ‘event’.

The static timeless element in the relation of Cleopatra's Needle to the Embankment is a pure illusion generated by the fact that for purposes of daily intercourse its emphasis is needless... If we define the Needle in a sufficiently abstract manner we can say that it never changes. But a physicist who looks on that part of the life of nature as a dance of electrons, will tell you that daily it has lost some molecules and gained others, and even the plain man can see that it gets dirtier and is occasionally washed. Thus the question of change in the Needle is a mere matter of definition. The more abstract your definition, the more permanent the Needle. But whether your Needle change or be permanent, all you mean by stating that it is situated on the Charing Cross Embankment, is that amid the structure of events you know of a certain continuous limited stream of events, such that any chunk of that stream, during any hour, or

any day, or any second, has the character of being the situation of Cleopatra's Needle. (Whitehead, 2004: 166–167)

Are you saying that there has always been a stand at this particular location since 1890 or 1940? Or are you saying that the actual physical building standing today is what was built on 1890 or 1940? I think this would be difficult to prove. These stands are not built as permanent buildings – I'm sure they are completely rebuilt from top to bottom over the space of 15 of 20 years. If you cannot verify the date of the actual materials, then I would recommend not including them in the resource count. (Ann Swallow, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, Letter to Lori Grove, 9 February 1994)

Buildings, and other elements of the material landscape of place, are also linked to other places along the horizontal plane of connections. While buildings may appear to get their sense of relative permanence from their singularity they are in fact achievements of networks as much as they are singular edifices. They are connected to the world through literal material connections such as sewers and telephone lines. The rock they are made of comes from elsewhere. Even the aesthetics of the façade are likely to have travelled.

The building becomes a place where a number of material and immaterial links meet in a node of relations, whose durability is both relative and negotiated. It is in this way that the building is able to engage and negotiate with a number of disparate realms... The building as a permeable entity becomes less an individual building block in a collection of blocks, but rather it becomes an unstable assemblage that is intimately connected to and renegotiated by the surrounding buildings, streets, communities, and economies and the world beyond. (Jenkins, 2002: 232)

This connectedness across a horizontal plane can also be thought of as an 'event' that is always subject to DeLanda's territorializing and deterritorializing pressures.

... the materiality of the building is a relational effect, its 'thing-ness' is an achievement of a diverse network of associates and associations. It is what we might think of as a building event rather than simply a building. Conceived of in this way, a

building is always being 'made' or 'unmade', always doing the work of holding together or pulling apart. (Jacobs, 2006: 11)

Places do not just endure through their material presence. The world of meaning is also important to the temporality of place. Sometimes the stories we tell about a place continue in more or less the same form, long after the material landscape has changed. Place is powerfully linked to memory through the connections between materiality and meaning.

It is the stabilizing persistence of place as a container of experiences that contributes so powerfully to its intrinsic memorability. An alert and alive memory connects spontaneously with place, finding in it features that favor and parallel its own activities. We might even say that memory is naturally place oriented or at least place-supported. (Casey, 1987: 186–187)

As with the materiality of place, the persistence of memory is not purely a product of 'here' but is produced through interactions between the inside and the outside that constitutes it. It has both vertical and horizontal aspects.

Place memory encapsulates the human ability to connect with both the built and natural environments that are entwined in the cultural landscape. It is the key to the power of historic places to help citizens define their public pasts: places trigger memories for insiders, who have shared a common past, and at the same time places often can represent shared pasts to outsiders who might be interested in knowing about them in the present. (Hayden, 1995: 46)

Meaning, and the narratives, stories, ideologies and memories that produce it, does not simply work to project past place into present and future place. This process is fractured – ruptured by different narratives that jostle for attention. Most places have stories that achieve some kind of pre-eminence. They also have stories that become hidden or silenced only to abruptly re-emerge as new constellations of place appear.

If you live in the city, especially near UIC, and your hubcaps disappear or your car sound system is ripped out, rush to Maxwell Street and you might be able to buy them back.

...

So if I have to take sides between the expansion of UIC, the city's first public university, which has provided thousands of working class kids with good educations, or a faded and fading Maxwell Street, I'll take the school.

The future of our society is not to be found in hot hubcaps. ('Don't shed a tear for Maxwell Street', Mike Royko, *Chicago Tribune*, 11 February, 1993, npn)

Maxwell Street is one of the few places left in the City where I can go on a summer Sunday and mix with Black people and White people and Asians and middle-easterners and rich and poor.

I can watch a pick up blues band, I can eat a pork chop sandwich with grilled onions not in a food court. I can wander, good, I can wander across an open field.

(Sharon Wolf – statement at a public meeting held at 7.00 pm on the 26th day of October 1993 at YMCA, 1001 W Roosevelt Rd, Chicago. [UIC University Archives, Associate Chancellor, South Campus Development Records, 003/02/02 – Series X Box 51, File 432, p. 104])

Materialities, meanings and practices from both within and without place are persistently gathered in place. The gathering, or weaving, function of place ensures forms of persistence that link place in the past to place in the present.

Layers of investment patterns, forms of labor, gender roles, migratory streams, and architectural styles: these among many other possibilities accumulate in sites over time. Often they do so in constitution with one another, with other places, and across geographical scales. Each round of sedimentation cannot help but shape the subsequent round. The place that materializes from this repetitive superimposition is never finished, never closed, never determined. Rather, places understood this way are processual, porous, and articulated. (Price, 2004: 5)

Practice appears to have the most tenuous hold on persistence. The individual doings of people and things (or people with things)

are often seen as the site for irreducible singularity.

Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representation... . Performance's being ... becomes itself through disappearance. (Phelan, 1993: 146)

In a number of ways, the things we do contribute to the persistence of place. Many theories of practice are centred on the notion of iteration and reiteration. Gender, for instance, has been seen as a product of iterative practice – constantly produced by repetition of actions (Butler, 1996). Social hierarchy more generally has been theorized as a product of practice and performativity (Bourdieu, 1977; de Certeau, 1984). This focus on practice and performativity has also highlighted the *becoming* nature of things (gender, society) that appeared to be already achieved, and their tenuous hold. If people and things are practised or performed differently, then these seemingly monolithic things would be transformed.

... performance also constitutes the methodological lens that enables scholars to analyze events as performance. Civic disobedience, resistance, citizenship, gender, ethnicity, and sexual identity, for example, are rehearsed and performed daily in the public sphere. To understand these as performance suggests that performance also functions as an epistemology. Embodied practice, along with and bound up with other cultural practices, offers a way of knowing. (Taylor, 2003: 3)

Practice is linked to temporality. While an individual act is doomed to disappear as soon as it happens, practices accumulate and repeat. This passage of practice through time links it to the production of meaning.

First, to recall, recount, or reactivate a scenario we need to conjure up the physical location (the 'scene' as physical environment, such as stage or place in English; scenario, a false cognate means stage in Spanish). Scene denotes intentionality, artistic or otherwise (the scene of the crime), and signals conscious strategies of display. The word appropriately suggests both the material stage as

well as the highly codified environment that gives viewers pertinent information, say, class status or historical period. The furnishings, clothing, sounds, and style contribute to the viewer's understanding of what might conceivably transpire there. The two, scene and scenario, stand in metonymic relationship: the place allows us to think about the possibilities of the action. But action also defined place. (Taylor, 2003: 29)

There are a number of ways in which memory and place are implicated in the production of each other. One technology of memory is the archive. The archive rests on the collection of things. It has a material presence that endures. That is one point of an archive – to ensure endurance. Places can be thought of as archives – as collections of things with origins in the past, things invested with different interpretive possibilities and that continue to be interpreted by people with different aims in mind (Turkel, 2007).

People become obsessed with material remnants because the past is a fiction: what remains are memories that are defined by our mourning for that which can no longer be present. We try to preserve memory by creating traces of a past that by definition can never be present. When places are made and understood in this way, their perceived material or emotive presence may seem comforting in the present moment because they are interpreted as giving the past a material form. (Till, 2005: 14)

Repertoire is another technology of memory that stands in contrast to the archive. The repertoire is centred on the importance of performance to memory and focuses on processes of reiteration. Again, place plays an important role. Places are both the settings for repertoires of repeated practice (providing the scenes in which scenarios are played out) and the products of the repertoire's enactments.

Certainly it is true that individual instances of performances disappear from the repertoire. This happens to a lesser degree than the archive. The question of disappearance in relation to the archive and the repertoire differs in kind as well as degree. The live performance can never be captured or transmitted through the archive...

Embodied memory, because it is live, exceeds the archive's ability to capture it. But this does not mean that performance – as ritualized, formalized, or reiterative behavior – disappears. Performances also replicate themselves through their own structures and codes... Multiple forms of embodied acts are always present, though in a constant state of againness. They reconstitute themselves, transmitting communal memories, histories, and values from one group/generation to the next. Embodied and performed acts generate, record, and transmit knowledge. (Taylor, 2003: 20–21)

Buildings are not what makes Maxwell Street historic; street vendors, musicians, and ambience did and does. The complex bringing together of persons from all walks of life – poor, rich, black, white, young, old, Hispanic, Jewish, eccentric, intellectual – is what makes Maxwell Street historic. The continuous use of this same place ... as a poor person's business incubator for 125 years is what makes Maxwell Street historic. (Letter from William Garfield to Ann Swallow, Illinois Historic Preservation Agency, 24 May, 1994)

There are clear lines to be drawn between the 'here'ness of place, ways in which places are constituted relationally, and the passage of place through time. What gets lost in a relational approach to place is the specificity of 'here'ness that resists or attracts particular kinds of flows and relations with the outside. I want to balance the vertical and the horizontal. The suggestion that places are made relationally sets up a false argument of territory and region as static concepts that need to be replaced. In fact the inhabitants of place continually assume space to be formed territorially and act as though it is. These territories are being made and remade all the time through political, economic and cultural practices. They are, like gender, products of iterative processes. Similarly networks, the favoured spatial form of many relational thinkers, are not always fluid and dynamic but have their own fairly static components or nodes, routes and moorings.

Sociospatial relations... are deeply processual and practical outcomes of strategic initiatives undertaken by a wide range of forces produced neither through structural determinism nor through a

spontaneous voluntarism, but through a mutually transformative evolution of inherited spatial structures and emergent spatial strategies within an actively differentiated, continually evolving grid of institutions, territories and regulatory activities... . In short, constructed and always emergent space matters in shaping future trajectories. (Jones, 2009: 497–498)

What is it that is being related in relational approaches to place? How come some things (places, etc.) are rich in relations while others are relationally impoverished? Who gets to make things relate? Is anything non-relational? There may even be structural reasons why some things enter into relations and others do not. At the core of this approach is the necessity of taking temporality into account when thinking through the interrelations between relational space and forms of territory and region – the interrelations between fixity and flow in place. Martin Jones uses the notion of ‘phase space’, which he borrows from physics (via assemblage theory). Phase space describes the way one set of spatial possibilities leads (or does not lead) to a new arrangement of space at some future point. Space, he argues, is ‘sticky’ and things can get stuck or anchored in it. This shapes the unfolding of space and society over time through a familiar interaction of structure (institutions, imperatives, etc.) and agency (individual acts). This stickiness can be thought of as the particularity of places out of which histories unfold.

The notion of the structure of a space of possibilities is crucial in assemblage theory given that, unlike properties, the capacities of an assemblage are not given, that is, they are merely possible when not exercised. But the set of possible capacities of an assemblage is not amorphous, however open-ended it may be, since different assemblages exhibit different sets of capacities. (DeLanda, 2006: 29)

Gathering gives to place its peculiar enduringness, allowing us to return to it again and again as the same place and not just as the same position or site... . A place is generative and regenerative on its own schedule. From it experiences are born and to it human beings return for empowerment... .

A place is more an event than a thing to be assimilated to known categories... . (Casey, 1996: 26)

Particular constellations of place contain within them a multitude of possibilities for futures – different versions of what happens next. It also reintroduces a notion of bound-ness and territory in a terrain that relational theorists are attempting to dissolve completely. But territoriality is not the only process at play in the development of place through time.

As gatherings of materialities, meanings and practices, places are projected forward in heterogeneous ways. Each of these elements of place contribute to the obduracy, or otherwise, of place – as persistent landscape, as memory, as repertoire.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has traced an outline of a theory of a place. Like place itself, the outline has piled up a number of often disparate things to create a synthetic approach – a meso-theoretical account of place that allows us to think about place holistically and in a way that sidesteps or ignores a series of abiding either/or choices. My approach here has tended towards both/and: representation and performance, material and immaterial, rooted and routed.

At the core of my argument are the following axioms.

Places are meaningful locations. They combine the three aspects of location, locale and sense of place. Places are sites where things are uniquely together and where the whole adds up to more than the sum of the parts. The components that are assembled (or ‘gathered’) are materialities (including non-concrete materialities), meanings (through experience, narratives, representation, ideologies, etc.) and practices/performances. Places exist in relation to an outside from where things are gathered and to where things disperse. Roots and routes exist together in place. Places

are also temporal. The particular assemblage that is formed at one point in time enables and prohibits particular futures. The components of place – materialities, meanings and practices – all contribute temporal dimensions to place as they are lived, felt and recalled.

It makes no sense to dissolve place entirely into a set of flows and connections. At any point in time, a place is a particular combination of materialities, meanings and practices that encourages some connections and makes others unlikely. These elements that make up 'here' are, to be sure, likely to have come from elsewhere at some point in the past. This, however, should not distract from the significance of a place's history in the ongoing constitution of place in the present. The ways in which the vertical (rooted) and horizontal (routed) aspects of place are assembled, the ways in which the materialities, meanings and practices of place are gathered and the ways in which present places enable or discourage future places are all central to the politics of place. Power casts its net here.

So what does this leave for geographers (and others) to do? One answer is a renewed practice of place writing. The tradition of regional geography from the first half of the twentieth century became moribund and parochial in its flat descriptiveness. At its best, however, it was described as 'the highest form of the geographer's art' (Hart, 1982). It should now be possible to try again. We have a half-century of theoretical and philosophical insight to draw upon when writing new geographies of place that take the elements I have outlined here seriously. Such an account would be more than description (though good description should not be underrated) but provides detailed and patient interweavings of theory and empirics in order to better understand the ongoing process of becoming places. Such accounts should resist the reduction of places to roots or routes, to materiality or practice, to representation or the non-representational. The older arguments of geographers, which rested on

places as syncretic and particular, had a point but lacked some of the theoretical landscape to take such ideas forward. We are in a different place now.

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