

PLACE WRITING:

narratives, experience and identities



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The Kakadu Floodplain. Source: J. Sillar

The Australian Curriculum: Geography identifies place as one of the pivotal concepts. How place is understood by teachers and how places are constructed and represented by teachers (Lambert & Morgan, 2010, 83) is of fundamental importance. For some teachers, in the consultation phase of the curriculum process, place was simply envisaged as location (personal observation). For others, the aim of school Geography is to make learners 'more effective perceivers, users, appreciators, evaluators and developers of place' (Catling, 1987, 19). A fascination with place has encouraged many of us to become immersed in Geography in school, university (Creswell, 2008, 132) and long teaching careers.

The Draft F–12 Australian Curriculum: Geography concisely defines place as 'a specific part of the earth's surface that has been named and given meanings by people, although these meanings may differ' (2011, 7) and then proceeds to demonstrate how students progressively develop an understanding of place. The intent here is to build on these ideas through discussion of a wide range of thinking about place with most examples chosen from Australia and the Asia-Pacific region.

Place is a rich geographical concept that fires the geographical imagination. Place is teased out here by: examining theory, or, 'grand narratives', as well as stories that people tell about place; the experience of place which emphasises the connection between 'being in the world'¹ and the sense of place associated with living in specific places (Agnew, Livingstone & Rogers, 1996 370); and place as a locus of identity because people invest their surroundings with meaning and can develop a sense of place (367).

¹ Put in its simplest form 'geography should deal with the world as it is actually lived by real people' (Peet, 1998, 60), 'being in the world' is most often associated with Heidegger's philosophy

Places and Place

Firstly, it is necessary to differentiate between places and place. Places occupy the high ground in many primary school geographies and have taken up much desk space in high school geographies.

Glacken spoke evocatively about places, 'In 1937 I spent eleven months travelling in many parts of the world. The yellow dust clouds high over Peking, the dredged pond mud along the Yangtze, the monkeys swinging from tree to tree at Angkor Vat, a primitive water-lifting apparatus near Cairo, the Mediterranean promenade, the goat curd and the carob of Cyprus, the site of Athens and the dryness of Greece, the shrubs, the coves, the hamlets, and the deforestation of the Eastern Mediterranean, the shepherds of the Caucasus, the swinging swords of Central Asians in the markets of Ordzhonikidze, the quiet farms of Swedish Skane – these and many other observations made me realise as part of my being the commonplace truth that there is a great diversity both of human cultures and of the physical environments in which they live' (Glacken, 1967).

Place, according to Hayden (1997, 112, cited in Anderson, 2010, 37) 'is one of the trickiest words in the English language, a suitcase so overfilled that one can never shut the lid'. Feminist writers use the term place to signify positionality or social location frequently expressed in terms of gender, race, class, age or sexuality (Anderson & Jones, 2009, 292). These metaphorical vocabularies of place have some salience in a number of geographical considerations of place, but place is all too often a more concrete concept for geographers, albeit often framed in poetic language.

Pascoe speaks of geographical place, 'If you are born here you might admire another place but never love in like your own. Love is when you stand before your country and your

jaw drops open and your soul creeps out of your mouth and walks about the country and when it returns it whispers in your ear, pardon me but I have just visited our mother. She is the plain below Nourlangie Rock, she is the serenity of Blanket Bay, the all-knowing stillness of the Wallagaraugh River, she is the birth mark stain of vermilion you see as you cross the continental centre of this country, our birth place' (Pascoe, 2007, 187).

The task of the geographer/Geography teacher teaching about places can fall into the trap of presenting endless lists of facts about places, the ways in which geographers in classical antiquity compiled inventories to describe parts of the Earth. One solution to this is to produce evocative descriptions that facilitate an understanding and appreciation of places (Hart, 1982). Then there are the more analytical approaches to explaining why places are like they are in which geographers compare places that are similar in all but a few key variables, and evaluate the effects of these variables. Diamond (2005, 329-357) examines the two different places that occupy the Caribbean Island of Hispaniola in his study on 'One Island, Two Peoples, Two Histories: The Dominican Republic and Haiti' and Hutchinson (2010, 11) follows up on Diamond's ideas in an examination of the physical, human and historical geographies of the Dominican Republic and Haiti in the context of the 2010 Port-au-Prince earthquake. A social scientist writing from a sociological perspective (Sassen, 2011, 8) examines 'a highly variable mosaic of results' in the places she identifies as *global cities*; urban economist, Glaeser (2011, 41-64) writes of the rise and decline of rustbelt cities in the USA; and, Parkins and Craig (2006), from the humanities, explain the differences between the various *Città Slow*² or *Slow Cities* throughout Europe.

Another approach to the study of places is through fieldwork; another through the use of literature, film, digital imagery, fine art, music and poetry. But teaching about place may need other sets of skills. Rawling (2011, 65) maintains that school Geography, as it is currently taught tends 'to undervalue the poetic, the emotional and the spiritual dimensions of 'being in place'. Furthermore, when examining Pascoe's construction of place there may be a need to consider the textural strategies of contemporary writing; when examining a contemporary novel or digital image is it desirable to take into account changes in perspective, jump-cuts and cross cuts between scene, and different constructions of time and space (Gregory, 1989, 229)? At the very least the list of strategies³ that Rawling (2011, 74) enumerates should develop the geographical imagination with regard to place.

Defining Place

Pascoe's evocative extract is only one clue to a number of constructs of place. Aristotle, in his *Physics* pondered about place to then conclude that it refers to the precise dimensions of the space that contains something—'place' is a neutral container (McKeon 1941, cited in Relph, 2001, 11448). Philosopher Casey asserts, 'To live is to live locally, and to know is first of all to know the place one is in' (1996, 18, cited in Massey, 2004, 7). Casey (2001) speaks of a remarkable convergence between philosophy and geography in recent years, particularly between phenomenology, a form of philosophy that attempts to give a direct description of first-person experience, and, humanistic geography. He explains that, 'Both geography and phenomenology have come to focus on place as experienced by human beings, in contrast to space, whose abstractness discourages experiential explorations' (Casey, 2001, 683). Thus for Cresswell (1996, cited in Relph, 2001, 11448) place is 'a meaningful segment of space' and a 'container of social power'. Similarly, Cresswell explains that places are locations with meaning seen as particular constellations of material things that occupy a particular segment of space and have sets of meanings attached to them (2008, 135).

On the other hand, to geographers who espouse spatial science, places were relegated to 'nodes in networks of rationally determined flows of people, commodities and money' (Lambert & Morgan, 2010, 86). One could argue that such a view of place still is prevalent among geographers using GIS with their preoccupation with 'relationships between events and objects in space by correlating their spatial co-occurrence' (Agnew, 2011, 321).

Major (2010, 90) explained that Marxist, phenomenological, feminist and post-structural approaches⁴ 'have all involved, in their widely divergent ways, some recognition of the variability, uniqueness and multiplicity of place'. Explanations of these theoretical positions is not the aim here. An examination of place from within the discipline of Geography has as much to contribute to 'theory' as it has to learn from it (Gregory, 1994).

Regional geographer Paasi (1996, cited in Macleod, 2001, 678) has claimed that the concept of place is useful in depicting the context through which the paths and projects of the everyday lives of individuals are enacted. Similarly, contributions from critical human geographers capture an internal essence of place in their arguments that 'a place is where [people] have networks of friends, relatives and

² Goolwa, in South Australia, Katoomba, in NSW and Yea, in Victoria are currently *Cittaslow* places in Australia.

³ The strategies include reading novels, poetry, travel writing and nature writing; expressing personal responses to place creatively; drawing of personal geographies; using ways of 'being in the world' as starting points e.g. surfing, painting; allowing for creativity and a sense of wonder when reflecting on fieldwork; using literary and textual artefacts as tools of stimulus; and, undertaking cross disciplinary approaches to place. (2011, 74).

⁴ Marxist views, for example, would see dystopian place fashioned out of the ebbs and flows of global capital, phenomenologists focus on places formed from the full range of human experience, feminists on 'gendered places' and post-structuralist geographers are concerned about 'relationality' where place is made by interactions of internalising forces, powers, influences, and meaning from elsewhere.

Agnew, (2011, 324) identifies a similar set of four recent theoretical approaches that investigate the nature of place: neo-Marxist, the humanist or agency-based (including phenomenological), the feminist, and the performative (a particular line of post-structuralist thought).

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acquaintances, where they have learned about life and acquired a cultural frame of reference through which to interpret the social world around them (Beynon and Hudson, 1993, 82). But there are also exogenous factors that affect place, places are interlinked with other places and these connections construct place across space and over time. Place is also clearly different from space. 'Spaces are scientific, open and detached, whilst places are intimate, peopled, and emotive. Place then is the counterpoint of space: places are politicised and cultured; they are humanised versions of space' (Anderson & Jones, 2009, 293).

Lambert sums up various notions of place rather well for Geography teachers, 'Every place has a particular location and a *unique set* of physical and human characteristics. Furthermore, the same place can be *represented* differently. Places are dynamic and subject to constant change. What we think about places is both shaped by, and shapes, our *'geographical imagination'*'. (Lambert, 2009, 1)

My Place

According to Agnew (1987, 2011) place as a 'meaningful location' involved three attributes: location, a point on the Earth's surface; locale, a setting and scale for people's daily actions and interactions; and, a sense of place, subjective feelings about place.

Ashfield, an inner western Sydney suburb is located 33° 53'20"S, 151°07'30"E, approximately 9 kilometres southwest of the CBD. Its locale includes a multicultural mixture of residents with some 20% speaking a Chinese language at home, in an urban milieu made up of post-World War II low rise home units, Federation era detached houses and a number of splendid Victorian villas. Ashfield is a porous place; an unbounded lived space⁵. An Anglo-Celtic pre-war population has been enriched by migration streams from Poland, Italy and Greece and more latterly India and China. Ashfield high street, popularly known as 'Little Shanghai' is home to Chinese small businesses where about eighty-five per cent of the shops display Chinese script shop signage (Wise, 2009, 93). The sense of place engendered in Ashfield for many Chinese Australians is a powerful one where local Shanghai dialects can be heard and where familiar foods evoke a 'deeply embodied, sensuous feeling of belonging and familiarity, which in this case knits together both Ashfield and Shanghai' (Wise, 2009, 99), thus enveloping people into a strong sense of *translocal* identity. Here local-local connections, complicated spatial lattices and powerful place-based identities combine to fashion, *a home away from home*, a sense of place dependent on both mobility⁶

⁵ There is some confusion between the use of 'lived space' as it is referred to in contemporary French philosophy and the geographical connotation of place. Several geographers maintain that such usage should be termed, or conceived of, as referring to place (Agnew, 2011, Creswell 2004, and Mitchell, 2000).

⁶ Urry (2000, 132-133, cited in Oakes & Price, 2008, 308) believes that 'People dwell in and through being at home and away, through the dialectic of roots and routes or what Clifford terms 'dwelling in travel'



Liverpool Road Ashfield. Source: J. Sillar

and the importance of place. However, these modes of translocal belonging among the Chinese residents have also constituted a sense of alienation among many elderly Anglo-Celtic residents (Smith, 2009, 195). Ashfield will continue to be enriched by translocality as evidenced in the colourful costumes of the Tongan and Fijian communities that attend the local church, the Polish Club with its enormous portrait of Kosciusko in the dining room, and the had written signage in Russian at the Shanghai Night restaurant that attracts the Russian immigrants who lived in exile in Shanghai in the early 20thc (Wise, 2009, 98).

Part of Wise's fieldwork into 'multicultural place sharing' involved videotaping everyday life along Liverpool Road 'focusing on the rhythms of the street, who uses it, and how people from different backgrounds interact with it as a place' (Wise, 2009, 97).

My Place and some theoretical issues

A number of theoretical issues regarding place are informed by the Ashfield study. The reference to the 'rhythms of the street' reminds one of the tendencies of some contemporary geographers to study performance⁷ in place and space. Seamon (1980) writes in a humanistic or phenomenological vein of a 'body ballet' – think of the automatic driving responses of car drivers on a regular route to work and aggregate these into habitual routines that are enacted throughout the day and you have a time–space routine where people negotiate a place in the rush hour or navigate busy streets coalescing to form a 'place ballet'. 'Seamon's argument is that places exhibit a kind of un-choreographed yet ordered practice that makes the place just as much as the place's more static and bounded qualities do. Indeed the meaning of a place may arise out of the constant reiteration of practices that are simultaneously individual and social. Places in this sense are intensely embodied and dramatic' (Cresswell, 2009, 175).

The strong leitmotif of mobility signals a change in the ways in which many geographers theorise place. The founders of place studies, such as Ratzel (1844–1904) believed that 'fixity in place was a necessary condition of advanced culture and civilisation' (Oakes & Price, 2008, 325) 'like a tree, then, civilisation was 'rooted' in the soil' (84). Harvey wrote of the difference between place as a secure and bounded community as opposed to the 'uncontrollable vectors of spatiality' (Cresswell, 2004, 56). Yet a metaphor that helps to explain contemporary ideas about place again use a biotic figure of speech, but this time the root is a rhizome (Deleuze & Guattari⁸, 1983). Tree logic explains place in terms of region where geography is 'the study of places' (Hartshorne, 1961), with place as an apparently unproblematic concept and region is the essential mental construct for the organization of geographic data (1961). Tree-like logic sees central places set in latticed hexagons spread across an isotropic plane; it also sees place as Yi-Fu Tuan's does as an emotional bounded area, often the dwelling-place, to which an individual or a group has a strong emotional relationship. People then even derive their personal identity from it; they are for example a Novocastrian (Dunn, McGuirk & Winchester, 1995) rather than a town planner or a surfer.

The rhizome frees up theoretical presuppositions about dwelling in place, we can dwell by being both home and away and by moving between places and within places (Oakes & Price, 2008, 308). The rhizome differs from the tree or root in that it is not necessary to return to its origins, in fact, it brings into question the concept of origin; the rhizome is likely to rupture at any point into 'lines of flight' and cannot

⁷ Rose (1999), in quite difficult philosophical language, partially drawn from psychoanalysis, insists that space is not a pre-existent void or a 'terrain to be filled or spanned or constructed' but instead practised and performed. In short, Rose thinks of space as 'a doing'; or, a space to be performed. Thrift (1999), in another challenging reading, puts forward theories of 'performativity' in relation to place.

⁸ Agnew (2011, 322) admonishes British geographers that 'ransack' a quotation or two from French philosophers just to find a seemingly apposite quotation but I think the inclusion is instructive here.

be contained within a simple abstract structure (Cranny-Francis, 2006, 154). Post-structuralist geography sees places not as closed and contained but engaged with other spaces and places; some processes and practices emanate from within, some from without; both the performer and the site of performance are entangled as places are made and remade (Murdoch, 2006, 18). In phenomenological terms our dwelling or being in the world involves embodied processes of place-making and meaning-making as conjoined activities (Oakes & Price, 2008, 254). Mobility⁹ is taken up in the notion of the 'nomad' as a way of questioning the norm of dwelling in place, of a 'sedentary metaphysics' (Cresswell, 2009, Malkki, 1992) (and of a way of providing sites of resistance to other grand narratives such as colonialism, patriarchy or nation building). Massey (2005, 82) goes further to argue that the rhetoric used in globalisation discourse comes to have almost 'the ineluctability of a grand narrative'.

Interconnections

Epeli Hau'ofa, a Tongan academic, reflects on his oceanic place and ocean peoples, 'Theirs was a large world in which peoples and cultures moved and mingled unhindered by boundaries of the kind erected much later by imperial powers. From one island to another they sailed to trade and to marry; thereby expanding social networks for greater flow of wealth. They travelled to visit relatives in a wide variety of natural and cultural surroundings, to quench their thirst for adventure, and to even fight and dominate ... Nineteenth century imperialism erected boundaries that led to the contraction of Oceania, transforming a once boundless world into the Pacific Island states and territories that we know today. People were confined to their tiny spaces, isolated from each other' (Hau'ofa, 1992, 152–155).

Cresswell (2004) recounts the narrative of travel writer Raban and his retelling of the 1792 voyage of HMS Discovery, under the command of Captain Vancouver. In mapping the coastline between present-day Seattle and Vancouver the explorer named prominent parts of the coast rendering it a place of empire. His journal recorded the seemingly inexplicable and nonsensical movements of the natives in their canoes as they zigzagged across the ocean, 'To the native canoeists their movement made perfect sense as they read the sea as a set of places associated with particular spirits and particular journeys. While the colonists looked at the sea and saw blank space, the natives saw place' (Cresswell, 2004, 9). On both sides of the Pacific place is made up of wind, waves, clouds, stars, sun, moon, birds, fish and the water itself (Davis, 2009, 52).

Gale (1987, 128–131) describes Diyari country to the east of Lake Eyre as being an open place, an important trading Australia-wide Aboriginal trading hub. Kooperamanna, literally 'as the fingers all come together in the 'root' of the hand, so do the native tribes come together' (128), in pre-

⁹ Cresswell (1997, 360) explains, 'Everyone is travelling in the field of 'theory' today. Metaphors of movements parade across the pages of cultural theorists, social theorists, geographers, artists, literary critics.'

Invasion times marked the intersection of five major trading routes from as far away as Cape York, central Queensland, the Kimberleys and Coorong bringing in boomerangs, axe heads, sea shells, animal skins and wooden artefacts to a place that was located near the 'proper' ochre and best quality pituri (native tobacco).

Kimble (1951, 499) maintained that rather than the seeing a patchwork of regions, 'from the air it is the links in the landscapes, the rivers, roads, railways, canals, pipe-lines, electric cables, rather than the breaks that impress the aviator'. Massey (1995) believes that there are strong arguments for including the interconnections of places into conceptualisation of place. The examples above demonstrate that places have long been open and porous. Further, interconnections between places across scale and space become ever more evident in a globalised world. Thirdly, contemporary theory emphasises that any concept of identity, whether it be a person or place, should be an open one rather than bounded or closed off from the outside (1995, 67).

A relational geography of place attempts to rethink place in terms of the wider social relations that constitute it. This relational view sees both space and place as made up of spatialised social relations that not only make and remake place but also reshape social and cultural identities and how they are represented (Allen, Massey & Cochrane, 1998, 1-2). Further, there are multiple ways of seeing place; they are not out there waiting to be discovered, they are subjective and collective social constructs. If place is conceptualised in this way they are thus not isolated from each other, each with their own personality. Their very characteristics are formed, in part, through their links with one another (Massey, 1995, 69). The economic prospects and general well-being of place dwellers can in no way be completely determined by events or actions within the places themselves (69)

Because, as Massey argues places are actually constituted out of wider relations and networks and should be seen as meeting points where different social groups and relations come together, there is an emphasis on diversity, hybridity and heterogeneity within places. This engenders a distinctive 'politics of place' as different social groups and actors assert their claims to place, striving to shape its meaning and character according to their interests and orientations (MacKinnon, 2009). Engagement with the porosity rather than the boundedness of place is an important conceptual understanding that allows young people explore different responses to immigration (Taylor, 2005, 16), for example.

Additionally, places compete with each in terms of power, their material future, 'whether a new development should occur, whether new people should be allowed to move in, whether a place should remain 'unspoilt'' (Massey & Jess, 1995, 2). This idea of place as a 'meeting place' is a powerful one because chains of command and control are stretched out across the surface of the planet and over time they are contingent on the processes that create, sustain and dissolve

them (Harvey, 1996, 261), -- places are thus sites of relational conflict and where consensual relations can be resolved. These relations exist over differing scales from what Massey refers to as 'the unimaginably cosmic to the intimately tiny' (1998, 37). Again, social space consists of all the networks and complexities of social interaction and interconnection, whether they be very small scale or global in their reach' (Massey & Jess, 1995, 54).

Representing place

David Harvey bundles together an eclectic group of terms that he maintains are associated with place, 'we use many generic terms such as place, region, area, territory, and locality, to identify a distinctive and usually bounded space as if it is a relatively permanent and separate entity endowed with particular and distinctive qualities. A series of cognate descriptive terms, such as city, village, hamlet, fiefdom, administrative district, neighbourhood, and even community and home and hearth, as well as more technical-sounding determinations, such as ecosystem, microclimate, topographic region or landscape, effectively some distinctive and coherent assemblage of particular phenomena in a bounded space' (2009, 169-70).

Place as landscape

It is landscape that is most often associated with ways of seeing in Geography. Relph (1976, 30) maintains that the spirit of a place resides in its landscape and Cresswell (2004, 10) explains that landscape combines a focus on the material topography of a place with the notion of vision, or the way that it is seen; and yet humans are an integral part of place: we inhabit place but we look at landscape.

Malouf, thought of the Australian landscape in a similar way to the American cultural geographers of the Berkeley School¹⁰, although he did open up another way of making place. 'The land had received the imprint of culture long before we came to it. It had been shaped by use and humanised by knowledge that was both practical and sacred. It had also been taken deep into the consciousness of its users so that, through naming and storytelling and myth-making, all the features of the land took on a second life in the imagination and in the mouths of women and men. A land can bear any number of cultures laid one above the other or set side by side. It can be inscribed and written upon many times. One of those forms of writing is the shaping of a landscape. In any place where humans have made their homes, the landscape will be a made one. Landscape-making is in our bones' (Malouf, 1998).

Other ways that geographers look at landscape are useful heuristics for representing place. Cosgrove emphasises the ocular and the cartographic in his way of seeing, imagining and representing the world (2008) but cultural geographers

¹⁰ An approach variously called 'landscape morphology' or 'cultural history' that involved the inductive gathering of facts about the human impact on the landscape over time

are also concerned with visual and textual practices and the ways in which landscapes, or places, whether the representation is 'in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water and vegetation on the ground' (Cosgrove & Daniels, 1988, 1). The metaphor of the landscape as 'text' with investigations into post-war linguistics and semiotics thus disclose multiple layers of meaning and 'thick descriptions' (Cosgrove & Jackson, 1987). The investigations by Wise, video-recording the 'rhythms of the street' in Ashfield, the dissection of movies such as *Heimat* (homeland) (Morley & Robins, 1995) and *Bladerunner* (Harvey, 1990) or visual methodologies more generally opens up other visual and textual practices about place.

Seeing place in Australia

A number of different examples illustrate diverse approaches to represent place. Firstly, written texts can be mined for meaning. Main was attempting to find his Australian place in Wiradjuri Country, in south-western NSW. 'Standing on the hillside beside the graves, I heard trucks rumbling into Tarcutta on their long journeys between cities. I knelt on the damp red earth to draw in the dreamy aroma of a chocolate lily blossom. Ants crawled over the rotting leaves. One deep breath, then another, as the flowering lily drew me into relationships with particularities and histories, into dialogue with place' (Main, 2005, 15).

Geographer, Heathcote described the development of the built environment, in 1914, in rural Australia, 'From the golden fleece and the golden grain, the profits had accumulated, bark huts became brick and stone homesteads, dirt tracks became highways and rail routes, and the river steamers crunched their way over the snags and sandbars of the Murray Darling with supplies and produce' (Heathcote, 1994, 262).

White wanted 'to paint a portrait of my city: wet, boiling, superficial, brash, beautiful ugly Sydney, developing during my lifetime from a sunlit village into this present day parvenu bastard compound of San Francisco and Chicago' (quoted in Falkiner, 1992, 49).

Lohrey pictures an inner-western Sydney suburban backyard where a pensive figure, 'sits alone and contemplates ... the dense tangle of leaf that reflects each wave of immigrants to the city: fig tree, lemon, grapevine, blue gum, banana palm, white frangipani and there, in a fragrant clump by the fence, a climbing red rose entwined with a scarlet hibiscus, while at their base wild tomato plants run riot. The English, the Mediterranean, the tropical and the native bush entwined in a ceaseless tangle, an above them the sweet heady smell of frangipani floating on an acrid wave of gasoline' (Lohrey, 1996, 91, quoted in Murphy & Watson, 1997, 12).

Gibson and Connell (2000) have written about Sydney and the photographs of Max Dupain, the detective noir fiction of Cliff Hardy, poets such as Kenneth Slessor, the exuberance of the gay and lesbian Mardi Gras parade through Oxford Street, and the seamy desolation of Sydney's West encapsulated in rock music by Tex Perkins.



Performer in the 2010 Mardi Gras Parade by Richard Kendall. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Reading Medan Merdeka

Another reading of place is illustrated by Crang (1998) who describes how the 'Koningsplein', the centre of the colonial Dutch administration was transformed into Medan Merdeka of newly independent Indonesia. The new government simply took over the governor's palace as the presidential palace thus signalling that the new administration was every bit as powerful as their colonial masters. The national mosque was Arabist in its architectural style symbolising pan-national rather than national identity and the Dutch Catholic cathedral remained next door as a tolerant symbol of *pancasila*. In the centre of Medan Merdeka square is a square tower, the Monas monument that looks over the former colonial buildings. 'In the monument is a series of forty-eight dioramas, bound into a narrative through their spatial logic- simply by walking from one to the next is enough to link them into a story leading up to the creation of Indonesia as a modern state. A whole panel is devoted to the United Nations building in New York, not just the people the building - symbolising the moment when the international community recognised the claim of Indonesia as a nation state' (Crang, 1998, 28).

A sense and spirit of place

Humanistic geographer Tuan (1977) saw place as 'humanised space' and developed associated arguments that the essence of place lies in a 'sense of place' and a deep feeling of belonging. Casey (2001, 683) explained that humanistic geographers such as Tuan and Relph emphasised the experiential features of place, or its 'subjective' or 'lived' aspects and as such their writings were natural allies of phenomenology. According to Relph (2001, 11448) phenomenology, as a philosophical method, allowed rigorous interpretations of place using the writings of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty to argue that ideas about place are grounded in experiences of dwelling in specific places, and that these precede all abstraction notions of location, environment, or geography. Phenomenology interrogates identity and sense of place, topophilia, and home. These insights, that waxed and waned in the humanistic geographies of the 1970s and 1980s, have been absorbed into most subsequent discussions of place in Geography.

Sense of place

Cresswell (2009) explains that sense of place refers to the more nebulous meanings associated with a place: evocative feelings about place but Relph distinguished between sense of place and spirit of place or genius of place (*genius loci*) but both sets of terms referred to the character or personality of a place, which could be reflected in more prosaic phrases such as 'town character,' or 'local distinctiveness' (Hayden, 2001, 11451). The great regional geographers also referred to *genius loci*¹¹ (Herbertson, 1916, 384).

Sense of place may vary from 'simple recognition for orientation, through the capacity to respond empathetically to the identities of different places, to a profound association with places as cornerstones of existence and individual identity' (Relph, 1976, 63).

Spirit of place

Spirit of place comes from the Latin *genius loci*, but the idea is derived from the ancient and widespread belief that certain places are inhabited by their own gods or spirits. In contemporary thinking it involves a relational interplay between places and human aspirations and actions, the types of ideas taken up by psychogeography. Places accumulate sedimented layers of social, symbolic, psychological, biological and physical meaning to constitute the *genius loci* (Harvey, 2009, 180). In classical antiquity almost every hill-top, spring, grove, and outcrop of rock had its own guardian spirit, and Greek and Italian farmers walked around the parameters of their fields every month singing hymns and offering sacrifices to evoke the benevolence of the gods towards house and home (Tuan, 1977, 153–4).

Bell & de-Shalit (2011) maintain that contemporary Singapore's spirit of place is based on material well-being, materialism and meritocracy. But spirit of place goes further than this. Yuen (2005) explains that decorative and ornate shophouses in the Tanjong Katong district, built between 1918 and 1930, occupy a 'special niche in the hearts of people and have the intangible effect of increasing resident attachment to place' (Yuen, 2005, 206). The spirit of place in Singapore, seen through recent attempt to search for place identity, involves a search for buildings and places to conserve. Recently the government has made a concerted effort to enhance a sense of place, or rewrite the city's development with greater emphasis on identity (Yuen, 2005), as the city-state moves remorselessly towards a (placeless) advanced service economy (Leaf, 2007, 158). Such endeavours must be seen against the backdrop of a number of 21st century aspirations: 'Industry 21', 'Trade 21', 'Tourism 21', 'ICT 21' and 'Technopreneurship 21' (Baum, 2003, 222).

¹¹ Herbertson observed that regional geography was not solely concerned with materialistic interpretations of geography (and history) 'There is a *genius loci* as well as *Zeitgeist* – a spirit of place as well as of time' (1916, 384)

The antithesis of sense of place is placelessness. Cresswell (2001, 332) writes about Changi Airport as the archetypical non-place¹², as described by Augé (1995). It is a place of the privileged business traveller, the western tourist and the puzzled academic, such as Augé or de Botton¹³ developing theories about the increased mobility of the interconnected world. Relph (2001, 11450) explained placelessness as: 'the condition in which different places look much the same, and, more importantly, offer the same opportunities for experience. It is the erosion of geographical distinctiveness and diversity.'

Topophilia

Topophilia, as explained by Tuan, is the affective bond between people and place or setting, or 'all of the human being's ties with the material environment' (1974, 93). Tuan explains the most intense aesthetic experiences of humannature are likely to catch one by surprise (94). Rolls (2002, vii) elucidates, 'The casual first European observers of country and city found them beautiful. ... everywhere, from the cold wet valleys of Tasmania through the hot sandy plains of the Red Centre to the tropical north, shrubs and flowers bloomed for most of the year.' Tuan writes of 'landscapes of persistent appeal,' such as mountains and seashores, islands, carefully tended farms, and small towns (Relph, 2001, 11449).

Tuan quotes Strehlow (1947, 30–31) in the context of Aranda, he 'clings to his native soil with every fibre of his being ... Today, tears will come into his eyes when he mentions an ancestral home site, which has been, sometimes unwittingly desecrated by white usurpers of group territory. Love of home, longing for home, these are dominating motifs which constantly re-appear also in the myths of the totemic ancestors.' And, 'He sees recorded in the surrounding landscape the ancient story of the lives and deeds of the immortal beings whom he reveres; beings, who for a brief space may take on his own experience as his fathers and grandfathers and brothers, and as his mothers and sisters. The whole countryside is his living, age-old family tree' (cited in Tuan, 1974, 99–100).

Pearson (1999) nobly proclaimed, 'We, as individuals, have within our breasts layers of identity according to sex, sexual preference, culture, religion, recreation, professional ties, locational patriotism and political preference' but others would assert that an Aboriginal sense of personal identity is derived from only one context, place (Myers, 1991, 54, cited

¹² Cresswell (2002, 17) explains, 'Augé's use of the name non-place does not have the same negative moral connotations as Relph's "placelessness." By non-place Augé is referring to sites marked by the "fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral." Non-places include motorways, airports, supermarkets – sites where particular histories and traditions are not (allegedly) relevant – unrooted places marked by mobility and travel. Non-place is essentially the space of travellers.'

Large airports can hardly be thought of as non-places when judged by the number of people they employ. The 77 000 people employed at Heathrow Airport presumably regard it as an authentic place.

¹³ de Botton, A. (2009) *A Week at the Airport: A Heathrow Diary*, London: Profile Books Ltd.

in Lawlor, 1991, 235, Clarke, 2003, 18, Sveiby & Skuthorpe, 2006, 19). Yuin People speaking to Rose about Gulaga, on the NSW South Coast, expressed their feelings toward the mountain, 'acquired as part of their growing up, are both consciously articulated and accepted as an integral part of being who they are. As one man explained to me, 'It's sacred to us. It has been for years and years. It's like a monument. It's important to us. It's just natural ... The old people always talked about it. It's ours. One of the women told me: 'You've got to understand, Debbie. I'd give my life for this mountain' (Rose, 1996, 38).

One of the most eloquent testaments to topophilia comes from Yunupingi, former Member of the Council of Aboriginal Reconciliation, 'The land is my backbone. I only stand straight, happy and proud and not ashamed about my colour, because I still have land. I can paint, dance, create and sing as my ancestors did before me. I think of land as the history of my nation. It tells me of how we came into being, and by what system we must live. My great ancestors, who lived in the time of history, planned everything that we practice now. The law of history says we must not take land, fight over land, steal land, give land, and so on. My land is mine only because I came in spirit from the land, and so did my ancestors from the land. My land is my foundation' (Theophanous, 1998, 101)

In his Australia Day address, Flannery (2002) said Australians could only become a 'true people' by developing 'deep, sustaining roots in the land'. He said the land was 'the only thing that we all, uniquely, share in common. It is at once our inheritance, our sustenance, and the only force ubiquitous and powerful enough to craft a truly Australian people.'

A number of contemporary writers apparently experience a spirituality informed by Aboriginal people-land relations.

McKenna (2002) reconstructed the spirit of place of his eight acres of land at Towamba on the NSW South Coast. 'I now look down the river and see the flats where the corroborees took place. ... Aboriginal people had performed corroborees on or near this site for thousands of years. And they moved along this same river valley on their way to and from the Bogong moth festival on the Monaro plains' (2002, 228).

Shakespeare (2004) tells of an Aboriginal man from the east coast of Tasmania who rediscovered his spirituality through a dream. He dreamt of walking along the beach and on being surrounded by a mob of Aborigines taunting him about being non-Aboriginal. In the dream he tore open his shirt to reveal body scars, big cicatrices of the Oyster Bay people. After the dream he affirmed his Aboriginality to the community at large. (Shakespeare, 2004. 180)

Main's (2005) speaks of the deep connection that Wiradjuri had to land and the developing links that non Aboriginal people were experiencing: 'I can just feel an enormous sort of presence here, thousands and thousands of years of human habitation and millions of years of life forces going on here' (2005, 259).

Anthropologist, Rose (2001) discussed white pastoralists from South Australia, Central Australia and Northern Australia and their response to place. In so doing she counsels that, 'The country that gets into people's blood invariably contains the blood and sweat of Aboriginal people as well as settlers. It may contain convict blood, and the remains of humans and non-humans' (2001, 8).

When Yunnupingi said the 'land is my backbone' the 'land' the Australian Settlers stole was, in effect, hearth, home and the source and focus of spirit to the Aborigine (Waitt, McGuirk, Dunn, Hartig & Burnley, 2000, 166-8). It is home, according to Relph where love of place is strongest (Relph, 2001, 11449). For other Australians it may be the bush, 'After the last gapped wire on a post, homecoming for me, to enter the gum forest' (Murray, 2007, 31); for some, the bush (Facey, 1981), some, the rainforest, (Hill, 2004) some, the beach (Drewes, 2008) some, the desert (Rothwell, 2007), some, the mountains (Thomas, 2003) and some, the city (Connell, 2000). 'Dwelling in this sense does not mean simply to dwell in (and build) a house, but to dwell in and build a whole world to which we are attached' (Cresswell, 2009 170).

A darker side to place

There is a darker side to home as a place. NSW geographers write 'geographies of heteropatriarchy' and a gender division of labour between home and the workplace (Waitt, McGuirk, Dunn, Hartig & Burnley, 2000, 444-446) and Rose (2003) sees home as 'Ideologically idealized as a haven in a heartless world, it is actually a space in which women are expected to work, cooking, cleaning and caring, without wages or privacy' (315). Like much other feminist work, feminist geographers, such as Rose, see domestic space as restrictive and oppressive, a space into which women are confined and where various forms of exploitation took place. 'To feminist geographers home frequently features as a site of patriarchal authority often associated with extremes of abuse, boredom, and backbreaking labour. To others, home is a place associated with violence against and abuse of children' (Cresswell, 2009, 173)

Nevertheless, place as 'homeplace' can engender powerful emotional bonds that can, for example, draw back refugees and those who have been uprooted in spite of the most adverse circumstances. Because of the intensity of these associations, in phenomenological interpretations 'home' is identified as the archetypal place.

Psychogeography

Parallel to, but quite separate from humanistic geography, is a literary style of writing and philosophy that draws from a sense of place. Psychogeography was defined by Debord as 'the study of the specific effects of the geographical environment, consciously organised or not, on the emotions and behaviours of individuals' (Debord, 1981, 5, cited in Coverley, 2010, 10). Something of the flavour of the kinds of writing, and a more than a nod to geographical thinking, is

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expressed by Self (2003, 69) 'I have taken to long distance walking as a means of dissolving the mechanised matrix which comprises the space-time continuum and decouples human from physical geography'. Most of the writing about psychogeography today seems to emanate from London (Coverley) but it has an interesting genesis in the various philosophical and literary movements that flowered in post war Paris (Wark, 2011). Self's writing should be accessible to able high school Geography students.

Contested place

Newcastle can be regarded as a contested place where 'male, blue-collar and Anglo-centric narratives' (Dunn, McGuirk & Winchester, 1995, 149), are the hegemonic discourses of this place; and where Aboriginal, non-Anglo-Celtic, indigenous and women's voices are silenced. Of course, women are ever present in Newcastle but, 'Whereas the steel, shipbuilding and coal industries have been central to the identity of places such as Newcastle and Wollongong, their clothing and textiles industries have not (159) '.

The industrial city of Wollongong became something of a contested place when a team of marketers attempted to transform Wollongong's physical urban spaces into 'exciting', 'hip' and 'cool' places for the creative class' (Waitt & Gibson, 2009, 1227), changing the metropolitan spaces of a 20th-century working port and steel mill into a vibrant '21st-century city of the 'new' globalising, post-Fordist, metropolitan economy' Port Kembla residents were reluctant to embrace these changes. 'Amongst the ageing Macedonian community of Port Kembla, there is a documented nostalgia for the past and a drive for a far more mundane redevelopment of Wentworth Street, along the lines of a traditional community centre, with a butcher, post office, pubs and shops' (1240).

Country Australia is also a site of contestation. When newcomers to rural NSW arrive from the city to erect new off-the-plan houses surrounded by Colourbond fences they misunderstand the ways of the country, symbolised by the more aesthetically open barbed wire fences, structures that are 'visually and physically permeable' (Connell & McManus, 2011, 130), signalling a more open sense of place.

Jess and Massey (1995, 134) see the contestation over place in terms of rival claims to define the meaning of place, asking 'whose place is it?' and thereby people's rights to control their use or future. Harvey, (1996, 302) points out that, 'place is the preferred terrain of much environmental politics. Some of the fiercest movements of opposition to the political-economy of capitalistic place construction are waged over the issue of the preservation or upsetting of valued environmental qualities in particular places' (302). Indeed Harvey (2009, 179) sees place as the locus for resisting change and fermenting change. He speaks of a 'militant particularism'¹⁴ in place.

¹⁴ "Militant particularism" . . . seizes upon the qualities of place, reanimates the local bond between the environmental and the social, reactivates collective memories, and seeks to bend the social processes constructing spacetime to a radically different universal purpose' (Harvey, 2009, 179).

Cresswell writes of people apparently 'out of place', 'Black people are often stopped while driving through cities in the United States on suspicion of having committed some crime. This has been called 'driving while black'. People who appear to be of Middle Eastern origin have to think twice before using public transport or taking a flight as they are frequently stopped and treated with suspicion. Young people in 'hoodies' are similarly frowned upon when gathered at a street corner' (Cresswell 2009, 176). Some of the ways by which place is constantly contested, transgressed and resisted by the excluded is taken up in the section below 'power in place' but here the emphasis is on youth.

Whereas the child is allocated appropriate places to inhabit in the home, school and designated play space and the adult have recourse to the pub, club, race track or workplace, youth often has to negotiate contested places. Children are under almost constant surveillance in the places they occupy 'Youth thus have a liminal status and although this means they have no place made for them by the mainstream it does not mean they have no place at all' (Anderson, 2010, 134). 'The street' is a metaphor for all the outdoor places that youth like to occupy from roads, shopping malls, public parks, derelict sites, car parks and beaches. These public places are important arenas for young people wanting to escape adult surveillance and 'define their own identities and ways of being' (Valentine, 2004, 396). These places may be claimed by youth for a time as sites of resistance but they are subject to reclamation from adult society. Such places can be risky places but they also become sites of creativity, invention and potential (139).

Cresswell (2004, 103–4) lists a number of other groups that have been studied by geographers as being 'out of place' including, mentally disturbed people, gypsy-travellers, political protesters, non-white people, gay, lesbian, bisexuals, the homeless, prostitutes and the disabled.

Young people can bring interesting insights into the contestation of place. Wood (2009,) describes the observations of a fourteen-year-old Geography student in the UK describing his collage, 'In the middle underneath the dominant culture, are things that make [this place] what it is. There are sub-cultures such as Goths shown as well as Chavs'¹⁵. Both cultures are sub-cultures as they are sets of people with distinct beliefs and characteristics – theirs being music. There are shown because looking around [this place] I can see lots of sub-cultures, each with their own unique places to "hang" . . . there are also pictures which aren't generally from [this place], but show the types of behaviour seen throughout [this place] such as binge drinking, drugs, teenage pregnancy . . . I put them in as to many sub-cultures or teenagers they are part of everyday life'.

A study of the least favourite places in Edinburgh, where teenagers experienced contested space and dangerous places, found that the presence of a particular youth group, the 'Goths', made young people avoid that area. 'They felt

¹⁵ The Australian equivalent of a chav is a bogan or westie (in NSW)

that the street belonged to those teenagers who, through their attitude, dress and behaviour, appropriated this place' (Travlou, Eubanks, Thompson & Maxwell, 2008). A much earlier study of gangs in Philadelphia demonstrated how groups marked out their place using graffiti 'In Philadelphia, wall graffiti offer an accurate indicator of turf ownership. As a general rule, the incidence of gang graffiti becomes denser with increasing proximity to the core of a territory. Overwhelmingly graffiti consist of signatures, a nickname, often followed by the gang name' (Ley & Cybriwsky 1974, 496)

Primary students from Brisbane's inner city suburb of Fortitude Valley were encouraged to explore their place using ICT resources. The 'Students gathered material for their web pages on walks through the Valley, using digital and disposable cameras, sketch books and notepads. They began putting together their individual web pages by creating large-scale, annotated collages of aspects of the Valley that were significant to them ... The result is a series of compelling and evocative readings and writings of everyday cultural (re)productions of the Valley seen through the eyes of these Murri children. The web pages combine photographic images of themselves in relation to the Valley's topography and aspects that serve as icons or tropes for the multicultural life of the Valley. For example, one image shows a Murri student - identified as the writer's cousin - sitting in the lap of a large statue of a Chinese doll in the heart of Chinatown. Others capture distinctive Chinese architectural shapes in the form of pagodas and symbolic gates, or shop windows displaying the headless bodies of plucked ducks ready for cooking. These pictures graphically portray the enacted identity of these Aboriginal young people "rubbing up against" key elements of Asian ethnic identities' (Lankshear & Knobel, 1998).

The power of place

De Bilj has written recently on the power of place, 'From the uneven distribution of natural resources to the unequal availability of opportunity, place remains a powerful arbitrator. Many hundreds of millions of farmers in river basins of Asia and Africa live their lives much as their distant ancestors did, still remote from the forces of globalization, children as well as adults still at high personal risk and great material disadvantage. Tens of millions of habitants of isolated mountain valleys from the Andes to the Balkans and from the Caucasus to Kashmir are as bound to their isolated abodes as their forebears were. Of the seven billion current passengers on Cruiseship Earth, the overwhelming majority (the myth of mass migration notwithstanding) will die very near the cabin in which they were born' (2009). His essential thesis, that geography matters can be summarised in the words of Sen (2006) 'Depending on where they are born, children can have the means and facilities for great prosperity or face the likelihood of desperately deprived lives.'

Other ways in which geographers have looked at the power of place have included views from economic geography. The end of a 'Fordist' method of mass production, mass consumption of commodities and Keynesian economics in the

early 1970s saw economic geographers writing about flexible accumulation and flexible specialisation (Amin & Thrift, 1992). Just as small scale enterprises thrived in parts of Yorkshire and Lancashire in the UK in the 19thc as a result of a combination of local expertise, a flexible labour force, spirit of cooperation and specialised services, so to economic geographers began to identify certain places that appeared to exhibit the power of place. Included in the new lists were centre of research and development such as Silicon Valley in California, financial hubs such as the City of London, centres of the movie industry such as Los Angeles, Baden- Württemberg in Germany where large industrial firms were supplied by a host of local subcontractors, and, industrial districts in semi-rural areas such as 'Third Italy'. The latter is an interesting example.

Third Italy was based on dense networks of flexible, strongly related, small and medium sized firms in craft-based industries (clothing, ceramics) in a number of specialized industrial districts that have developed since their efflorescence in the Renaissance. Third Italy still exists but in a vastly changed form. Some of these small firms have been subject to takeovers, some have outsourced their production to Romania, Tunisia or Vietnam and many now employ migrant labour as the Italian demographics change, thus undermining the apparent advantages of craft based production (Hadjimichalis, 2006). The industries are far less competitive because, since Italy adopted the Euro in 2001, and they are unable to exploit a comparative advantage over other producers through successive devaluations of the local currency. Further, the protectionist advantages that Third Italy enjoyed under the Multi-Fibre Agreement ceased in 2005.

More recently, Yeung (2006) identified a number of distinctive places that have developed export oriented industrial production at historically unprecedented rates: China's Yangtze River Delta and Pearl River Delta, South Korea's Seoul Metropolitan Area, and Taiwan's Taipei-Hsinchu, Malaysia's Penang and Selangor states and Thailand's Greater Bangkok region. Each is a distinctive assemblage of translocal linkages 'between local firms and lead firms in global production networks' (28). Each place is different; each demonstrates the power of place. Rojana Industrial Park, in the centre of the Extended Bangkok Metropolitan Region, comprising of the eleven provinces that surround Bangkok, has former rice growing villages are virtually encircled by factories and major roads. Of the hundred-odd factories less than 20 per cent are domestically owned with some 70 per cent Japanese owned (Rigg, Verravongs, Veeravongs, & Rohitarachoon, 2008). They produce electronics, automobile parts, car assembly, textiles and apparel, footwear, and food and food processing goods destined for export. Most of the workers are migrants from the northeast, Thailand's poorest region.

By way of contrast The Seoul Metropolitan Area contains two of the world's largest producers of digital TV and mobile phones – Samsung Electronics and LG Electronics (Yeung, 2006, 23). Both companies produce most of their products from the region rather than outsourcing or sub-contracting; both invest huge sums in research and development.



Floodwaters inundated Rojana Industrial Park, Ayutthaya Province, Thailand during October 2011. Photo: Defense Video & Imagery Department System. Source: Wikimedia Commons

Power in place

Scale is another important geographic concept. As far as place is concerned, evidence exists of a power shift taking place whereby there is a 'downward' transfer of power from nation states to regional places and an 'upward' shift to supranational bodies like the European Union (MacKinnon, 2009). It will be interesting to see how the various free trade agreements between the various ASEAN nations and China affect regional developments in Southeast Asia.

There are other ways of examining power in place. Foucault suggested that we should view the world as a set of overlapping 'heterotopias', places that are simultaneously home to conflicting performances and utopian in the sense that 'they are not spaces of containment and control, but rather of experimentation, fluidity and disorder' (Mitchell, 2000, 215). Much of Foucault's work was centred on unearthing geographies of control that modernity had instituted, from the asylum, the schoolroom to the panopticon. Heterotopias¹⁶ can sometimes appear to all too evident in various places such as the shopping mall and its CCTV cameras, on the one hand, and the public occupation of public places to protest about the inequities occasioned by the finance industry.

Urban places generally can be thought of as containers of social power (Cresswell, 1996), and as the locus of power struggles. What is at stake is who gains political access to territory? Who gets to own, plan, design, use or demolish

⁶ Goss (1999, 45) sees the contemporary shopping mall as sites of contested social power in place where 'multiple images of ideal times and places combine to create an illusion of the world standing outside of everyday life'. One is reminded of the kinds of enacted utopia, represented, contested and inverted as seen in Canada's West Edmonton Mall with its pirate ships, Bourbon Street and surf beach.

various kinds of built space (Hayden, 2001, Harvey, 1992)? Pred (1984, cited in Cresswell, 2009, 175) proposes a view of place as a process where the activities of people and institutions produce and are produced by social structures that are saturated with power. They can also be sites of exclusion and oppression where uneven power relations are played out (Major, 2010, 90). They can, as Harvey insists, be often used in quite regressive and reactionary ways. He points to the rise of gated¹⁷ communities in urban and suburban places.

Kenna (2010) studied *Macquarie Links*, one of Sydney's largest gated estates, to discover that security concerns were the foremost concern for the residents. The gated community's proximity to a large public housing estate that experienced 'riots' in 2005 and subsequent furore in the press about 'rampant crime' had led other geographers to describe *Macquarie Links* as 'Sydney's most pointed example of estate securitisation in response to perceived threats of crime' (McGuirk & Dowling 2007, 28).

There is also an external dimension to the nature of power in place. If we are to accept the views of the geographers working at the Open University in the UK about the construction of social space, and the relational nature of such space, then the 'social relations that bind places together are relations of power' and the geography of power can be traced' (Massey, 1995, 69). 'Contacts, chains of command, personal interlinkages, and relations of social power and domination are increasingly stretched out across the surface

¹⁷ Horvath (2004, 96) describes metropolitan Los Angeles—'with its estimated 500 gated subdivisions, 2,000 street gangs, 4,000 mini-malls, 20,000 sweatshops, and 100,000 homeless residents—is a dystopian symbol of Dickensian inequalities and intractable racial contradictions.'

of the planet. And in the midst of this global connectedness places and cultures are being restructured: on the one hand previous coherences are being disrupted, old notions of the local place are being interrupted by new connections with a world beyond; on the other, new claims to the usually exclusive – character of places, and who they belong to are being made' (Massey & Jess, 1995, 1)

There is a geography of power emanating from the global and local reach of each transnational corporation operating within and outside Australia. Each enterprise exercises a different geography of power as they draw places differently into the unequal power relations that they create (70). Massey and Jess remind us that there are also military, social and political inequalities of power operating, in conjunction with, and separately from economic ones.

As Massey says, 'Power is one of the few things you rarely see a map of. Yet a geography of power – that is, of social relations stretched over space – is what sustains much of what we experience around us in the local area – from the nervousness of going down a particular street at night, to the financing of a local company down the road, to the arrival of the latest US movie at the multiplex. And it is out of the intersections of all these geographies that each 'place' acquires both its uniqueness and its interdependence with elsewhere' (Massey, 1995 71).

Both terms 'power of place' and 'power in place' are deeply imbricated. The term 'power of place' can be used as an evocative term, a means of analysing social life in existing places, in advocating the preservation of historic places and a broader setting for the design of new places (Hayden, 2001, 11451) but it also has a metaphorical aspect where phrases such as 'knowing one's place' or 'a woman's place' still carry some territorial meanings and imply political power relationships (Hayden, 2001, Massey, 1994).

Feminist geography has done much to uncover these power relationships. McDowell (1999, 4) melds a sense of positionality with a definition of place to explain that, 'It is socio-spatial practices that define places and these practices result in overlapping and intersecting places with multiple and changing boundaries, constituted and maintained by social relations of power and exclusion. Places are made by power relations which construct the rules, which define the boundaries. These boundaries are both social and spatial – they define who belongs to a place and who may be excluded, as well as the location or site of the experience.'

Conclusion

A number of writers encapsulate the complexities of place. Escobar explains that we are 'placelings', based on the phenomenological assertion that as embodied subjects we always find ourselves in place (2001, 289). He reminds us that place continues to be important in the lives of many people, but particularly so if we regard place as 'the experience of a particular location with some measure of groundedness (however unstable), sense of boundaries

(however, permeable), and connection to everyday life, even if this identity is constructed, traversed by power, and never fixed' (288). Tuan (1977) would see groundedness as essential, remarking that such a place would have shrines and monuments but would be unlikely to have museums and societies for the preservation of the past. Massey is adamant that if there is any uniqueness about a place then, 'it is always hybrid, arising out of the particular mix of social relations' (1994, 5). Agnew (2011, 328) reminds us that new ICT technologies are part of new '*place-making* projects' rather than simply creating a totally new cyberspace world. But Harvey can have the last word about place, 'Almost everyone who attempts to theorise about place starts at one point ... only to shift somewhere else when they attempt to unravel the rich complexity of the idea' (2009, 193).

The *Draft F–12 Australian Curriculum: Geography* clearly defines place but does not capture its complexity. It signals that the meaning given to place by people may differ but then leaves this proposition open. The Curriculum mentions scale and interconnection but there again teachers may need some assistance in teasing out the nuanced meanings of these interconnections. Quite soundly the Curriculum wants teachers to engage with places in the early years of schooling and then progressively understand, explain and think about place. It is here that some of the ideas outlined in this discussion of place and the ways in which students develop an understanding of place according to the Draft Curriculum¹⁸ might be best borne in mind. The Geography teacher needs a rich and deep understanding of place to facilitate curiosity in the students as they, in turn, develop their geographical imaginations.

ACARA (2010) *Draft F–12 Australian Curriculum: Geography* For national consultation, October 2011–February 2012. Retrieved November 2011 from <http://consultation.australiancurriculum.edu.au/Static/Draft%20F-12%20Australian%20Curriculum%20-%20Geography.pdf>

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¹⁸. progressing from describing the characteristics of places to explaining them. These characteristics include population, climate, economy, landforms, built environment, soils and vegetation, communities, water resources, cultures, minerals, landscape, and recreational and scenic quality. Some characteristics are tangible, such as rivers and buildings, while others are intangible, such as wilderness and socioeconomic status

- exploring people's aesthetic, emotional, cultural and spiritual connections with places; the role of places in their own feelings of identity, sense of place and belonging; and the ways they experience and use places
- recognising that places may be altered and remade by people, and that changes promoted by one group may be contested by others
- using the uniqueness of places to explain why the outcomes of environmental and human processes may vary, and why similar problems may require different strategies in different places (ACARA, 2011,7).

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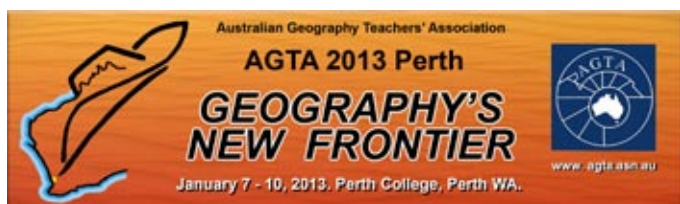
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LATEST NEWS – AGTA conference attracts wide interest

We are delighted to bring you the latest news about three keynote speakers for the AGTA 2013 Conference. Professors David Lambert and Simon Catling from the United Kingdom and Professor Peter Newman from Australia have accepted AGTA's invitation to be keynote speakers at the AGTA 2013 Conference in Perth!

This is wonderful news given David Lambert and Simon Catling have considerable experience with the national curriculum in the United Kingdom. Simon Catling's experience with primary geography implementation in particular ensures that this conference will appeal to primary school teachers as well as secondary school teachers. Peter Newman is the Professor of Sustainability at Curtin University and the Director of the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute. He has recently been appointed as Chief Writer – Transport for the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, (IPCC).



Acknowledgements

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