

Duquesne University
Duquesne Scholarship Collection

Electronic Theses and Dissertations

Fall 2011

The Narrative Subject and Place

Keith Martel

Follow this and additional works at: <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd>

Recommended Citation

Martel, K. (2011). The Narrative Subject and Place (Doctoral dissertation, Duquesne University). Retrieved from <https://dsc.duq.edu/etd/880>

This Immediate Access is brought to you for free and open access by Duquesne Scholarship Collection. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Duquesne Scholarship Collection. For more information, please contact phillipsg@duq.edu.

THE NARRATIVE SUBJECT AND PLACE

A Dissertation

Submitted to the McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Duquesne University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for
the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

By

Keith R. Martel

December 2011

THE NARRATIVE SUBJECT AND PLACE

By

Keith R. Martel

Approved November 11, 2011

Lanei Rodemeyer, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Philosophy
(Committee Chair)

L. Michael Harrington, Ph.D.
Associate Professor of Philosophy
(Committee Member)

Thomas P. Kinnahan, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor of English
(Committee Member)

James C. Swindal, Ph.D.
Acting Dean, McAnulty College and
Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Associate Professor of Philosophy

Ronald Polansky, Ph.D.
Acting Chair, Philosophy
Professor of Philosophy

ABSTRACT

THE NARRATIVE SUBJECT AND PLACE

By

Keith R. Martel

December 2011

Dissertation supervised by Lanei Rodemeyer, Ph.D.

This dissertation investigates the ways in which the human encounter with place has an active role in shaping personal identity. I commence the study with an examination of the appearing of place in the life of the subject. This begins with a consideration of intentionality through the philosophies of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. I then identify several characteristics of place including: place as unselfconsciously intended and tacitly known, place's bleeding boundaries, the intimate connection between the self and environment, and place's affectivity on the emplaced subject. Edward Casey, E.C. Relph, and J.E. Malpas are key influences in the development of these characteristics.

The dissertation continues to employ the narrative identity theory of Paul Ricoeur as he develops a sense of self-identity that is founded neither in the subject as posited in

the Cartesian cogito, nor in Nietzsche's deconstruction of the subject. While Ricoeur's narrative identity is a helpful means of understanding the concept of personal identity, nevertheless, I argue that Ricoeur's framework manifests a significant oversight. In his attention to time and action, he misses the vital role of environment in the development of one's narrative. I reconsider Ricoeur's work giving attention to the way that the appearing of place in experience is effectual in shaping the self's story and thus the formation of identity.

I then turn to explore the question regarding why place is overlooked in everyday experience, in the work of Ricoeur, and throughout much of the history of philosophy. In the consideration of the veil of place, I utilize the inconspicuity of the ready-to-hand tool in Heidegger's *Being and Time*. However, I argue that to remain hidden is not necessarily the fate of place. I endeavor to exhibit the ways in which place is (and can be) self-consciously experienced. Finally, to demonstrate the ways in which place is a significant aspect of identity formation, I turn to the fictional works of author Wendell Berry and the later philosophy of Martin Heidegger. Through Berry and Heidegger I explore the themes the self's relationship with place, the effects of displacement, and the role of place-based memory.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my family.

First and foremost to my wife Kristie: Without your patience, encouragement, and love this dissertation would have never been completed. You make the emplaced life worth living.

To my children Simone and Gavin: Your youthful wonder and curiosity about the world in which we dwell revives my study and reminds me of my passion for the grand and mundane environments that surround us. It is a privilege to journey in and through interesting places with you. May you never stop asking questions about place.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As I reflect on the years of labor that have gone into this dissertation, I realize that to acknowledge all of those who have contributed is an impossibility. Even as I write this I am overwhelmed by gratefulness for all of those who have selflessly provided support, feedback, and encouragement.

The questions and encouragement of my like-minded and curious friends have been an ever-present source of inspiration. While there are too many to name, I must acknowledge two here. Scott Calgaro, with whom my friendship was consummated in an unforgettable passage into a wild place years ago, has posed the right queries and aided in making so many connections. There is also my friend Tom Sparrow from Duquesne University. His fellowship in the journey of academic life made the travel worthwhile. His brilliance and work ethic has been an unending source of motivation.

I am grateful for my parents, stepparents, and the parents of my wife. They have been a source of support throughout the project. My mother and father have played a crucial role in the development of this work. Over the past decades, and particularly in my childhood, they have given me opportunities to travel into diverse places. They have raised my awareness toward places—both exotic and mundane. Each has provided a first home for me, and thereafter established hospitable places with open thresholds.

My colleagues at Geneva College have also made invaluable contributions. Among the many I would like to note just a few. Jeff Cole, Robert Frazier, Eric Miller, and Donald Opitz have been allies and mentors through the process and have contributed to my maturation as a person and as a student of philosophy. I am particularly thankful

for Bradshaw Frey. His undying dedication to place initiated my interest many years ago as an undergraduate and has since been a model for the ways in which scholarly considerations of our environment are always rooted in a care for the places in which we dwell. My supervisor Michael Loomis has been generous in creating space for the work that has unfolded and has offered vital perspective. My friends and co-laborers in Student Development, Missy Davis and Brian Jensen, have helped to keep my feet on the ground. They have often reminded me that the content of this dissertation is integral to the formation of college students—in and out of the classroom.

I am grateful for the faculty and staff of Duquesne University who provided a durable ground and an open space for my re-entry into the world of philosophy. I am deeply grateful for my readers. Michael Harrington, whose deep wisdom and scholarship regarding the concept of place has thickened this project. Thomas Kinnahan has most graciously been willing to step from the world of literature into this realm of environmental philosophy to provide insight into the role of literature in my work. And of course, I am indebted to the long, patient, and diligent work of my advisor Lanei Rodemeyer. Her rich knowledge of the field of phenomenology and her standard for excellence has enabled me to proceed along the way. I am thankful for the many, many hours she has labored with keen accuracy in the subtlest details, as well as the overarching themes. She has contributed greatly to this work, but also to my life as a scholar. Words are not enough to describe the role that an advisor plays in the birthing of a dissertation. She has done this meticulously and graciously.

My deepest gratitude is reserved for my wife Kristie. Our marriage has been one marked by the perpetual shadow of doctoral work. Her patience and care has been

steadfast throughout the entire journey. She has encouraged me in times when I felt unfit for this course of study. Her love and kindness is matched by her wisdom and curiosity about many aspects of life—including the way to live with integrity in place. She has proofed hundreds of pages and never once complained. Kristie has consistently created time and space for work, and, often, she shoved me into them. She has truly been the *terra firma* from which this work has taken form.

Finally, I am thankful to the God who grants curious minds, a place to stand, and exquisitely sensuous bodies through which we have engagements with awe-inspiring places.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Abstract.....	iv
Dedication.....	v
Acknowledgements.....	vi-viii
Introduction.....	xi
Chapter One: Place and Experience.....	1
Chapter Two: The Narrative and Place.....	45
Chapter Three: The Veil of Place.....	86
Chapter Four: Place and Wendell Berry's Membership.....	119
Chapter Five: Remembering in Place.....	153
Conclusion.....	186
Bibliography.....	202

Introduction

To be rooted is perhaps the most important and least recognized need of the human soul. It is the hardest to define.
Simone Weil, *The Need for Roots*

My best, truest...self is vitally connected to a few square miles of land.
Sven Birkert, "Place: A Fragment"

A young boy, who has never been outside of the confines of his city, spends a week at a camp deep in the woods. Excited about novel opportunities, he is surprised and disoriented by his experience. At night, the rural camp is devoid of light. For the first time he realizes the omnipresence of artificial light in his city. Meanwhile, in his cabin at night, he is restless as he assailed by the relative silence of the woods. The sounds that the woods do have are wholly unfamiliar to him: the creaking trees in the wind and the interminable chirping of crickets. Or consider the eighteen-year-old girl who sets out for her first year of college. Equally excited about the prospects of life in a new place, she finds herself homesick. She does not just "miss" her home, but is physically sickened, to the point of losing any sense of appetite in her new environment. Then there are the newlyweds who are later in age. One is recently widowed; the other has been divorced for years. Soon after their marriage, they purchase a home with the intent of starting fresh—they leave behind the memories of their old lives in heavily worn places to initiate dwelling together in a new place. Finally, there is the elderly couple that has built their lives together in the same house for fifty years. Old age has taken its toll and they are no longer physically able to stay in the place in which they have loved one another, raised children, and watched their sons and daughters leave. A deep sense of melancholy assails them when they need to sell the home to pay for life in a care center. The people in these

stories are diverse. They differ in race, age, gender, and class. They have all had variegated experiences and are from dissimilar geographical backgrounds. Yet, there is one common element—a singular theme—that binds each of these examples: *The fundamental role of place in experience*. These examples are indicative of the powerful role of place in human existence. Although they may not even have a way of fully explaining their association with their environments, each identifies with place in a deep physical and psychological way. Edward Relph explains that, “To be human is to live in a world that is filled with significant places: to be human is to have and to know *your* place.”¹ If Relph is correct, then what is it about place that impacts the human experience so profoundly? Why is it that we can find ourselves delighted or dismayed when emplaced in a new environment? It is surprisingly difficult to locate precisely what it is about place that affects the human experience. It is perhaps even more difficult to surmise just what a place *is*. As J.E. Malpas writes concerning place, “It is something of a truism to say that that which is closest and most familiar to us is often that which is most easily overlooked.”²

To begin the journey of a phenomenology of place and its role in human experience and identity, we must first lay the groundwork for the examination of place. The question “what is place?” is a difficult query. In its utility the word has a multiplicity of meanings. Place is considered as a geographical location: “In what *place* shall we meet?” It is also a descriptor of an emotional or psychological situation. When explaining a depressive mood one may say, “I am in a bad *place* right now.” Further, it can be

¹ Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (London: Pion, 1976), 1. Emphasis his. Hereafter, I will only note when emphasis has been added.

² Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 19.

utilized to exhibit the quality of a relationship. I may say to my wife, “our marriage is in a better *place* than it has been for years.” At times it refers to one’s role in an institution, organization, or hierarchical social order. “It is not your *place* in the company to make that decision.” These examples only expose the tip of the iceberg of the ambiguity of place and its multiform use in language. One can spend volumes in etymological wordplay of various languages when considering the diverse understandings of place. The ambiguity becomes more ubiquitous regarding the semantic and philosophical differences between space and place. Much could be crafted concerning the dialogue that extends the centuries beginning with Plato’s *chora* of the *Timaeus* and Aristotle’s *topos* in *Physics*.

In our current milieu the philosophical concept of place has been significantly reinvigorated. Edward Casey asserts, in *The Fate of Place*, that following the Ancient and Medieval periods' rich consideration of the role of place in philosophy, Enlightenment thinkers jettisoned the study of intimate, personal places for the study of space and time— notions denuded of personal, subjective consequence. As Casey writes: “Descending from a supreme term within Aristotle’s protophenomenological physics, place barely survived discussion by the end of the seventeenth century. By the end of the eighteenth century, it vanished altogether from serious theoretical discourse in physics and philosophy. At that moment, we can say of place what Aristotle believes has to be said of time: ‘It either is not at all or [only] scarcely and dimly.’”³ Since the early twentieth century, especially with the emergence of the phenomenological movement, place has been drawn back out of the background. Currently the concept of place has not

³ Edward S Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 133.

only become a viable realm of study in itself; place has also become a focal point in fields ranging from gender studies (Irigaray) to geography (Tuan, Seamon), sociology (Beatley) to architecture (Muggeraur and Harbison), queer theory (Knopp) to theology (Gorringe). Academics are rediscovering the study of place as an affective aspect of human experience.

However, my study of place did not commence with a philosophical investigation of place and the human experience. My first key exposure to thinking about place happened in the living room of a professor, while working on a graduate degree in Higher Education. In my professor's home, a group of students discussed the works of new urbanists and considered, primarily, our ethical posture toward place. Questions emerged such as: What is a "good place"? How are we to live in and care for places—what do places require of us? And, what is the meaning of place commitments? Through these books and conversations, I discovered the phrase "sense of place" employed time and again. "Sense of place" became as incomprehensible as the meaning of place itself.

Naturally, my encounter with place began well before my intellectual engagement with these questions. We do not just come upon aspects of place in books. When we are attentive we are able to realize the import of everyday encounters with the world. We find, conceivably first of all, that our homes have meaning. As Bouma-Prediger and Walsh observe, "To be 'home' is to experience some place as 'primal,' as first, as a place to which one has a profound sense of connection, identity, and even love."⁴ Schools,

⁴ Steven Bouma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008), 4. The authors also, rightly identify that this intimate connection and love of place is not the experience of all. They explain that, for some, "Home is a place of painful memories, a place they rarely if ever miss, a place from which they long to escape. For most of us, perhaps, home is a mixture of both joy and sadness, and we feel both a longing to return and a longing to leave. Home is an ambivalent place," 40.

places in which we work, and sanctuaries all have a “sense of place” to them that is unique. While we spend much of our time in built-places, we also discover this “sense of place” in uncultivated “wild places.” The wilderness has its own diverse set of characteristics and “sense.” Wild places can convey a feeling of wonder and repose. Standing at the edge of the Grand Canyon can make one feel uncharacteristically small. The variety of moods associated with place is as varied as the places themselves. If we reflect more deeply on our experience in place we come to discover that environment has a way of affecting us corporeally. We enter, leave, and walk through familiar places with ease, unselfconsciously moving our bodies without explicit recognition of the places in which we move. And if we dwell in a place long enough the place itself “becomes inscribed in us” in its familiarity. As Gaston Bachelard contends: “the tiniest latch has remained in our hands.”⁵

In *Native to Nowhere*, Timothy Beatley writes, “Sense of place, or emotional connection to a place, is a challenging concept to articulate, but one more important than we often understand. Yet, most of us know what this means in a deep visceral way.”⁶ Beatley’s description of a visceral understanding of place is what inaugurates this work. What is it about place and about being in place that manifests a “sense of place?” An exploration of the vague concept of “sense of place” is not enough to unveil the impetus for place’s appearing and its powerful role in the life of the subject. To understand the role of place in human experience, we must disclose place’s characteristics and examine the interface between the person and the places in which she dwells. The work that

⁵ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 14–15.

⁶ Timothy Beatley, *Native to Nowhere: Sustaining Home and Community in a Global Age* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004), 31.

follows finds its origins in the living room of my professor years ago, but it evolves through a dissatisfaction with such an “intuitive” understanding that the environment is important in the life of the subject. It has been birthed from my desire to explore a more critical engagement with place and human experience.

As my exploration of place and experience progresses, it becomes increasingly evident that this dissertation is an act of standing on the broad shoulders of giants. At nearly every turn, I find my line of thinking coming across and ultimately converging with previous philosophical work. Edward S. Casey has influenced this dissertation most significantly. Perhaps the groundwork for any investigation into place is *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Here, Casey establishes the quintessential study of the itinerary of the concept of place. Beginning with an examination of the creation accounts of religious traditions, he charts the evolution of the story of place through its many iterations over millennia. Casey considers the concept’s course—its rise in the classical age, fall to the dominance of “space” in the 18th century, and reemergence in contemporary theory. In *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*, Casey develops his own phenomenology of place and experience. Gleaning from the works of Heidegger and Merleau-Ponty, Thoreau and Muir (among many others), he considers a phenomenological perspective of the embodied experience of humans in place. He attempts to “articulate an exact and engaged analysis of place more fully, and to trace out its philosophical consequences more completely, than has been done by other students of the subject.”⁷

⁷ Edward S Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), xv.

Among other authors who have contributed to my work, there are several who arise as primary influences. J.E. Malpas's *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* studies the concept of place and the way in which space, agency, and temporality are knit together in the development of subjectivity. Edward Relph contributes to the discipline of geography in his seminal text *Place and Placelessness*. Relph jettisons the primacy of objective theoretical geographical studies for a consideration of the places of human experience. He endeavors to refresh the concept of place to those in his own discipline through a study (deeply influenced by Husserlian phenomenology) of the intentional structures of consciousness as directed at space, causing the appearance of places. He writes, "Places are thus incorporated into the intentional structures of all human consciousness and experience."⁸ In Gaston Bachelard's eloquently philosophical work *The Poetics of Space*, he develops an approach to understanding the human psyche through place. Bachelard presents his concept of topoanalysis, the investigation of the sites of our personal and intimate lives, as an alternative to psychoanalysis. He argues that the places of our lives can serve as a way into understanding human meaning and experience. Finally, the works of 20th century phenomenologists Edmund Husserl, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, and Martin Heidegger significantly influence my thought. These thinkers provide an exploration of the concepts of place and spatiality. They also grant the groundwork to this phenomenological investigation through their work on intentionality as directedness toward the world. Their work will also be instructive as I consider the role of bodily orientation, mood, and memory in place-based human experience.

⁸ Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 42.

The aim in this dissertation is to investigate the ways in which the encounter with environment in experience has an active role in shaping the identity of humans dwelling in place. This pursuit naturally discloses several questions: (1.) What is the nature of the appearance of place in experience? and (2.) How does place affect the self? To be certain, these are questions that require more than the extent of this work will allow. However, I will seek to address each of these, and then consider the confluence of the two. In what ways is place affective in the development of personal identity? My work rests between Casey and Malpas, finding a gap (albeit a small one) between the two environmental philosophers.

Casey is the master of the phenomenology of place—going to the depths of description of the intersection of persons, experience, and the environment. While he considers the experience of the subject in place and the ways that places affect the dweller, he does little to examine critically the transformation of one’s identity in and through place. In the final pages of *Getting Back Into Place*, Casey offers a brief consideration of place and personal identity. He writes, “Beneath chronometry and cartography alike there is a primordial topography—a *chorography*, a ‘tracing of place’—at one with the layers of our psychical lives. Topoanalysis is designed to fathom and describe these layers.”⁹ While we see glimmers of a place-based identity in these closing statements, place and identity are not a primary component of Casey’s work. My investigation into a place-based narrative will attempt to configure an understanding of narrative that co-privileges time and place, action and setting.

On the other hand, Malpas’s *Place and Experience* is primarily a study of place and subjectivity. His goal in the text is to “set out a way of thinking of place that, while

⁹ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 311–312.

mindful of the complexity and ambiguities of the concept, explicates its relation to other concepts including those of space, time and self.”¹⁰ Akin to my own project, an aspect of Malpas’s work will endeavor to connect self-identity with place through narrative identity. He proceeds primarily through the theories of Ricoeur and Macintyre, connecting these to the work of Proust in what he calls the “Proust Principle.” He explains that, “Self-reflection very often takes the form of reflection on, and remembrance of, past places and things...and, in conjunction with this, the way in which the experience of places and things from the past is very often an occasion for intense reflection.”¹¹

There are two primary ways in which my work is set apart from that of Malpas. They concern his utilization of the concept of place and human experience, and also the extent to which he mobilizes the narrative identity theory. My work (and Casey’s) diverges from Malpas in that Malpas’s work is, at ground level, a transcendental ontology of place. He writes:

Yet, although it is certainly the case that place is not constituted independently of subjectivity—just as it is not constituted independently of the physical world—neither is it dependent on the existence of an independent subject or subjects. Place is instead that within and with respect to which subjectivity is established—place is not founded *on* subjectivity, but it is rather that *on which* subjectivity is founded. Thus one does not first have a subject that apprehends certain features of

¹⁰ Malpas, *Place and Experience*, 14.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 182.

the world in terms of the idea of place; instead, the structure of subjectivity is given in and through the structure of place.¹²

For Malpas, place is not encountered through the intentionality of the subject in the world, but rather it becomes the *a priori* necessary condition for being human. The structure of place is discovered in the interdependent triangulation of the subjective (and intersubjective), the objective, and agency. I will aim to exhibit that a characteristic of place is that it appears to the human dweller in experience due to the subject's intentionality *in* place. Because of its appearing in intentionality, Casey argues that place is more accurately considered an "event"¹³ than a structure. Regarding Malpas's pursuit of the place as a structure, I concur with the critique of Casey, that it is both "unduly formal and restrictive."¹⁴

Secondly, Malpas (unlike Casey) explicitly identifies the importance of place in the narrative identity of the subject in its role in agency and "autobiography."¹⁵ While he

¹² Ibid., 35.

¹³ Casey, *The Fate of Place*, 337. Casey writes, "On the one hand, place as newly emergent calls for recognizing the rhizomatic structure of emplacement and the many ways in which place figures in human and nonhuman settings. Not mere multiplicity but radical heterogeneity of place is at play. On the other hand, place is not entitative—as a foundation has to be—but eventful, something in process, something unconfined to a thing. Or to a location." He continues, "There is no simple origin or telos of place: no definitive beginning or end of the matter. The primacy of place is not that of *the* place, much less of *this* place or *a* place...all of these imply place-as-simple-presence—but that of being an event capable of implacing things in many complex manners and to many complex effects. It is an issue of being in place differently, experiencing its eventfulness otherwise."

¹⁴ In light of Malpas's extensive work on Heidegger and place, this formalistic perspective on environment may come as a surprise. For a more thorough analysis of *Place and Experience* see Casey's "exchange" piece in *Philosophy and Geography*, vol. 4, no. 2 2001, in which he writes: "Here the transcendentalism of Malpas's whole stance becomes more evident, since 'structure' smacks of a formal *a priori* condition of possibility. My question would be this: does not the assemblage at stake in place—a loose gathering of independent traits which we can take as equivalent to Heidegger's *Versammlung*—take care of itself without any need to invoke a supervenient structure?" He continues, "Here I would remind Malpas of his apt phrase 'open and bounded' as applies to place." Further, Malpas's ontology becomes problematic in that it both requires the subject in the structure of place, while maintaining that place is the necessary condition for subjectivity. Malpas himself admits (*Place and Experience*, 139) that the only place to begin investigating place is *in media res*. This statement is foundational to a phenomenology of place—denying an *a priori* formalism.

¹⁵ Malpas, *Place and Experience*, 80.

considers place and narrative identity in his consideration of the structure of place, my approach will be to constitute a fuller consideration of place and experience in the life of the subject that will exhibit place as fundamental in the role of the narrative. We can consider the narrative as essentially a place-based story beginning with the appearance of environment in experience. In doing so I will look more closely at Ricoeur's narrative identity theory, offer possible reasons for Ricoeur's oversight of place in the narrative, and finally consider ways in which a consideration of the role of place is able to buttress and enhance Ricoeur's narrative identity theory of the self.

In taking up the thesis that place is a key feature of personal identity, the dissertation will proceed through six chapters. In chapter one, I begin the investigation of a place-based narrative with an exploration of the characteristics of place as it appears in human experience. The chapter is initiated with a consideration of place's appearing in human intentionality. To elucidate intentionality, I examine the concept of intentionality from the perspectives of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. I then turn to consider the ways in which place appears through the engagement of the self with the world. I move to exhibit that place is often overlooked in experience in the world; place is both unselfconsciously intended and tacitly understood. I also consider other key characteristics, including: place's bleeding boundaries, humans' intimate connections with place, and the ways in which place affects the emplaced self. Chapter two attempts to consider place and its role in the formation of personal identity. In doing this I examine the narrative identity theory of Paul Ricoeur in which he endeavors to establish an answer to the historic problematic of subjectivity. While avoiding both the "exalted cogito" of Descartes and the "humiliated cogito" of Nietzsche, Ricoeur locates the answer to the

question “who” through the self as found in the hermeneutic reconfiguration of the narrative. Having described Ricoeur’s position, I continue to show that in Ricoeur’s use of Aristotle’s notion of emplotment, his narrative identity of the self overlooks the role of place due to the primacy of time and action. Reconsidering narrative identity with a more watchful eye for the way in which environment plays a crucial part in its reconfiguration, I attempt to not only strengthen Ricoeur’s position, but also to establish place in its rightful role, that is, as an indisputable partner with action through time in the development of personal identity. Chapter three explores why place, a part of human experience that I argue is crucial in human experience and identity, is overlooked—not only by Ricoeur, but also, often, by the subject in the everyday experience of being in place and, at times, in the history of philosophy. In doing so, I consider the ways in which place is veiled in the task of residing. In doing this I utilize Heidegger’s deliberation of the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand nature of equipment. After this, I examine the way that place, nevertheless, appears in human experience and moments when place comes into explicit, conscious awareness.

In the final chapters, I turn toward the fictional world of author Wendell Berry to survey examples of the ways in which place shapes the narratives of those who dwell therein. In chapter four I disclose the role of place, in Berry’s Port William chronicles, as a member in the triune membership of self, other, and environment. By exploring Berry’s employment of protagonists and antagonists in his fictional accounts of Port William. I will explore the engagement of humans with their environments, the reciprocal relationship of self and place, and the effects of displacement. Chapter five is a consideration of the role of environment in remembering. With the aid of Casey and

Husserl's phenomenological conception of the act of remembering I investigate place-based memorial experience in Berry as developed in the short story "The Boundary." This will lead to a consideration of the role of place-memory, temporality, and membership. Chapter six will conclude the work by drawing together the characteristics of place in experience and identity of the self. This conclusion will map the itinerary of the dissertation, but will also endeavor to make explicit my thesis that place does not only affect the self, but contributes significantly to one's narrative identity. This journey into place ends by advancing question future consideration regarding place and practice. I suggest that these questions will be able to be more fully explored having established the emplaced subject.

Before continuing to chapter one, I would like to make a note regarding the growing field of critical geography. Humanist geographers—including the works of Yi-Fu Tuan and Edward Relph, mobilize phenomenological approaches to place that are taken up in this dissertation in my consideration of a place-based narrative identity. These geographers are particularly interested in the person-environment relationship as an alternative to the scientific geographers.

Critical geography is meant to proffer a challenge to humanist geography (as well as a fundamental phenomenology of place) by way of considering the role of power in place. Regarding the critical geographers, Tim Cresswell writes, "Place, they argued, was not just about a positive sense of attachment points and rootedness but was also bound up with power. Places are created things and tend to reflect or mediate the society that produces them."¹⁶ This emerging field (most often developed from the perspectives of

¹⁶ T. Cresswell, "Place: encountering geography as philosophy," *Geography* 93, no. 3 (2008): 136.

Marxism, feminism, and/or poststructuralism) means to uncover the ways in which “the material structure of place is often the result of decisions made by the very powerful to serve their ends.”¹⁷ In the extent of this dissertation, I do not explicitly explore critical geography’s response to humanist geography or phenomenology of place. However, in chapter four, we discover the notions of partial inclusion and exclusion considered through Wendell Berry’s fiction and his conception of the membership of Port William. Further, in the conclusion, I briefly render questions for future consideration. These questions (including the effects of forced displacement and the creation of built institutional places utilized to shape the subject) direct us toward a robust study of the role of power and place that would benefit from an in-depth investigation into critical geography.

Let us now, in the words of Richard Lang, “arouse the slumber of our dwelling, to reflect on the mysterious alliance between person and world.”¹⁸

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Richard Lang, “The Dwelling Door: Towards a Phenomenology of Transition,” in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, ed. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 202.

Chapter One Place in Experience

Space is everywhere open... We are in this place.
Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*

We take the region itself as that which comes to meet us.
Martin Heidegger, "Conversations on a Country Path"

In the introduction I considered the complexity of place in its multiform use in language, our encounters with it in experience, and that, while it is closest to us, it is often the furthest from our conscious reflection. We are always, already in place, yet we seldom consider its presence and impact on the human experience. To initiate the study of place, experience, and identity, I will begin *in* place. Casey writes, "The priority of place is neither logical nor metaphysical. It is descriptive and phenomenological."¹⁹ The aim of this chapter is to consider key characteristics of place in experience. This exploration will include the relationship of human intentionality and place, the unselfconscious appearing and tacit knowing of place, place's bleeding boundaries, the intimate connections between places and those who dwell within them, and the affects of place on humans in place. These characteristics of place are not meant to be exhaustive. However, this list will set the stage for an investigation into place, experience, and identity.

Intentionality and Place

The first, and perhaps most foundational aspect of place is that it always emerges by way of intentionality. Before exploring intentionality and the appearance of place, we must first consider this concept as a primary aspect of the phenomenological movement.

¹⁹ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 313.

In doing this I will briefly give an explanation of intentionality in the works of Husserl and then how this framework was modified by Merleau-Ponty and Heidegger.²⁰ This will naturally be only a thumbnail sketch—a primer that will create a common context to consider intentionality and place.

In Edmund Husserl's *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* we find a starting point of the phenomenological intentionality of the subject. Husserl, in *Ideas*, is endeavoring to provide a philosophy that is at once an alternative to empiricism and idealism. His phenomenology is a philosophy that he characterizes as “a science of essential Being (as ‘eidetic’ Science); a science which aims exclusively at establishing ‘knowledge of essences’ (Wesenserkenntnisse) and absolutely no ‘facts.’”²¹ In this Husserl will be exhibiting not the *real* world of the empiricist, nor the ideal world. But instead, he is working to uncover what he will refer to as the unreal—that which concerns “transcendentally reduced phenomena.”²² This is put in direct contrast with the movement of psychologism, which “consisted in dissolving the tension in understanding truth one-sidedly in favor of subjectively situated achievements.”²³ For the extent of the work at hand, this examination of Husserl's work will focus on his investigation into the structures of intentionality and the means of access into the pure phenomenological standpoint through the epoche that allows reflection upon the essential realm of phenomenological experience.

²⁰ For the sake of brevity I will keep my offering of frameworks of intentionality to Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, and Heidegger.

²¹ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. William Ralph Boyce Gibson (New York: Collier Books, 1962), 40.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ Edmund Husserl, *The New Husserl: A Critical Reader* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 11.

The foundational component or “general theme”²⁴ of Husserlian phenomenology is intentionality. All experiences of the subject, for Husserl, participate in intentionality.

He writes:

We understood under Intentionality the unique peculiarity of experiences ‘to be consciousness of something.’ It was in the explicit *cogito* that we first came across this wonderful property to which all metaphysical enigmas and riddles of the theoretical reason lead us eventually back: perceiving is the perceiving of something, maybe a thing; judging, the judging of a certain matter; valuation of a value; wish, the wish of content wished.²⁵

The fundamental characteristic of consciousness is that it is always directional.

Consciousness proceeds from the ego in a glancing ray toward an object of consciousness. In the experience of the subject, there is an encounter of consciousness with what Husserl refers to as the hyletic stream. Within this act of consciousness there is a duality of the sensile and the intentional, the matter and the form. Intentionality must not be reduced to only the act of perceiving (although it can be this). The intentionality of the ego is the activity of any directedness of consciousness. It includes acts of remembering, judging, longing, imagining, etc. All activities of the conscious life are acts of intentionality.

Before proceeding into the structure of intentionality we must first consider the means of access for Husserl into the pure intentional realm of consciousness. As mentioned before, the philosopher is developing a phenomenology that is inclined toward the study of essences. The mundane life of the subject is the life embedded in the “natural

²⁴ Husserl, *Ideas*, 222.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 223.

standpoint.” The natural standpoint is a posture towards the world that naively assumes that the world as we encounter it is real. “The different ways of sensory perception, corporeal things somehow are spatially distributed are *for me simply there*, in verbal or figurative sense ‘present.’”²⁶ This posture is one that assumes the status and reality of the world, its entities, and the self among them. It is the world of facts and objects. The natural standpoint does not question the “reality” of this world. Husserl raises the example of looking at an apple tree with blossoms in a lush field. He notes that this experience as conceived of in the natural attitude is one that assumes a real tree and a real person with a real perception of the tree. But he then raises the question: What if the experience with the tree is in fact a hallucination? “The objective relation that was previously thought of as really subsisting is now disturbed. Nothing remains but the perception; there is nothing *real* out there to which it relates.”²⁷

Husserl, seeking to develop an eidetic science, is compelled to configure a way out of the natural standpoint for the sake of studying the essences of conscious experience. In an attempt to access the realm of essences, he develops the epoche. In the epoche “we put out of action the general thesis which belongs to the essence of the natural standpoint, we place in brackets whatever it includes respecting the nature of Being: *this entire world therefore* which is continually ‘there for us,’ ‘present to our hand,’ and will ever remain there.”²⁸ The epoche is an abstention from the considerations of the fact world. It sets aside the presumptions of the natural attitude for the sake of pure phenomenological consideration. The bracketed world is not denied existence. Husserl makes clear that he is not enacting the work of the skeptic. He is merely putting it into

²⁶ Ibid., 91.

²⁷ Ibid., 239.

²⁸ Ibid., 99–100.

brackets, away for the current consideration. Upon the bracketing of all presumptions of reality one is in the phenomenological standpoint.

What remains following the bracketing of the world in the *epoche* is the phenomenological residue. Here the pure structures of intentionality are encountered. Enacting the phenomenological reduction does not in some way destroy the act of perceiving the tree. It simply brackets previous presuppositions regarding the reality of the tree and turns our attention toward the perception of the tree *as such*, that is, only what is given in the perception. What subsists (as residue) includes the noesis and noema. The noesis is, in most general terms, the intentional acts of consciousness. The noesis can be the *act* of remembering, perceiving, imagining, etc. The object (or content) of the intentional act is the noema. Although each can be considered distinctly in themselves, the noesis and noema are always necessarily bound up together. The noesis is directed at a noema—it is the correlate of the noesis. Consciousness is always consciousness *of* something. There is a unity of the object in consciousness.

There is also a unity of consciousness itself. Husserl writes, “It is intentionality which characterizes *consciousness* in the pregnant sense of the term, and justifies us in describing the whole stream of experience as at once a stream of consciousness and unity of *one* consciousness.”²⁹ In intentional experience the “glancing ray”³⁰ of the noesis is directed toward the hyletic stream. In this glance the stream of experience, emerging from the intended object, is at once unified and also can be understood in reflection to be a stream. There is unity in the diversity of experience. This unity is engendered through the characteristic of intentional experience as an act that bestows meaning. Although the

²⁹ Ibid., 222.

³⁰ Ibid., 223.

presumptions regarding the world are put on hold, Husserl asserts that the meaning “cannot burn away.”³¹ It remains as an aspect of the intended object's essential nature.

This realm of the phenomenological standpoint grants access to the eidetic features of consciousness. Upon the bracketing of the natural standpoint “we wait, in pure surrender on that which is essentially given. We can then describe ‘that which appears as such’ faithfully and in the light of perfect self-evidence.”³² Husserl’s language of surrender here is indicative of the situation of the realm of the transcendental ego as only able to access what is given in a particular experience. This includes the intended object and the “objective background.” The background is that from which the intended object emerges and is present “in a really experienceable way.”³³ Husserl asserts that the background is there and able to be intuited. There is consciousness of horizontal possibilities that is not yet given. These co-conscious horizons allow for the Ego’s filling in of the potential sides of the intentional object. Although given only one side of a table, the subject is able to adequately fill in other, potential sides. The subject is able to enact descriptions of the experience of consciousness (both noesis and noema) that is a description of the essential acts of conscious. Always embedded in these acts of consciousness is meaning. The ego “sweeps around” the conscious experience, and in this “seek(s) to know the noetic-noematic structures”³⁴ through acts of reflection on what is given.

Although there is more to be ascertained through a further study of Husserl’s philosophy of the transcendental ego and the eidetic science of his phenomenology, we

³¹ Ibid., 240.

³² Ibid.

³³ Ibid., 223.

³⁴ Ibid., 246.

have gained much toward our project in understanding the intentional subject and the structures of intentionality as explicated above. We have found that every act of consciousness (perceiving, remembering, imagining, willing, etc.) is always, necessarily a consciousness of something. This consciousness is directed at an object of intentionality. To consider conscious experience, one must enact the epoche that suspends all naive assumptions of the natural standpoint—putting them temporarily out of action. The subject enters the realm of the pure Ego, thus able to reflect on the distinct, yet necessarily entangled, noesis (intentional act) and noema (intentional object). One is able to examine the noetic-noematic structures of consciousness in intentional experience.

Martin Heidegger takes up the work of Husserl and makes radical modifications to his work on intentional experience. Heidegger, in *Being and Time*, refers explicitly to intentionality only twice. The first is in his critique of Scheler³⁵ and the other is in a footnote asserting that intentionality is somehow caught up in the unity of the temporal ecstasies of Dasein.³⁶ In the latter he writes that he will address this in the following section. Macquarrie and Robinson note that this section has never been published. Yet, to assume that Heidegger is uninterested in intentionality in *Being and Time* or that intentionality does not play a role would be a grave error. One can look into Heidegger's other works (including "The Marburgh Lectures" and *Basic Problems of Phenomenology*) to find intentionality dealt with in a more specific way. For instance, in *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* he writes, "The task of bringing to light Dasein's existential constitution leads [to] interpreting more radically the phenomenon of

³⁵ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962), 48.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 363.

intentionality and transcendence...It will turn out that intentionality is founded in Dasein's transcendence and is possible solely for this reason—that transcendence cannot conversely be explained in terms of intentionality.”³⁷ But to pass over *Being and Time* altogether in reaction to his lack of the use of the term in the text would be an error. For the sake of this work, I will draw out the concept of intentionality in *Being and Time* to show how the philosopher, even in this early work, is engaging in the concept through the structures of Dasein as Being-in-the-world. I will focus on the task of addressing this in *Being and Time* because this text will be drawn upon significantly in this and proceeding chapters. It is vital to understand that while the philosopher does not speak of it in the same terms, nevertheless he maintains a significant stance on the notion of intentionality.

Heidegger begins *Being and Time* in this way: “Do we in our time have an answer to the question of what we really mean by the word ‘being’? Not at all. So it is fitting that we should raise anew the question of the meaning of Being.”³⁸ On this first page of his text he indicates that his aim will be to understand the meaning of Being through an interpretation of time. Along the way, we find that Heidegger works out a philosophy of intentionality rooted in his phenomenological investigation of Being. Here I will develop some of the foundational aspects of Heidegger's work to the extent to which it is helpful in understanding his framework of intentionality. This will be a guide through his discussion of Dasein as Being-in-the-world and the ways in which this structure elicits a sense of intentionality that is worthy of attention.

To enter into the mode of questioning the meaning of Being, Heidegger takes up the posture of examining the Being of the inquirer. He writes, “This entity which each of

³⁷ Ibid., 162.

³⁸ Ibid., 1.

us is himself and which includes inquiring as one of the possibilities of its Being, we shall denote by the term ‘Dasein.’”³⁹ Dasein, literally Being-there, has a distinction from other entities in the world in that while other entities occur in the world, Dasein is a being for which its Being is an issue and is “in each case mine.”⁴⁰ Dasein is the only entity that exists *and* is interested in its own existence. Dasein comports itself toward its own Being. Its essence lies in both its existence (as determinative) and fundamentally to the characteristic of Being-in-the-world.

While Husserl brackets assumptions regarding the world in the phenomenological epoche to examine the structures of intentionality of the pure ego, Heidegger begins and remains in the world. In the text Heidegger explicates the meaning of his usage of the term world. He grants four different possible definitional stances concerning the term world. For the sake of his study, “world” is, “not...those entities which Dasein essentially is not and which can be encountered within-the-world, but rather as the ‘wherein’ of Dasein.”⁴¹ World as “wherein” is not a solipsistic world that is only for each individual Dasein, but rather a world which is both a public world and a world of “one’s own (domestic) environment.”⁴² Dasein’s Being-in-the-world is characterized by a residing in the world that is marked by a familiarity and absorption in the world. The in-ness of Dasein is not fundamentally spatial (although Dasein has spatiality), but it is a Being-in that is epitomized by involvement. Heidegger explains that there are a variety of ways of Being-in-the-world. These include: “having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating,

³⁹ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 41.

⁴¹ Ibid., 65.

⁴² Ibid.

considering, discussing, determining...⁴³ These ways of Being-in-the-world Heidegger determine as “concern.” There are also deficient modes of concern for Heidegger such as “neglecting, renouncing, taking a rest.”⁴⁴ However they are ways of Being in which “the possibilities of concern are kept to a ‘bare minimum’.”⁴⁵ In each of these ways of Being-in, defined as concern, Dasein is described as having a relationship with the world. A relationship that is only possible because Dasein is essentially Being-in-the-world.

It is in this milieu of Heidegger’s interrogation of Dasein and its Being-in-the-world that we find the key to his philosophy of intentionality in the text. Although he does not explicitly speak of it by name, there remains an operative intentionality that we see emerging in *Being and Time*. Throughout the text there is a teleological directedness of Dasein that is not completely different than the conception of intentionality we have already found in Husserl (although there are indeed significant differences). This notion of operative intentionality is found specifically in an investigation of Being-toward (*Sein zu*). We have already seen this in an aspect of Dasein’s essential nature as comportment toward its own Being. In the authentic mode of Being-in-the-world Dasein is fascinated with its own Being. Thus we have found Dasein as Being-toward its own Being and also Being-toward the world in concern.⁴⁶

As Being-in-the-world, Dasein also has a Being-towards other entities in the world. He writes:

The being of those entities that we encounter as closest to us can be exhibited phenomenologically if we take as our clue our everyday Being-in-the-world,

⁴³ Ibid., 83.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 57.

which we also call our ‘dealings’ in the world and with entities within-the world. Such dealings have already dispersed themselves into manifold ways of concern. The kind of dealing which is closest to us is as we have shown, not a bare perceptual cognition, but rather that kind of concern which manipulates things and puts them to use; and this has its own kind of ‘knowledge’...Such entities are not thereby objects for knowing the ‘world’ theoretically; they are simply what gets used, what gets produced, and so forth.⁴⁷

These entities encountered closest to Dasein in use are what Heidegger considers “equipment.” While there is an operational intentionality that Dasein directs toward the equipment (or tool), there are further layers to the utilization of the tool. Heidegger characterizes every piece of equipment as something “in-order-to.”⁴⁸ There is a task embedded in the tool. When just staring at a hammer as an entity it is considered not as equipment, but as a thing present-at-hand. Considering something as present-at-hand encapsulates an inspection that is non-circumspective and lacks concern.⁴⁹ Present-at-hand inspection is a scientific or theoretical consideration: The hammer is eight inches long, made of a wooden shaft, weighs six pounds, and has a balled head. In this way the hammer becomes a hammer-Thing.

Yet, when put to use the equipment takes on the characteristic of equipment and our relationship with it becomes more “primordial.”⁵⁰ In this Being-toward the hammer in use and manipulation there is a bestowal of meaning. The meaning of the hammer is not in its present-at-hand consideration as a thing, but rather in wielding the hammer. It is

⁴⁷ Ibid., 66–67.

⁴⁸ Ibid., 68.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 69.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

here that the in-order-to emerges. The hammer is used for the sake of, for instance, hanging a picture. For Heidegger, in the utilization of the hammer, the hammer itself falls away from immediate attention as the work comes to the fore. Although the hammer is not seen (in a general sense) there remains a particular kind of sight which Heidegger calls circumspection (*Umsicht*). This circumspective seeing is not before Dasein in explicit reflection, yet it remains as unselfconscious awareness of the equipment as ready-to-hand. There remains an unselfconscious directedness toward the tool in use. The comportment toward entities in the world (in use) is fundamental to an understanding of Heidegger's intentionality as Being-in-the-world. While Husserl brackets the world to find the intentional structures of consciousness, Heidegger is interested precisely in our concerned dealings with entities ready-to-hand in the world.

We already find a vibrant consideration of operational intentionality in comportment towards Dasein's own Being, Being-toward the world and entities in the world. Yet, his consideration of Dasein Being-toward does not end here. Throughout his work Being-toward remains a focal point of his philosophy at every turn. For instance there is also Being-toward what is heard,⁵¹ seen,⁵² the thing that has been uncovered,⁵³ and others.⁵⁴ Perhaps the ultimate form of intentionality for Heidegger is in care, which is the "basic state of Dasein."⁵⁵ Heidegger encapsulates the care structure of Dasein as: "ahead-of-itself-Being-already-in (the world) as Being-alongside entities which we encounter (within-the-world)."⁵⁶ The care structure brings together the past and present of

⁵¹ Ibid., 155.

⁵² Ibid., 172.

⁵³ Ibid., 256.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 177.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 249.

⁵⁶ Ibid.

Dasein as facticity (Being-already-in) and falling (Being-alongside) and drives Dasein into the future as existence (ahead-of-itself), ultimately culminating in the death of Dasein. Heidegger explains death as “the uttermost ‘not-yet’ [which] has the character of something *towards which Dasein comports itself*.”⁵⁷ In Being-towards-the-end Dasein is opened up to its ownmost possibilities for Being. For Heidegger, Dasein's embrace of its possibilities is authenticity. It is in the anxiety before the end that “Dasein is brought face to face with itself as delivered over to that possibility which is not to be outstripped.”⁵⁸ Heidegger instructs us that this mode of authenticity opens the possibilities of how Dasein comports itself toward: entities in the world, possibility in expecting [*Erwarten*], and even toward death itself as its ownmost possibility.

There is more to be said about Heidegger’s rich notion of intentionality. What has already been explored exhibits that Heidegger has a significant philosophical stance on the intentionality of the subject (as Dasein). This intentionality emerges in *Being and Time* as one understands Dasein’s comportment toward itself, the world, entities in the world, and ultimately finding its ownmost possibilities for Being through the care structure in Being-toward-death.

In *Phenomenology of Perception*, Merleau-Ponty also exhibits the meaning of intentionality. In his phenomenological perspective of human intentionality he takes up Husserl’s notion that intentionality is operational and directed. But he (like Heidegger) opposes Husserl’s fundamental structures of intentionality as found exclusively within the realm of the transcendental ego. He develops a philosophy of intentionality that begins not in the epoche, but instead in the very fleshy, embodied being of the subject

⁵⁷ Ibid., 250.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 254.

within the world. Merleau-Ponty asserts that the work of Husserl (finding the eidetic nature of the world through the reduction) is not accessing *irreal* intentional objects, but is itself idealism.⁵⁹ Merleau-Ponty means to found a phenomenology that contrasts traditional intellection with a comprehension that is in and through the body.⁶⁰ At root, his argument is that “in perception we do not think the object and we do not think ourselves thinking it, we are given over to the object and we merge into this body which is better informed about the world, and about the motives we have and the means at our disposal for synthesizing it.”⁶¹ He contends that the work of both Husserl and Kant “treats the experience of the world as a pure act of constituting consciousness, [and] manages to do so only in so far as it defines consciousness as absolute non-being, and correspondingly consigns its contents to a ‘hyletic layer’ which belongs to opaque being.”⁶²

Rather than locating directionality in the pure consciousness of the transcendental ego, Merleau-Ponty begins in the body oriented in the world. He writes, “We must...avoid saying that our body is *in* space, or *in* time. It *inhabits* space and time.”⁶³ The body is not an extended thing taking up space. Instead, the body is always a lived body. The body perceives, remembers, wills, judges, etc. always within the world as it moves about its daily functions and encounters phenomena. Further, the self as lived body does not merely conceive of space and time, but rather it belongs to them and also includes them. For him being cannot be considered within the manifestation of the

⁵⁹ See M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Forrest Williams (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd., 1962), preface and 243.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, xviii.

⁶¹ M. Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Forrest Williams (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd., 1962), 238.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 243.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 139.

epoche, which removes us from the presumptions of the world. “Being is always being situated”⁶⁴ and “consciousness is being-toward-the-thing through the intermediary of the body.”⁶⁵ As we will find, it is this fusion of body and space (and entities within the world) that is the foundation for Merleau-Ponty’s intentionality.

Emerging from this notion that the body is always a lived body that inhabits the world and that consciousness is directedness through the intermediary of the body, we find the basis of Merleau-Ponty’s intentionality as “motility.”⁶⁶ Intentionality for Merleau-Ponty is not a disembodied ray of the transcendental ego going out to an intentional object. Instead, it is the embodied self, directed toward the world in which one is enmeshed. The result of this is that intentionality is not the “I think” of the cogito, but it is an “I can.”⁶⁷ It is the potentiality of the actual body. Yet, as motility is the very basic form of intentionality, Merleau-Ponty also considers intentionality as emerging from what he calls an intentional arc. He writes, “The life of consciousness—cognitive life, the life of desire or perceptual life—is subtended by an ‘intentional arc’ which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological, and moral situation, or rather which result in our being situated in all these respects.”⁶⁸ The development of the intentional arc is necessary for Merleau-Ponty because motility is simply an aspect of the intentional arc. While the base level of intentionality is conceived as the “I can” of motility in movement (intentionally reaching out for an object) and perception (smelling a rose), there remains for Merleau-Ponty intentionality in all human acts—including moral considerations and ideological perspective. These aspects of

⁶⁴ Ibid., 252.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 138–139.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 137.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ Ibid., 136.

intentional life remain always already embedded in the intentional arc, which goes forth (spatially and temporally) from the intending subject. The intentional arc of experience makes it possible for Merleau-Ponty's system to encapsulate more than just directedness of the body as motile—considering only movement and perception. All acts are thus acts of the lived body rather than the transcendental ego of Husserl. All intentional acts of consciousness are situated acts.

For Merleau-Ponty the intentional act is an act that is an encounter of the phenomenal object and the whole of the subject's body. Within this interaction of the object and the subject's body there is a key role that memory will play in the intentional act. The subject is able to perceive (love, will, judge) because she has a sedimented history with the world around her.⁶⁹ Merleau-Ponty writes:

The thing that is presented to sight...and which stays the same for us through a series of experiences, is neither a *quale* genuinely subsisting, nor the notion of consciousness of such an objective property, but what is discovered or taken up by our gaze or our movement, a question to which these things provide a fully appropriate reply. The object that presents itself to the gaze or the touch arouses a certain motor intention that aims not at the movement of one's own body, but at the thing that presents itself from which they were, as it were, suspended. And in so far as my hand knows hardness and softness, and my gaze knows the moon's light, it is as a certain way of linking up with the phenomenon and communicating with it. Hardness and softness...moonlight and sunlight, present themselves in our recollection, not pre-eminently as sensory content, but as certain kinds of symbiosis, certain ways the outside has of invading us and certain ways we have

⁶⁹ Ibid., 395.

of meeting this invasion, and memory here merely frees the framework of the perception from the place where it originates.⁷⁰

In this we find Merleau-Ponty's system of intentionality come to fruition. Motor intentionality is a moving out toward phenomena. For him, we cannot have a consciousness of the object with suspension of presumption; rather it is the memories (embedded in the flesh) of what has come before that shape the act. Further, each act is not reduced to a single sense at any one time. Rather, each perception is multi-sensory (for instance we see the sun and feel its warmth, we feel the breeze and hear its effects on the rustling leaves). He writes, "If a phenomena... strikes only one of my senses, it is a mere phantom, and it will come near to real existence only if, by some chance, it becomes capable of speaking to my other senses."⁷¹ In this going out of the motor intentionality through the arc (which encapsulates both present and past experience) the body integrates with the outer phenomenon. This integration develops unified meaning for the intentional subject through the experience of the object synthesized through the work of past sedimented experiences through memory.

Another mark of Merleau-Ponty's intentionality is that it is primarily pre-reflective. For the most part, our situation in the world is an encounter with phenomena in a way that is engaged in its direct givenness. There is not the process of suspending beliefs about the world to encounter the structures of intentionality. He writes, "I perceive this table on which I am writing. This means, among other things, that my act of perception *occupies me*, and occupies me sufficiently for me to be unable, while I am perceiving the

⁷⁰ Ibid., 317.

⁷¹ Ibid., 318.

table to perceive myself perceiving it.”⁷² This unsophisticated perception not only exhibits the unreflective nature of intentionality as embedded in the world, but also shows the importance of the arc of intentionality in his work. The arc, which goes out from the body (in this case in perception), does not just envelope that which lies in front of us presently, but it also utilizes that which has come before; “it takes advantage of work already done, in a general synthesis constituted once and for all, and this is what I mean when I say that I perceive with my body or my senses, since my body and my senses are precisely that familiarity with the world born of habit, that implicit or sedimentary body of knowledge.”⁷³ In the intentional act we are seized by the act and in its immediateness we are engaged in a bodily engagement both presently occurring while making sense through past experiences.

In Merleau-Ponty intentionality begins with the operational/directed intentionality of Husserl. Although similar in its directedness, his phenomenology is one that jettisons the exclusivity of the transcendental ego for the self embedded in the world through the body. This self has experiences in the world through the intentional arc going out from the body. Merleau-Ponty holds that the intentional arc draws together aspects of the subject’s lived experiences (of which motility is the most basic) as a life which is always moving, perceiving, remembering, etc. from an “absolute here” which is situated and goes forth toward the givenness of objects in the world.⁷⁴

In each of these philosophers we find a common starting place of operational intentionality as the subject in some way directed out toward the world. Although each of

⁷² Ibid., 238.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Merleau-Ponty is utilizing Husserl's notion of the zero point of orientation. This notion of an absolute here will be further developed later in the chapter, including Holostein's critique of the zero point.

them share the basic similarity of intentionality as being directed toward (rather than being about) something, we discovered that each of them hold particular distinctions that differentiate them from one another. These distinctions will be particularly useful as we consider a phenomenology of place and the way in which places emerge through human experience in place. It will be notable that many of the contemporary philosophers of place most often tend to lean more heavily on one of these three in their work on place and its role in the life of the subject.

Intentionality and Place

To begin our investigation into place as emerging through the intentionality of the subject, let us turn our attention back to Heidegger's *Being and Time* in which an intentional structure of place is established. It is interesting to begin here, as many philosophers of place are suspicious of Heidegger due to an alleged lack of import he grants to the concept of place in this text. Although Heidegger's early work does cast the shadow of time over place, one must not be too hasty in such a dismissal. Not only is a rich portrayal and investigation of place found in this text, but the investigations in *Being and Time* will also lead to his later works which engage the concept of place in a more explicit manner.

Heidegger writes, "Places themselves either get allotted to the ready-to-hand in the circumspection of concern, or we come across them. Thus anything constantly ready-to-hand, of which circumspective Being-in-the-world takes account of beforehand, has its place" and further, "all 'wheres' are discovered and circumspectively interpreted as we go our way in everyday dealings; they are not ascertained and catalogued by the

observational measurement of space.”⁷⁵ Place, for Heidegger, does not exist outside of Dasein’s interaction with the world. Heidegger is asserting that place is constituted through things being set into a place by Dasein (making these places ready-to-hand) or Dasein “comes upon” places—transforming “space” into place.⁷⁶ Although Heidegger seems to be suggesting that these are two different ways that place emerges, it will become clear that both of these are interconnected through Heidegger's notion of involvement of Dasein's Being-in-the-world.

As the subject sets up or puts an entity somewhere, the equipment's place is determined. Therefore things are placed and in effect places unfold by this act of Dasein. Place does not preexist Dasein. Heidegger’s concept necessitates a very intentional act of place-making. He is juxtaposing a Cartesian conception of place with his own. For Descartes, places are always in reference to other immovable objects. The place of something, for Descartes, never has a correlation with the way that an entity comes to be there. Regardless of involvement, the entity is in place. In the Cartesian system, it is always and only dependent upon its relations to other things. But for Heidegger place has everything to do with Dasein—a place must be connected to Dasein’s explicit intentionality. Place always requires Dasein's comportment toward it.

This comportment toward also pertains to the second means of constituting places: the coming across place. Place, for Heidegger, will necessarily be shaped by the interpretive acts of Dasein. In the hermeneutical realm of the existence of Dasein a place

⁷⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 103.

⁷⁶ In precise terms it is important to acknowledge that within Heidegger's framework place always is the starting point as Being-in-the-world as comportment toward is the fundamental way of Dasein's being. We should not read him as arguing that there is space and Dasein transforms it into place. Dasein always comes upon place first. It is only then that there is the possibility of this environment being transformed into space. This we will see in more detail later in the work.

exists because it is interpreted *as* place. To “come across a place,” then becomes an intentional act. It is not as though someplace was preexisting in the world and we, as subjects, stumble upon it. Instead, one enters a site and it is the intentional act of interpretation that shapes this space into a place. Both setting up and interpretation of place find their unity in the fact that both are established through Dasein's involvement and structure as Being-in-the-world.

A key critique that is rendered against Heidegger's philosophical commitments in *Being and Time* is his avoidance of the body within the framework of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Edward Casey, concurring with this critique, endeavors to craft his notion of place commencing with the implacement of the body in the environment.⁷⁷ Casey writes, “Body and landscape present themselves as the coeval epicenters around which particular places pivot and radiate...Place is what takes place between body and landscape.”⁷⁸ Casey's conception of place is not the hermeneutic activity of a seemingly disembodied Dasein; instead the intersection of body and landscape is precisely what is significant for Casey as the defining characteristic of place. The body for Casey is always an experiencing body. A place is always experienced by the body in the place. Place for Casey has a “certain experimentalism”⁷⁹ in which the body is “trying out”⁸⁰ its surroundings. Experimentalism, itself a significantly intentional act of the subject, is for Casey what distinguishes place from space. Here Casey points out that “to have an experience is to make a trial, an experiment, out of living. It is to do something that

⁷⁷ In this we find Casey to be heavily influenced by the works of Merleau-Ponty.

⁷⁸ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 29.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

requires the proof of the senses, and often of much else besides.”⁸¹ As space is considered a pure position, charted upon a coordinate system, place necessitates the experiencing subject. Place is experienced in the intersection of the body and landscape.

Edward Relph explicitly insists that the conscious subject must always be experiencing and intentional. In the opening chapters of *Place and Placelessness*, Relph distinguishes different types of “space.” This is an interesting move, especially as we consider him in the company of spatial phenomenologists who endeavor to keep space to the confines of the understanding of dimensionality—space denuded of subjective experience. But for Relph, coming from the vantage point of a geographer (and working to unhinge the traditional notion of objective, scientific geography) it is sensible to commence from the starting point of his colleagues. Prior to making the move from space to place, he keenly outlines diverse categories of space, each of them relating to aspects of human life,⁸² that is, modes of being in the world.

For Casey, as we saw above, this being-in is what creates the notion of place versus space. Relph wants to make the shift from the existence of space toward experience and intentionality in these spaces. Relph writes, “Those aspects of space that we distinguish as places are differentiated because they have attracted and concentrated our intentions, and because of this focusing they are set apart from the surrounding space while remaining a part of it.”⁸³ For Relph the human subject is always an intentional subject and this intentionality transforms space into place.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² These categories include: space as primitive, perceptual, existential, sacred, geographical, architectural, cognitive and abstract. None of these spaces for Relph are discrete as he spends time in section 2.7 working through the ways in which these types of spaces interact, overlap, and affect one another.

⁸³ E. C. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (Pion, 1976), 28.

⁸⁴ One point to be made here regarding Relph's idea of place making through the constant

The Unselfconscious and Tacit Dimension of Place

Through various philosophers of place and their diverse frameworks of intentionality, it has been shown that places emerge in experience by way of the interpretive moves of the subject, through actively making places for things, by the way of the body intersecting the environment, and by the interpretation of the places in which we dwell (both bodily and in the life of the mind in the directedness of consciousness). At times places are explicitly noticed and utilized in consciousness. But an assumption that needs to be laid to rest is that the capacity of intentionality is necessarily a self-conscious and reflective intentionality. Addressing this possible presumption leads to the second characteristic of place: human experience with, and intentionality toward, place is often unselfconscious and tacit.

In *Place and Placelessness*, Relph consistently holds that place is developed through human intentionality and experience. Yet, he argues that the intentional place-making aspect of human experience is only at times an explicitly reflective intentional action. He writes, “Human intention should not be understood simply in terms of deliberately chosen direction or purpose, but as a relationship of being between man and the world that gives meaning...This is so regardless of whether we are self-consciously directing our attention towards something or whether our attention is unselfconscious.”⁸⁵ The reader finds this unselfconscious intentionality described by Relph throughout the

intentionality of the human is that while he maintains this in his larger work *Place and Placelessness*, in a later work he reforms his idea of place to be developed in a different way. In “Geographical Experiences,” in Mugeraur and Seamon's *Dwelling, Place, and Environment*, Relph's notion of the emergence of place requires something more. He explains that places are “constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are necessarily time-deepened and memory-qualified” (26). Nevertheless, I will maintain Relph's early suppositions about place as always made by immediate intentionality for the sake of this work as I find it more philosophically satisfying and as we see it fits with other works I am utilizing.

⁸⁵ Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 43.

spectrum of human experience. The geographer begins with what he calls primitive or pragmatic space.⁸⁶ This is the environment in which we most primordially find ourselves. This space is shaped into place simply by the fact of being in the space. Primitive place, Relph writes, is “structured by basic individual experiences, beginning in infancy, associated with the movements of the body and with the senses.”⁸⁷ Here, most basically, is found the unselfconscious meaning-making intention of the infant.⁸⁸ However, the unselfconscious experience with an intention toward space, which creates place, extends beyond the groping infant. Relph's key is his commitment to a differentiation between reflective and unreflective intentionality. The unselfconscious intentionality should not be considered as some sort of “dumb” or “naive” non-reflection. Rather, it is the way in which people generally go about being in the world.

As I walk into my study there is both reflective and unreflective modes of intentionality that transforms this space into a place. Simply in the activity of entering, the intersection of my body and the landscape of the room, place and places take shape. The room itself, known to me as the study, takes form. Within this place there are other places as well. Just ahead of me is a bookshelf; on the third shelf from the top is my copy of Cormac McCarthy's *The Road*. The room is the place of its contents (including the bookshelf) and the bookshelf is the place of McCarthy's text. These places emerge through the unintentional, unselfconscious act of being-in. Turning to the Heideggerian view of hermeneutic place, when I set the stapler on the desk next to a tumbler filled with pens, its place emerges. In an act of setting up, these tools find their place.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8-9.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 9.

⁸⁸ The meaning-making intentionality of the infant will not hold true for each of our philosophers of place and intention that I have outlined above. Certainly for Heidegger the infant would not fit the definition for Dasein as “the being for whom being is an issue.”

Within this characteristic of place as appearing by unselfconscious interaction there is also an epistemological aspect. While interaction with place is often done in an explicitly unselfconscious manner, place knowing also occurs unselfconsciously. Places are tacitly known. Often one does not know a place through an intentional investigation, but rather by way of repeated experience. This tacit knowledge of place becomes evident as we consider habit embedded in the subject over time. The tacit dimension of knowing places is evident in the very mundane bodily reaction of an experience as simple as entering a dark room. Upon entering I immediately swipe my left hand to the right and upward. I know the place of the light switch so intimately, yet so “unknowingly.” The bodily act is done by way of habit embedded in me. When I enter a dark room in a strange place, I nevertheless sweep my hand in the same way to the wall at my right and upward. It is only when I find the light switch missing that I consider the power of tacit place knowledge. Bachelard urges that this is not a simple remembering but an enduring habitual residue. He writes, “But over and beyond our memories, the house we were born in is physically inscribed in us. It is a group of organic habits. After twenty years, in spite of all the other anonymous stairways; we would recapture the reflexes of the 'first stairway,' we would not stumble on that rather high step...The feel of the tiniest latch has remained in our hands.”⁸⁹

Describing tacit knowing, Michael Polanyi explains that “*we can know more than we can tell.*”⁹⁰ He continues to explain the difference in tacit knowing by contrasting the German terms *wissen* and *können*. While the former connotes the notion of “knowing what” the latter maintains the characteristic of “knowing how.” It is this differentiation of

⁸⁹ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1994), 14-15.

⁹⁰ Michael Polanyi, *The Tacit Dimension* (London, Routledge & K. Paul, 1967), 4.

knowledge as embedded in activity, or as Casey would prefer, the experimentalism of place, that brings to life how we most often know places. We do not go about the world in an attempt to know *what* places are, rather there remains a place knowledge that is shaped by repetitive activity in place. In this way we see Polyani's "tacit knowledge" in our interaction with place. Most often our knowledge of place is indescribable, while at the same time it is deftly, yet often unselfconsciously, enacted.

There are countless examples surrounding the tacit knowing of place. Perhaps the best of these is the consideration of a very mundane, yet intimate, place encountered by the academic. When asked, "what key lies directly to the right of the D on the English typing keyboard?" most would have a difficult time answering. Yet, years of typing have demanded that we first learn the keyboard through memorization and repetition. This past memorization has trained our bodies in the place of the keyboard. The current usage is one that is habitual. It creates a tacit knowing. When we type the word "feline" we do not first think of the F key as landing immediately to the right of the D and the left of the G. Rather, we move through the act of typing fluidly due to the habitual residue that has been created over years of being in this "keyboard-place."

Bleeding Boundaries

The third characteristic of place to be examined is the aspect of place as having *bleeding boundaries*—places, in a sense, have a beginning and an end, but these are most often fluid rather than static. In considering boundaries it is imperative not to confuse boundaries with borders. This mistake is understandable as the terms "border" and "boundary," in general parlance, are often used interchangeably. Further, as will be

developed later, borders and boundaries are often concurrent. Yet, they should not be assimilated.

To differentiate, boundaries relate to places shaped by lived experience *in place*, borders are constructs utilized to set limits to spatial sites. Casey, in his treatment of Gaston Bachelard's topoanalysis, explains borders in this way:

But, to be topoanalytically precise, we should again distinguish between *limits* and *boundaries*. A room in our home is not experienced as a limit, that is, as a geometrically determined border or perimeter. To inhabit such a room is for *it to be in us*, and for us to be in an entire house and world *through it*. But, by the same token, a room may also be experienced as having a boundary, that is something with shape and force.⁹¹

In this way we can come to understand a border as delimiting a static space. It is constructed as a way to constitute a spatial zone. This is evident in the ways that borders are understood in our culture. For instance, a surveyor outlines the precise border of a property line. It is where one thing is said—or perhaps better *pronounced*—to begin and another ends. Borders are spatial human conventions. While borders maintain theoretical and legal significance, boundaries are the product of the lived subject. Places emerge from the experience of the subject in the environment and so are their beginnings and ends. When the subject is in a place, the extent of that place is its boundary.

The nuances of borders and boundaries became lucid on a backpacking trip I led.⁹² The wilderness is a particularly helpful environment through which to consider

⁹¹ Casey, *The Fate of Place*, 293.

⁹² At points throughout the dissertation I will be pointing toward my own experience of place. Many of these examples will be drawn from my experience as an outdoor educator. Work in this capacity in the wild (from the forests of Pennsylvania to the canyons of Utah) was, for me, the genesis

bleeding boundaries. While the Bartram Trail System is far from being unadulterated by human touch, it remains a relatively “low impact area.” The paths are well-marked by blazes, the trail crosses several bridges and opens up to roads, but largely it is an experience in the “wild.” A pine forest scarred from a fire the year previous becomes a place embedded with meaning as we hike through it. Soon this pine forest transitions into a prairie. As night approaches it is time to make camp. We shape our camp in a somewhat ritualistic way. Here we see both the self-conscious and unselfconscious intentionality of place making. During the building of this camp in the prairie, new places occur: cook sites, water source, tent site, etc. Returning to Heidegger, some of these places are “set up” by us (tents, cooking wares, hanging bear bags), as others are interpreted *as* places. The portion of the stream with a steep dip becomes our water source, while the stand of trees to the north is the assumed bathroom. Each of these (set up or interpreted) also has boundaries as defined by the experiencing subject. The boundaries of the campsite do not have distinctive starting points and ending points. Instead, they bleed into one another. The cook site transitions into the sleeping area. Although different, it is not possible to determine precisely where one begins and the other ends. They are not disparate locales, but instead they move toward and overlap one another.

What becomes most interesting about this trail system is that it crosses through three different states. As we designed this experience for the participants we thought it would be interesting to choose a trail system that would begin in Georgia and terminate in South Carolina. It is here the phenomenon of borders and boundaries became evident.

of my love affair with the concept of place and experience. In most examples one could apply this to the urban, rural, suburban, etc.

Walking through the meadow we moved through a place with a horizontal view toward another wooded area we would soon enter. However, in the middle of this meadow was a sign reading: “You are now entering South Carolina.” The irony of borders came to the fore. Students jumped back and forth from state to state. One student called to me from across the border, “What’s it like in Georgia this time of year?” In the meadow the distinction between borders and boundaries was amplified. The state lines made virtually no real difference in the life of the party. Here they felt an ironic impotence of borders.⁹³ Yet, the places of meadow, forest, campsite, and water source held immediate meaning for the students, during their experience in the wild. While spaces with their borders are theoretical constructs and are not dependent upon an emplaced human being, places and their boundaries are necessarily dependent upon human interaction with and perception in a place.

Borders and boundaries are not necessarily mutually exclusive. At times they coincide and overlap. Often landscape, creating a geographical border, also creates an experienced boundary. Another backpacker may hike the Rio Grande. Taking a break, she sits on the edge of the river and gazes at the distant shore. The river serves as a platial boundary. It facilitates a sense of here and there. The paired places are created by the experience of the river as divide. Yet, the Rio Grande (as many other geographical features) also serves as a border.⁹⁴ The river then exists as both border and boundary. Some boundaries of place in experience make sensible borders. This is the case with the Rio Grande. Yet, others have no relation to the boundaries of place in experience.

⁹³ This is not to say that all borders are impotent, simply that there was a felt impotence, or perhaps, non-importance in the experiencing of this border crossing experience.

⁹⁴ I will return to this in remarks concerning the precision of borders verses that of boundaries.

Further, while borders are characterized by their precision, boundaries are most often *bleeding*—places transition, blending into one another. They most often do not have exact beginnings and ends. In Steven Bauma-Prediger and Brian Walsh's book on the phenomenology of homelessness, the authors explain, “Contexts, or emplacements, are bounded: they are set off by boundaries as the special places they are...Geographical, cultural, emotional, religious, familial, and physical boundaries are constitutive of homemaking, and yet they are deeply ambiguous.”⁹⁵ We see this ambiguity in the river boundary. While I suggested the Rio Grande was both boundary and border, this requires further clarification. Sitting on the shore of the river being here (on the U.S. side) the river as boundary is bleeding. The boundary of place does not gain its power or significance from a certain line (which would be the border), but rather, difference of a here place and a there place are porous and bleeding. The border, in contrast, is a distinct specified line. It is charted *at* a certain point in the river. Crossing the river one “moves through” the boundaries of place and “moves across” the delineated border.

Coinciding with this notion of bleeding borders there also remain transitional places or what Casey names “interplaces.”⁹⁶ For instance, a porch serves as an interplace, or a threshold, between inside and out. It is not quite either, but links both as one moves through a doorway and onto a porch only to find oneself eventually to be in a distinctively different place. With bleeding platial boundaries and thresholding interplaces we find the breakdown of the dichotomies that geographers of space hold to strongly. In the experience of the dwelling subject, clear lines of inside and out and here and there become blurred and even nomadic. Finding oneself in a “new” place is not as

⁹⁵ Steven Bauma-Prediger and Brian J. Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008), 45.

⁹⁶ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 154.

easily determined as it once seemed. Beatley explains, “[A] contemporary reality is that a place, or places, can no longer be viewed as a discrete or separate thing. Our modern notion of place must acknowledge the *connectedness* between places.”⁹⁷

The final aspect of bleeding and bounded places is that places are characterized by being *nested*. Ultimately, in their bleeding, places proceed outward toward one another and are necessarily linked as interconnected “metaplaces.” But further, it is noteworthy that places also lie within one another, they are nested. In this way we can consider not only the house as a place, but the bedroom as a place nested within that place. This consideration of the nested place extends further: the closet in the bedroom, the shelf in the closet, etc.

Intimate Connection

In *Poetics of Space*, Gaston Bachelard writes:

First of all, as is proper in a study of images of intimacy, we shall pose the problem of the poetics of the house...Descriptive psychology, depth psychology, psychoanalysis and phenomenology could constitute, with the house, the corpus of doctrines that I have designated by the name topo-analysis. On whatever theoretical horizon we examine it, the house image would appear to have become the topography of our intimate being.⁹⁸

In this way, Bachelard introduces his work that has become the quintessential text on the intimacy of place and the way in which one may examine the human psyche through the examination of places in our lives. He looks specifically at the image of the house, which he claims to be the most intimate of images one holds. The work of Bachelard points us

⁹⁷ Timothy Beatley, *Native to Nowhere: Sustaining Home and Community in a Global Age* (Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004), 33.

⁹⁸ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, xxxv.

toward the fourth characteristic of place and human experience, that is, places are necessarily centers of intimacy and significance in the life of the subject.

While Bachelard points toward the intimate image of the house, which becomes the new gateway into the soul or psyche of the analysand, I assert that we must take Bachelard's notion of intimacy and expand it to be a universal aspect of place. In fact, I will argue that Bachelard is in fact incorrect when quoting Baudelaire, that in a palace “there is no place for intimacy.”⁹⁹ That is, in large places there is a lack of intimate connection. Here I will push the notion of intimacy and significance to be understood in such a way as to encapsulate every aspect of platial experience. Or to put it explicitly (and perhaps controversially) there is no place, and no being in place, that is not intimate.

In a visceral way we understand levels of intimacies with places. We find places of comfort—our living room, study, a path in the forest, the remembrance of our childhood yard—as those with which we have had an intimate connection. In exploring this level of intimacy, we find that the places closest to us are those most often reencountered throughout time (or, in the least, a brief, yet experientially significant encounter). Intimacy develops more fully as the story of person and place become further entwined through continual interaction and as more diverse experiences occur in that place. In consideration of the intimate nature of place Bauma-Prediger and Walsh explain: “Houses become homes when they embody the stories of the people who have made these spaces into places of significance, meaning, and memory. Home is fundamentally a place of connection, of relationships that are life-giving and fundamental.”¹⁰⁰ In their consideration of the phenomenology of home they proclaim that

⁹⁹ Ibid., 29.

¹⁰⁰ Bauma-Prediger and Walsh, *Beyond Homelessness*, 130.

homes are always narrative-shaped. And we find ourselves in (both bodily and through memory) these places of narrative that hold significance in the life of the subject.

Relph notes the act of naming places—traced back to Paleolithic times—as a way that the intimacy with place is connected to human experience. He points to Jacquetta Hawkes who explains that, “Place names are among the things that link men most intimately with their territory.”¹⁰¹ We give names to places (homes, highways, and nooks) as a way of marking a relationship with these places. Place-naming portrays the personification of place in experience that not only exhibits, but also enhances intimacy. Further one can consider conflict over place names throughout history. Within the hegemonic move west, indigenous territories became renamed. A vivid (and still controversial) example is the renaming of the highest peak in the United States¹⁰² as Mount McKinley, even as the people of the region had known this place as Denali. Although this can be considered simply a conquering move of the anglo progression westward, it cannot be denied that this re-naming shows forth the intimacy of place. For places to become “ours” we recast new names to formerly named places.¹⁰³ Place names can also be configured and reformed based around financial contributions. The naming of a public place, for example a park, can be created in honor of the park's benefactor. Naming based on financial contribution has the ability of deepening the significance of intimacy, but in a turn it can also detract from it. As sporting arenas are bought and sold they are regularly renamed for the corporation that holds ownership. The replacement of

¹⁰¹ Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 16.

¹⁰² To make the point: what we have *re-named* as the United States of America.

¹⁰³ This also connects to an aspect of place and ownership that will be further examined in chapter four.

a name that once held intimacy in a community becomes in itself an advertisement, stripping the place of its former meaningful name.

Just as we have seen that the human intentionality toward place is often an unselfconscious experimentalism, so also is the characteristic of platial intimacy. At times the intimate connection to place is not felt or acknowledged. But it is within the experience of the loss of place that the abiding intimacy becomes evident. Hannah Arendt, in *The Human Condition*, explains that when a schism arises between the subject and her intimate environment there also arises a deep sense of the loss of intimacy.¹⁰⁴ We are not people who necessarily spend our time in consideration of the intimate places as described. It is, again, a tacit intimacy. In the event of a loss of place or physical displacement we find the rupture of embedded intimacy.¹⁰⁵

The intimacy of the person/place relationship may appear self-evident when one considers the places that hold layers of richly built significance through experience over time. Yet, for the notion of intimacy to be a *characteristic* of place, intimacy must, at some level, extend beyond the evidently personal and relate to every place shaped by human experience and intentionality. But is it appropriate to ascribe intimacy to some of the most mundane experiences of place? When one stops at a seemingly nondescript convenience store or walks down the corridors of an office building can we truly consider these places, seemingly denuded of personal connectedness and narrative, as intimate places?

¹⁰⁴ As cited in: Botond Bogner, "Phenomenology in the Design Studio," in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, eds. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 184.

¹⁰⁵ The idea of places emerging in platial rupture will be further examined in chapter three.

To understand the intimacy of place more universally, we must consider intimacy not only in the mental or emotive aspects of human experience. Casey challenges the modern dualistic understanding of the experience of place as mind over body and to reconsider the import of coming to place not only through the mental/emotional aspects of intimacy in the environment, but also through the bodily interactions. For Casey the embedded body is the foundational way into place. He writes:

Does getting back into place mean getting back into mind? Tempting as it may be to think in this direction, especially in the rhetorical “raising consciousness” about place, we must resist the lure. Intimacy need not be mental but can be found in our body and in the places around us: in the houses and gardens, fields and forests, in which our bodies live and move. The introspection of the self-contained mind...must be supplemented, and in many cases supplanted, by the exteroception of the environing place-world and by the intermediation of the body.¹⁰⁶

Casey is questioning the conception that the intimacy of place is only (or even primarily) through the cerebral experience of person in place or in the memory of places from the past. Rather, there is intimacy in the intersection of body and environment. Here Casey is engaging in a critique of Bachelard's alleged elevation of the mental experience through the means of looking into the psyche, which becomes evident as Casey continues:

“Topoanalysis looks *without* as much as, and finally more than, it seeks within. The secret places, the source of their continual alchemical influence on our lives, is borne bodily by the 'rays of the world' (in Husserl's phrase) more completely than by the inner rays of a mind closed upon itself.”¹⁰⁷ Casey's challenge here (which emerges from his

¹⁰⁶ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 312.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

setting up the body as the way into place) grants a possibility of multiform levels of intimacy of place. For the sensuous body to enter into a place there is an intimacy that occurs. This intimacy is encountered in the unique sound of machinery, the smell of freshly baked bread, hot asphalt on bare feet, or even the bewildering experience of feeling lost in a city.¹⁰⁸

Here it becomes evident just how indebted Casey is to Merleau-Ponty in his phenomenological perspective on place. He is explicitly taking up the philosopher's work and applying it to place in particular. By recalling the preceding explanation above of Merleau-Ponty, we even find Casey using similar language as his flesh-centric predecessor. Casey builds on him by referring to the “exteroception” through the “intermediation” of the body, hearkening back to Merleau-Ponty's assertion that “consciousness is being-toward-the-thing through the intermediary of the body.”¹⁰⁹ It is imperative to recall that for Merleau-Ponty the arc of intentionality extending toward the phenomenal object does not jettison rationality, but rather the arc encapsulates the cognitive. The temporal, the spatial, the sensile, and the cognitive are all enmeshed in the flesh of the body. Casey is getting at this in these poignant statements concerning bodily engagement. Similar to Merleau-Ponty, he is not abandoning the cognitive, but rather he is reorienting it from the Husserlian rays of the cogito directed at a phenomenal object to an experiencing body (containing the experiences of its past) attending to its surroundings. It is in this that Casey orients phenomenology of place in the intentional bodily interactions with environment including movement and multi-sensory perception.

¹⁰⁸ For a very fine example of the intimacy of lostness through the fleshy intersection with a unfamiliar place, one can turn to the film of *Lost in Translation*. In this film Sophia Coppola manifests the experience of being lost through characters being immersed in a place that is utterly unfamiliar.

¹⁰⁹ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 138–139.

For Casey (and Merleau-Ponty) when one enters a place there is an intimate connection through the holism of body in place. This intimacy then does not necessarily depend on a time deepened emotive aspect (as proffered by Bachelard). Intimate connection with place can be immediate because of the bodily connection through a multiplicity of sensory engagements. In this way one finds an intimate aspect of any and all encounters in place, whether consciously reflected or encountered in an unreflective way. We can find the characteristic of intimacy from the lovers' bed to the momentary, enfleshed encounter of a bus terminal in an unfamiliar city.

Place as Effective

To ask an experienced sommelier about the character of a fine wine you would be hard pressed to find one who did not at some point refer to the wine's *terroir*.¹¹⁰ *Terroir*, literally meaning “dirt,” “soil,” or “earth,” encapsulates a larger context within the context of French wines. Dating back to the 18th century, growers began to notice that the places in which grapes were grown would express different characteristics. A rocky, more arid soil would give rise to one type of wine, while a moist and denser soil a wholly different one. Over time the use of *terroir* was expanded to attempt to encapsulate wines and the places from which they were derived in a more holistic sense. Of this utilization of *terroir*, James Wilson explains, “The true concept is not easily grasped but includes physical elements of the vineyard habitat—the vine, subsoil, siting, drainage, and microclimate. Beyond the measurable ecosystem, there is an additional dimension—the

¹¹⁰ For this notion of *terroir* as a metaphor I am indebted to the works of Moriah McCracken and Chapter One of her dissertation, *Place Affects: Place a Category for Writing Studies*. Although no longer available online, the abstract with chapter summary are can be viewed here: www.personal.tcu.edu/immccracken/McCrackenDissAbstract.pdf (accessed June 9, 2009).

spiritual aspect that recognizes the joys, the heartbreaks, the pride, the sweat, and the frustrations of its history.”¹¹¹

The notion of *terroir* plays an interesting role when developed as a larger metaphor for the notion of “sense of place.” Just as the nature of a wine is nurtured from its environment, so also we can consider the subject in place. A wine made from the fruits harvested from a south facing hill in the Napa region has a distinct character, so also a woman who dwells in the farmlands of the Midwest will be shaped in a decidedly different way than another abiding in Manhattan. Each place with its environmental features and regional distinctions will affect its dwellers differently. As Winston Churchill asserted in a speech before the House of Commons in 1944, “We shape our dwellings, and afterward our dwellings shape us.”¹¹² The final characteristic of place to be examined here is the notion that place is not just something that we create and encounter, but reciprocally, places likewise create an effect on those who dwell within them.

I have already, albeit briefly, alluded to this notion that place affects the subject. Previously I explored the ways in which places leave traces in the form of habitual residue on the subject. There are many other ways in which we are affected by place. Later in the dissertation this notion of place's role in shaping the subject will be delineated more fully. Here I want to make introductory notes to this characteristic of place by way of two examples: orientation and attunement.

In the woods of North Central Pennsylvania, I was taking part in a wilderness education course. I ventured away from camp under the bows of a thick pine forest. I

¹¹¹ Ibid., 55.

¹¹² Quoted in: Charles Lewis Broad, *Winston Churchill, A Biography* (New York: Hawthorn Books, 1958), 301.

remember vividly the quiet of the place, the trickle of a stream, and the sun's rays barely penetrating the needles above to those that had fallen below. I looked up to see a fawn playing in the pine needles around me. As I moved around, playing with the fawn, she skipped and leaped and turned. Soon the fawn ran off into the brush. Suddenly my delight turned to confusion and confusion to despair. I had lost my bearings on where I was—or perhaps more importantly (or accurately) where my camp was in relation to me. I attempted to find landmarks and to use the sun as a guide. I had found myself completely disoriented in the thickness of the trees and in the likeness of the things around me. Even as I had taken care to travel into the woods, the play had disrupted this care. The incautious movement of my body in place had disrupted my knowing of place; it had dislodged me from directionality. After some time of careful movement, I heard a trickle. As I moved toward this sound I found a stream. When I saw it bend around a set of distinctively familiar boulders, I realized it was the one I had followed out. My familiarity with place grew as I moved further upstream and landmarks became clear. I had found my place.

The progression of orientation/disorientation/reorientation I experienced in the Pennsylvania forest is not exclusive to the experience of the wild. Similar experiences occur in the context of the urban environment. One can become just as disoriented in the winding streets of Boston, only to regain his direction by the discovery of a familiar park, monument, café, or boutique. In the abundance of these experiences with place we find the power of place on the subject as the key to orientation. We find (and lose) our place by way of the landscape surrounding us. Place has the distinct power to shape our sense of *whereness*.

Orientation is created as the here of the body meets the there of landscape. Even lost in the woods I had a sense of orientation, that is, I *found* myself always *here*, always opening to a veritably infinite number of *theres*. As Husserl writes, “All worldly things there for me continue to appear to me to be oriented about my phenomenally stationary, resting organism. That is, they are oriented with respect to here and there, right and left, etc., whereby a firm zero of orientation persists, so to speak, as an absolute here.”¹¹³ Or as Relph explains, “To have roots in a place is to have a secure point from which to look out on the world, a firm grasp of one's own position in the order of things.”¹¹⁴ With this notion of the absolute here we have a starting point of orientation. It configures a world in which we have a modicum of sense of spatial orientation. Although still lost, we grasp a sense that in a primordial manner we become oriented through our body as the ultimate here. Further, the here then formulates a multiplicities of theres from which the lost person begins to navigate a possible return from being lost.

Elmar Holenstein offers an intriguing challenge Husserl's notion of the absolute here in his piece “The Zero Point of Orientation: The Placement of the I in Perceived Place.”¹¹⁵ Holenstein asserts that Husserl's notion of the zero point is claimed as self-evident and taken up by phenomenologists who follow in his footsteps with little critical reflection. Holenstein, investigating the experiences of the subject and utilizing gestalt psychology, provides persuading arguments against Husserl's zero point of orientation. He gives several examples in which the experiencing subject does not orient the world

¹¹³ Edmund Husserl, “The World and the Living Present and the Constitution of the Surrounding World External to the Organism,” in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, trans. F.D. Elliston and L. Langsdorf, ed. P. McCormick and F. Elliston (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), 250.

¹¹⁴ Relph, 38.

¹¹⁵ Elmar Holenstein, “The Zero Point of Orientation: The Placement of the I in Perceived Place,” trans. Lanei Rodemeyer and Sebastian Luft, in *The Body: Classical and Contemporary Readings*, ed. Don Welton (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 1999), 57-94.

according to his absolute here, but rather, at times, the world as experienced maintains its orientation outside of the experiencing subject. There arise many occurrences in which the “I” is primordially decentered. One of his more helpful examples is in the experience of the subject looking at a town center. He writes, “If I stand in the marketplace of an old city, which is surrounded by houses, then I am oriented toward that place, toward its center, which may even be additionally accentuated by a monument, and not towards me.”¹¹⁶ Here, in experience, the subject is not the zero point that orients the town. Instead the town has its own orientation, which the experiencing subject perceives.

Holenstein is not dismissing the possibility of the “I” as the centering force of the perceived world, he is only removing its necessity. For instance, he continues by way of an example of diners at a festival. Some orient their plate at a table according to their own position; others orient themselves according to the plate before them. While some orient the world according to their positions, others orient themselves according to the objects around them. He continues to explain this in terms of the possibility of psychological strength in one and weakness of the other. Holenstein's thesis is an interesting alternative to the orientation of place according to the subject. At times the subject is in fact the orienting force and at others he experiences the orientation of place by way of entities and their relations to other things. Nevertheless, Holenstein's work maintains the import of place in the orientation of the subject.

Another way of considering place as shaping the subject is in one's attunement, that is, the way one is attuned *in* and attuned *by* the environment. This notion of attunement, or mood of the subject, is perhaps the most evident aspect of place's effect on the subject. In consideration of nearly any place, one can point toward a mood created:

¹¹⁶ Ibid., 60.

peaceableness by the hearth on a cold night, timelessness in a casino, the serene of a park, sensuality within a nightclub, or reverence within places of worship. One only needs to look at place names serving as descriptors of the moods that they desire to create. We leave the busy world for a *retreat* center, take a weekend in a *recreation* area, or somberly commemorate fallen soldiers at a war *memorial*. Here, briefly, examples will be given of the shaping of attunement through places built and wild.

In his piece, “The Dwelling Door: Towards a Phenomenology of Transition,” architect Richard Lang considers the experience of something so mundane as a door. He investigates the experience of standing before a door and the effects it has on consciousness and mood. In outlining the experience of the door he exhibits how, being in that place, one encounters a variety of moods. The door can attune one in a variety of ways. He describes coming to the door of a friend. Approaching the wooden object before him, he stands before the door in anticipation of what is to come. The door and its threshold act as a portal *into* the role of guest. He writes, “My knocking on the door already transports me into their company.”¹¹⁷ In this way the door builds the anticipatory mood of joviality, while serving as a moment of preparation for that which lies beyond it. In contrast, the unanswered door embodies a barricade blocking the purpose of the one who knocks. Remaining static in the shadow of the door, the traveler can experience a variety of moods: confusion, frustration, and, as Lang points out, even obsession. He writes, “Waiting at the inaccessible door dramatically depicts the obsessive predicament: here, the door appears as destructive dam and the self, stagnant pond.”¹¹⁸ The obstinacy

¹¹⁷ Richard Lang, “The Dwelling Door: Towards a Phenomenology of Transitional,” in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, eds. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 209.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 212.

of the door shapes the mood and ultimately can become the sole focus of the one who remains on the outside—as an obsession within the subject.

The manifestation of mood also becomes evident in the unbuilt environment. Sitting by a flowing river in the sunshine can create an overwhelming sense of peace. Finding oneself in a field during the moments before an approaching thunderhead may elicit fear. Standing on a mountain precipice can create in one the Kantian sublimity. Casey considers mood in a place that he describes as the “between” of the natural and the built: the garden. Regarding landscape architecture and gardens he writes, “The garden embodies an unusually intimate connection between mood and built place...In gardens mood is an *intrinsic* feature, something that belongs to our experience of them. We go to a garden expecting to feel a certain set of emotions.”¹¹⁹

In orientation and mood we find just two of many examples of ways that places affect the human experience. The second half of the dissertation will be a phenomenological investigation of the ways that places affect the human experience and ultimately act as a foundational aspect of the constitution of personal identity.

In this initial chapter we have found, through the works of Bachelard, Casey, Relph, Seamon, and others, place emerging as a vital field in the realm of philosophy. The experience of the subject in place has a certain ripeness for phenomenological investigation. The characteristics of place through these experiences are able to be uncovered, examined, and reflected upon. Throughout the chapter I have (1) uncovered place's appearing as based in human intentionality. The discovery of place in this way can be built upon the works of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty. With these thinkers

¹¹⁹ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 168.

as a starting point we consider the ways that place emerges through the body's fleshy intersection with place, reflection on place, use of place, and through the hermeneutic aspects of human interaction as one encounters and interprets the lived places inhabited.

(2) Although place is laden with intentionality, this does not mean that place is necessarily encountered in explicitly self-conscious ways. Many times experience in place is unselfconscious and the knowledge of place is tacit and is developed over time in habit. This notion of unselfconscious encounters with place will be considered further in chapter three. (3) We have also found that there is a certain ambiguity to place. Places have bleeding borders: they move into one another and lack clear distinction. (4) Finally, there are ways that places affect subjects. Places have a sense of intimacy and shape the subject in place. From this starting point of a more clear understanding of place through its primary characteristics, I will move into the next chapter: an investigation of narrative identity theory. Ultimately I will be moving to examine the ways in which place is a key aspect in developing the identity of persons through the role of place in narrative.

Chapter Two **The Narrative and Place**

Not knowing where I was, I could not even be sure at first who I was.
Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*

Paul Ricoeur's *Time and Narrative* is an investigation into the role of narrative both historical and fictional. At the end of the series he begins the query that will drive a significant portion of his later work. The question at which he arrives is: Considering the powerful role of the narrative in fiction and history, what role does story hold in the development of the identity of the self? This chapter will proceed by way of two parts: The first is an examination into Ricoeur's theory of the narrative identity of the self. A full consideration of Ricoeur's narrative identity theory would be a large undertaking, in its groundwork, in his response to interlocutors (previous and contemporary to him), and in the working out of his narrative identity theory via his action-based ethics. For the sake of this work, I will be focusing on the elements that are most vital to an understanding of Ricoeur's fundamentals of narrative identity. The second part will exhibit how Ricoeur's work is enhanced when we consider the narrative with attentiveness toward place. I will then proceed in chapter three with an analysis of the impetus for the oversight of place in narrative identity theory.¹²⁰

Paul Ricoeur and Narrative Identity Theory

Ricoeur commences his study of the self, in *Oneself as Another*, with a consideration of the historic question of the subject. He introduces a dialectic of the “exalted *cogito*” of Descartes and the “humiliated *cogito*” of Nietzsche. In Descartes, the

¹²⁰ There are several thinkers that could be investigated in the pursuit of the narrative identity of the self (amongst these are Alisdair MacIntyre, Hannah Arendt, and Wilhelm Schapp). I hold that Ricoeur's theory remains the best developed.

“I” is established through hyperbolic doubt within the context of the evil genius. He establishes “someone” who doubts. Ricoeur shows that Descartes must answer the question: “Who is doubting?, Who is thinking?” Descartes asserts: “A thing that doubts, understands, affirms, denies, wills, refuses, and which also imagines and senses.”¹²¹ Ricoeur claims that Descartes' subject “can involve nothing but a kind of pointlike ahistorical identity of the 'I' in the diversity of its operations; this identity is that of the *same* that escapes the alternatives of permanence and change in time, since the *cogito* is instantaneous.”¹²² Ultimately, Descartes establishes an “I” that is a foundation of sameness. It lacks both historicity and mutability of the subject. Ricoeur tells us that this has nothing in common with the self he will seek to establish as “the speaker, agent, character of narration...etc.”¹²³

Ricoeur transitions from the “exalted *cogito*” of Descartes to what he will call the “humiliated *cogito*” of Nietzsche. Ricoeur explains that Nietzsche shatters the Cartesian *cogito* with several arguments. First, Nietzsche asserts that the philosophers of the *cogito* have ignored the role of language in their conception of the subject. In the constitution of the subject through the immediacy of reflection, Descartes and his inheritors have shaped rhetorical strategies that have “buried, forgotten, and even hypocritically repressed or denied”¹²⁴ the mediating role of language in discourse. Ultimately, Nietzsche posited that there is no “naturalness” to language. As Ricoeur puts it, Nietzsche held that “language is

¹²¹ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Later Printing. (Hackett Pub Co Inc, 1979), 17.

¹²² Paul Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 7.

¹²³ Ibid. Beyond identifying the *cogito* as an ahistorical identity of sameness, Ricoeur continues to put forth the question regarding the status of the posited “I” as being in the order of first truth from which all other truths follow. He utilizes Martial Guerolt's argument regarding Descartes' own reversal of the order in the “Third Meditations,” in which God replaces the *cogito* in the first place of the order of knowing, creating a “gigantic vicious circle.” See Ricoeur, *Oneself*, 8-10.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 11.

figurative though and through.”¹²⁵ Secondly, Nietzsche asserts that Descartes problematically phenomenizes the inner world. Implicit to this claim is Nietzsche's attack on positivism's presuppositions regarding “facts.” For Nietzsche, there are no facts, only interpretations. Ricoeur explains that, for Nietzsche, “to assume the phenomenality of the internal world is...to align the connection of inner experience with external 'causation,' which is also an illusion that conceals the play of forces under the artifice of order.”¹²⁶ Finally, Nietzsche argues that to establish the *cogito* as a substance or to offer a cause behind it is nothing but a “grammatical habit.”¹²⁷ Ricoeur concludes that Nietzsche doubts better than Descartes—leaving nothing but a multiplicity of subjects, “each struggling amongst themselves.”¹²⁸

For Ricoeur, the subject is *atopos*. It remains placeless in the discourse of philosophy. *Oneself as Another* is an investigation of personhood through different means. Consistent with his approach throughout the oeuvre of his philosophical investigations, Ricoeur will hold the *cogito* and the anti-*cogito* in a dialectical relationship offering his development of a hermeneutics of the self as an alternative. This conception is “placed equal distance from the apology of the *cogito* and from its overthrow.”¹²⁹ Ricoeur asserts that the philosophies of the subject seek to answer the question: “What is the subject?” But he wants to consider a different question. Ricoeur puts forth the question of “who?” He writes, “Four subcategories will therefore correspond to four manners of questioning: Who is speaking? Who is acting? Who is

¹²⁵ Ibid., 12.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 15.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid., 16.

¹²⁹ Ibid., 4.

recounting about himself or herself? Who is the moral agent?”¹³⁰ In this chapter, I will be primarily focused upon the culmination of Ricoeur's investigation of selfhood in narrative identity. This will become the groundwork for my investigation into the role of place in the narrative of the self. However, it is worth noting that Ricoeur first develops a careful study that culminates through an investigation of semantics of language theory and the development of reference to individuals, the pragmatics of language, and action theory.¹³¹ Ricoeur exhibits how each of these philosophical traditions manifest aporias and paradoxes in the consideration of personhood. These problematics do not inhibit the study concerning selfhood. Instead, he argues, they advance the question toward his conception of narrative.

To initiate his study of narrative identity, Ricoeur determines that the primary problematic of identity hinges upon a distinction between two notions of the identity of the self: *idem* (sameness) and *ipse* (selfhood). While he insists that these two ways of understanding identity are not equivocal, there remains an overlap between them. He writes, “The determination of this zone of convergence will therefore be of the greatest importance.”¹³² I will first look at each of these and then identify this overlapping zone.

In explaining *idem* identity, Ricoeur exhibits four aspects of sameness, each manifesting difficulties in the notion of identity and sameness over time. The first conception of sameness is numerical. He explains, “We say of two occurrences of a thing, designated by an invariable noun in an ordinary language, that they do not form two different things but 'one and the same' thing...the notion of identity corresponds to the

¹³⁰ Ibid., 16.

¹³¹ For more on the Ricoeur's development from analysis to reflection see: Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*.

¹³² Paul Ricoeur, “Narrative Identity,” in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood (New York: Routledge, 1991), 189.

notion of identification, understood in the sense of reidentification of the same, which makes cognition recognition: the same thing twice, n times.”¹³³ The second sense of sameness is qualitative or what he terms “extreme resemblance.”¹³⁴ In this, there appears a qualitative likeness that is so similar it is difficult to determine any difference between two disparate things or selves. From extreme likeness arises the problematic of both the qualitative and quantitative. Numeric recognition, in praxis, is dependent upon a quantitative reckoning. That is, one must determine that something is the same (in recognition) as it was in its previous appearing (or its appearing n times). But this quantitative recognition is dependent upon the qualitative reckoning of the thing as the same. Yet, the qualitative can prove deceptive. How is one to determine sameness versus extreme similitude? Ricoeur points toward the attempt of identifying an accused man as the actual assailant in a court of law. The accused man may be identified as the guilty party by eye witnesses when, in fact, he only holds a likeness to the guilty party. Ricoeur shows that this quandary becomes intensified over time, as in the case of the trials of war criminals appearing in court years (or even decades) after the alleged crime.¹³⁵

Numerical identity and extreme likeness can perhaps most clearly be understood when considering entities encountered in the world. Objects made through mechanical reproduction can show the difference between numerical sameness and extreme likeness. Automobiles coming off of an assembly line share extreme likeness with one another. The interior and exterior appear to be exactly the same, down to the intricacies of control panels. A set of cars emerging from a flawed machine will even share common traits (a malformed door handle for instance) that were not planned by engineers. Although

¹³³ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 116.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Ricoeur, “Narrative Identity,” 189.

sharing an extreme likeness with one another, these automobiles, nevertheless, are not the same car. They are nearly identical. I can walk into a crowded lot and find what I believe to be my vehicle and it is not until I have tried to enter using the key that I realize it is not the same car, but one that has an uncanny likeness to my own. Often it is something other than the car itself that indicates it is not mine. When the key does not work, I look to the interior and find that the contents are different. An unfamiliar handbag is on the front seat or there is a broken cup holder. This car, although having extreme resemblance with my own, is different.

Extreme resemblance can also be understood through the experience we can have with people. On the campus I teach at there is a set of identical twins. One of the young women was my student in a class of eighteen. Although I had never met the woman's sister I would often see one or the other on campus. The women are nearly identical. They share wardrobes and carry themselves in very similar ways. Even after having their physical differences explained to me, I continued to confuse them. Kim and Jackie are not numerically the same.¹³⁶ Each is different, but share extreme resemblance.

This issue of identification of sameness, particularly over time, leads to the third notion of sameness in identity: uninterrupted continuity. Uninterrupted continuity is understood in that “we say of an oak that it is the same thing from the seed of the tree to the tree in the prime of life. The same is true for an animal...and for a man, as a specimen of the species, from foetus to old man.”¹³⁷ The difficulty of uninterrupted continuity is manifest in Ricoeur's move to the final source of sameness: permanence in time. Drawing on Aristotle's notion of substance, as further developed by Kant in the “First Analogy of

¹³⁶ Names are changed.

¹³⁷ Ricoeur, “Narrative Identity,” 190.

Experience,” Ricoeur asserts that for there to remain sameness in something, there must be an aspect that endures regardless of change over time. This final idea of identity as sameness lays bare the difficulty with each of the previous, that is, temporality.

Regarding the *idem* sameness, Ricoeur explains that, “The basis for the discontinuity in the determination of the identical is that identity as uniqueness does not thematically imply time, which is not the case with the identity of permanence.”¹³⁸ Ricoeur holds that one needs to determine what it is that endures regardless of change over time. The oak (from acorn to fully mature tree) is the same substantially, it maintains the same *idem* identity, even as it does not have an extreme resemblance with itself over time. It maintains numerical sameness, uninterrupted continuity, and substantial permanence in time, while the determinations (accidents) of the entity undergo significant alterations over time. These modifications may lead to a lack of resemblance.

Idem identity, whether of an object or a subject, answers the question of “what” something is. In the conclusion to his work *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur establishes that there remains another, entirely different question at hand—the question of “who.” While he remains satisfied with the establishment of something that perdures over time through the structure of the *idem* sameness, he still needs something which grants identity to that which remains the same. He writes:

To state the identity of an individual or community is to answer the question, “Who did this?” “Who is the agent, the author?” We first answer this question by naming someone, that is, by designating with a proper name. But what is the basis for the permanence of this proper name? What justifies our taking the subject of an action, so designated by his, hers, or its name, as the same throughout a life

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

that stretches from birth to death? The answer has to be narrative. To answer the question “who?” as Hannah Arendt has so forcefully put it, is to tell the story of a life. The story told tells about the action of the “who.” And the identity of this “who” therefore itself must be narrative identity.¹³⁹

Offering a name as a signifier to the what of the *idem* is not enough. A name does not evidence the who of action. When asked who did something one is not looking to elicit a name per se, but rather a name which acts as a place-holder for something more complex. The name is only the tag applied to the structure of a person's selfhood. Having established the *idem* identity of sameness as the basis of the “what” of something/someone, before moving to the storied life, he must create the possibility of a “who.” The who of the self, being established in *ipseity*, will become manifest through the manifold of action and passion in the story of a life. To identify the “who” associated with the *idem* (as sameness), Ricoeur will develop the *ipse* self.

In most basic terms, *ipseity* (the who) occurs by way of ascription (acts connected to the self) and by imputation (the allocation of blame or praise, accusation or acquittal).¹⁴⁰ At the heart of ascription is what Ricoeur calls the development of character. Character “designates the set of lasting dispositions by which a person is recognized.”¹⁴¹ These dispositions take the form of habit as both acquired and previously formed. Acts done repeatedly over time, and thus ascribed to the self, become traits of the individual. These habitual traits become lasting “sedimentations”¹⁴² in the self by which they can be recognized. Ricoeur asserts that there is also innovation within the

¹³⁹ Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Volume 3* (University Of Chicago Press, 1990), 246.

¹⁴⁰ Ricoeur, “Narrative Identity,” 191.

¹⁴¹ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 121.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

development of the self in habit, that is, the self is continually developing new habits/traits over time that take the place of or redevelop those preexisting. The dialectic of sedimentation and innovation are always occurring in such a way that the newly innovated will cover over the previously sedimented, even to the point of the latter being fully subsumed.

Character is also developed by a set of identifications. Ricoeur writes, “To a large extent, in fact, the identity of a person or a community is made up of these identifications with values, norms, ideals, models, and heroes, *in* which the person or the community recognizes itself. Recognizing oneself *in* contributes to recognizing one by.”¹⁴³

Identification is most noticeable as we consider commitments that develop for those who are a part of a region or understand themselves as members of particular subcultures. I have seen this in a particularly noteworthy way in my father’s city. His city houses one of the largest corporately owned orange groves in the state of Florida. The influx of migrant workers (primarily Mexican workers, many of whom are undocumented) has created a dichotomous set of identifications in the region. The workers hold strongly to their roots, celebrating their ethnic heritage. These commitments develop recognizable traits. The latino community holds to a certain set of commitments that the white community does not necessarily share. At the same time there is a reactionary identification that has developed largely within the caucasian community that resists what they understand to be an “invasion” of “their” place.¹⁴⁴ This can become manifest through acts of harassment, racism, politicking, and “white pride.” These two groups each have a certain

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Interestingly, I have had conversations with people in this town that have referred to the African-American community as the “forgotten minority.” The influx of the Latino population could lead to an eye-opening consideration of the changes in the identifications of the once high-profile minority group.

identification with the values developed in response to the other. These identifications are both inclusive and exclusive. Not only are there norms, ideals, and practices through which the groups recognize themselves, but these are also ways that they distinguish themselves from the other.

Ricoeur fashions the *idem* and the *ipse* as two poles of the self. One pole (the *idem*) is the individual as sameness (numerical, qualitative, continuous, and permanent). The other pole (the *ipse*) is the “who” of the self. This pole is shown in the character traits and habits one develops over time that become recognizable characteristics of who the self is. Ricoeur will argue that these two poles are not necessarily disparate. He holds that character and habit are themselves *ipse* characteristics, because they become sedimented (nevertheless still innovating—not unlike the qualitative dimension of the *idem* above). However, they become “seen” as *idem* qualities, that is, character and habit emerge in a way that they are identifiable as “what” aspects of the self. Ricoeur does not say that these *ipse* characteristics become *idem* characteristics, but rather the “*ipse* announces itself as *idem*.”¹⁴⁵ While it remains an aspect of selfhood, it appears as sameness. The lasting dispositions of character and habit become recognizable sedimentations. They become lasting marks, available for identification.

These sedimented aspects of the *ipse* pole appearing as “whatness” allow for traits making the person “recognizable.” For instance, considering the twins mentioned earlier, after getting acquainted with both sisters, I came to realize that Jackie (the sister who held the office of executive student president at the college) is more outgoing than her twin Kim (who worked for the campus newspaper). This difference in personality manifests itself in their posture on campus. Although subtle, the nuanced differences regarding the

¹⁴⁵ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 121.

way the sisters carry themselves in public have become a sedimented trait that facilitates the process of identifying one twin from the other. Whether they hold these offices because of their difference in personality or whether their roles have enhanced their personalities remains to be seen. Nevertheless, the differences become identifiable.

Having considered character as the enduring aspect of one's *ipseity* (which manifests itself as *idem* identity), Ricoeur argues that there remains an aspect of the *ipse* pole that does not coincide with sameness (the *idem*).¹⁴⁶ This aspect of the *ipse* pole is expressed through the self's faithfulness to oneself by way of keeping one's word. He explains: "Keeping one's word expresses a *self-constancy* which cannot be inscribed, as character was, within the dimension of something in general but solely within the dimension of the 'who?'...The preservation of character is one thing, the perseverance of faithfulness to a word that has been given is something else again."¹⁴⁷ In the contrasting acts of preservation and perseverance, we find a key to the difference of the two poles of the self. The enduring marks of character, although being innovated through time, remain temporally, to some extent. They persevere. On the other hand, the preservation of the self in keeping one's word requires effort. While the former appears faithful throughout time, the latter posits a challenge to time, necessitating memory and the work or act of preservation—a decisive faithfulness (held consciously or at times unselfconsciously) through time.

By way of example, the poles of the self may become a bit clearer. In considering the dispositions of character we can think of a simple trait one may develop. For instance, one may become accustomed to nervous laughter. We can think of one who, when

¹⁴⁶ Ricoeur's work on this aspect of the self is decidedly less clear, but by way of the following example, I will seek to clarify the ambiguities of this portion.

¹⁴⁷ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 121.

finding himself in an awkward predicament, deals with the awkwardness by way of a contrived laugh. Over time this disposition becomes a habit by which he can be identified. Although this sedimented trait may be innovated over time, it most often remains (or at least a trace of it does). On the other hand, Ricoeur alludes to (although he does not expand upon) the example of friendship in consideration of the faithfulness unto one's self. In friendship one develops a commitment to another through her word (spoken or unspoken). This commitment is something that does not endure on its own accord as a trait, but rather, it requires maintenance and memory. Although a mark of selfhood, it is not one of sameness as it does not necessarily remain. This is one of the marks of Ricoeur's narrative theory that I find most helpful as we consider identity. The *idem* pole allows for sameness. There is a stability to what someone is. Further, the sedimented aspects of the *ipse* pole (manifested as *idem*) allow for a “who-ness” that remain recognizable while open for innovations over time.¹⁴⁸ On the other hand, the aspect of the *ipse* found in keeping one's word and faithfulness allows for self-reinvention and transformation over time. Although Ricoeur applies this primarily to others, I would extend the notion of keeping one's word beyond this. There is an aspect of self-faithfulness in which we give our “word” as we make foundational worldview commitments to ourselves (and, by recourse, others as well). These commitments are (re)shapeable and their innovations are often seen by others. These allow for the self to change “who” we are even as we have a sense of consistency in “what” we are.

¹⁴⁸ A river metaphor is helpful in understanding the relationship of the sedimented characteristics that allow for innovations. Just as the Beaver River valley in which I live is changing by way of erosion, so the characteristics of self take on different nuances by way of the innovations. Yet, even as the *ipse*-self takes on incremental changes it remains recognizable. Similarly, I may leave this valley and return 50 years from now and easily recognize the river, although it has literally taken a different shape.

This became particularly evident as I was speaking with a colleague who had moved from Denver. After a few months of conversation she had mentioned to me that she was not who she had always been. Intrigued, I asked her to elaborate. Moving to a new place, my friend saw the opportunity for a reinvention of her habitual traits (or what Ricoeur would also refer to as her character). She saw a chance to recreate herself. In Denver she was a relatively quiet person, prone to observing groups rather than engaging them in a gregarious manner. Moving to Pennsylvania to be amongst a new community, she made a decision to transform this aspect of her identity. Here she has endeavored (and I would say succeeded) to establish herself as an outgoing and even boisterous person. My friend has, in a sense, changed aspects of her *ipse*-self by making a promise and keeping it. She decided to change this aspect of who she is and has persevered in this commitment. Ricoeur's conception of the *ipse/idem* allows for the maintenance of her self as the same person while leaving room for the self to develop and change either gradually over time or sometimes, as in this case, quite dramatically in a short duration.

Ricoeur's intention is to establish two poles of the self to allow for continuity over time (sameness) and for the changing of a person into someone who is somehow different (selfhood). It is important to note that Ricoeur's design of the *idem/ipse* self is meant also to create a framework for a temporal action-based ethic. The self must be able to change and be shaped by his decisions and commitments while maintaining a stable self that can be identified as the same regardless of time. The story of my friend from Denver exhibits several of the moves that Ricoeur is making and reveals a possible difficulty. She made a commitment which in turn affects her *ipse* self in the keeping or the breaking of this commitment. But, over time, if she holds fast to the commitment to herself the actions

connected to her pledge will become a habituation, which will then change her character. The commitment held shapes her selfhood (*ipse*) and the sedimented actions (through habituation) will become an aspect of her *idem* identity. In this we find an example of a promise kept leading to a change in character. A question that is worth asking is: With the evolutionary self that undergoes modification with the innovation and sedimentation of traits, is there a time when the *idem* is no longer sameness? Can innovation happen to the extent that one loses considerable aspects of sameness? Or as Ricoeur himself asks in *Oneself as Another*: “Does the selfhood of the self imply a form of permanence in time which is not reducible to the determination of a substratum, not even in the relational sense which Kant assigns to the category of substance; in short, is there a form of permanence in time which is not simply the schema of the category of substance?”¹⁴⁹

Up to this point he has not sufficiently been able to accomplish this notion of sameness that is significantly different than the Kantian notion of substance. In his work to establish a selfhood that endures through time, he has pointed us toward the notion of character and identifications that become inscribed upon the person as recognizable traits. While he argues that, “By means of stability...character assures at once numerical identity, quantitative identity, uninterrupted continuity across change, and, finally, permanence in time which defines sameness,”¹⁵⁰ he also makes it clear that these traits are not static. The traits are always in the dialectical movement of sedimentation and innovation. The new innovation covers over the previous sedimentation. Here is the relative nature of the “stability” which he employs in his consideration of traits. While relatively stable (and hence generally recognizable—especially over a short duration),

¹⁴⁹ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 118.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 122.

character remains in flux through innovation. We can assume this allows for the possibility for such significant innovation to occur that current sedimentations could be unrecognizable over time. While character and habit (as aspects of the *ipse*) “show themselves” as *idem* temporally, they do not necessitate sameness over time due to innovation.

This lack of permanence will motivate Ricoeur to mobilize the concept of narrative as a way into identity, which will develop an aspect of the self that will remain over time and through qualitative change. This will become his source of mutable personal identity as manifested around the permanence of the *idem*. He will set forth the marks of the narrative in the text and then move to the narrative in the life of the subject. In this way he shows the life of the self understood as similar to a character developed in a tale.

Ricoeur utilizes Aristotle's *Poetics* and particularly the notion of *muthos* (or emplotment) in his pursuit of the narrative in the text. Emplotment, in this sense, is not to be understood as a concretized feature of a story; rather, Ricoeur argues that it is an ever-developing process leading from beginning to end of a constructed narrative. “I shall broadly define emplotment,” Ricoeur explains, “as a synthesis of heterogeneous elements.”¹⁵¹ Ricoeur identifies three sets of heterogeneous elements that are conjoined throughout the manifestation of the narrative. The first synthesis is the dialectic of the emergence of a manifold series of events paired with the unified totality of the story. In this, Ricoeur takes care to make a distinction between occurrences and events. While the former are mere happenings, the latter are incidents that explicitly contribute to the

¹⁵¹ Paul Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” in *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood, annotated edition. (Routledge, 1992), 21.

progression of the story in its beginning, culmination to a climax, and resolution toward an end. In the narrative, “event is defined by its relation to the very operation of configuration; it participates in the unstable...characteristic of the plot itself.”¹⁵² In this one can see the way that a fictive narrative is implicitly different from a subject's lived experience. While many of the events of the former might be viewed as occurrences, the writer of a fictional narrative will understand and shape each of the happenings as events moving the story through an intentional course.¹⁵³ The second synthesis is between the components of the action and the sequence of the story.¹⁵⁴ This unites the seemingly disparate aspects of action (intentions, causes, and chance occurrences) together into the sequence of the storied whole. Each of these distinct aspects is significant in the development of the story when taken in its entirety. The final synthesis can be understood as the explicit temporalization of the previous two—the synthesis of a story as a pure succession of discrete events (with the multiple aspects of actions) forming a temporal whole.

Through the development of the syntheses, Ricoeur asserts that three features of the story emerge: “the mediation performed by the plot between the multiple incidents and the unified story; the primacy of the concordant over the discordant; and, finally, the

¹⁵² Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 142.

¹⁵³ To be more precise, I make this claim with some degree of caution. Each of these statements may not always be the case. For instance, at times authors might include aspects of plot that do not act as events. At times actions that do not move the plot along can come into the story. On the other hand, some may argue that the interconnected aspects of one's own lived experience would preclude the presumption that there are mere occurrences in the life of the historical self. Or perhaps, as I would nuance this, it becomes difficult to judge those happenings which advance our own stories and those which do not.

¹⁵⁴ The three syntheses differ slightly in his presentations in *Oneself as Another* and in his essay “Life in Quest of Narrative.” While the second synthesis explained above is from the former, Ricoeur uses the synthesis of unintended circumstances and unintended results in the latter. He remains silent for the divergence of the two pieces. In one sense we may assume that unintended events and unintended outcomes can be folded into the first. Yet, to take the synthesis of the unintended gives the reader a fourth synthesis.

competition between succession and configuration.”¹⁵⁵ The import of the development of the syntheses and the features that emerge from their heterogeneity will be vital in the development of Ricoeur's theory of self-identity. The syntheses exhibit the resolution of the concordant and discordant nature of the story in its configuration. For Ricoeur, a narrative under the scrutiny of reflection will exhibit a story in which the accounts are interrelated and connected into a network of events in a narrative whole. Even the seemingly disparate occurrences will come to light as events leading through the overarching process of the narrative.¹⁵⁶

Ricoeur begins his essay “Life in Quest of a Narrative” by exploring a commentator's premise: “stories are recounted, not lived; life is lived and not recounted.”¹⁵⁷ This statement becomes the turning point for Ricoeur as he moves from the structure of the narrative in general toward the question regarding the narrative identity of the self. In understanding the life of the subject as developed in narrative, this turn will be crucial. The presupposition implicit to this statement, Ricoeur explains, is that it necessitates two distinct worlds: the world of the text and the world of the subject.¹⁵⁸

Approaching this alleged dichotomy of text and reader, Ricoeur claims that the two worlds cannot be held apart. In a text, a horizon of a possible world is created into which the reader is then able to insert himself. Alluding to Gadamer, Ricoeur argues that there is a double horizontal state, the actual horizon of the world of the reader and the possible horizon of the world of the text. With the reading and consideration of the text

¹⁵⁵ Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” 22.

¹⁵⁶ Later in the chapter I will investigate the possibility of individual or “micro-narratives” occurring within a life-long narrative whole.

¹⁵⁷ Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” 20.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 26.

there arises a “fusion of horizons.”¹⁵⁹ Only through this fusion can the text become a narrative. It is the hermeneutical move of recollecting the seemingly discordant aspects and reading a text that enacts the syntheses. Without the reader, the heterogeneous aspects of the body of work are not brought together into a whole. For the text to be a story, it requires the work of a reader to draw together words on a page into successive occurrences and then configure these occurrences into a unified whole. In this way we see the crumbling of the clear separation between text and reader. He explains that “it is the *act of reading* which completes the work, transforming it into a *guide* for reading, with its zones of indeterminacy, its latent wealth of interpretation, its power being reinterpreted in new ways in new historical contexts.”¹⁶⁰ And here, Ricoeur argues that the text is not only recounted, but it is also lived—lived by the interpretive, synthesis-creating act of the reader.¹⁶¹

If the text is lived and not simply recounted, the question then remains: is life only lived or is it also recounted? Ricoeur asserts that this simplistic notion of life as merely lived also requires readjustment. He posits that an uninterpreted life is merely a “biological phenomenon.”¹⁶² Through this, Ricoeur moves to challenge the presumption that a life is lived and not told. To do so, he identifies three anchoring points for the understanding of life as a narrative. The first of these is action and passion. In the human experience, action and passion are seen to be notably different from the simple biological aspect of movement or behavior. And this is, for Ricoeur, the fundamental aspect that

¹⁵⁹ Ibid.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 27.

¹⁶¹ Ricoeur expresses a substantial caveat toward literary criticism and acknowledges the notion that there remains an “inside” and an “outside” of the text. I will not go into any depth here other than to say he moves to consider the difference of structural analysis and hermeneutics, the former is that which is utilized here in his consideration of the “text world.” For a more thorough explanation see “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” 26-27.

¹⁶² Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” 28.

separates human life from that of animals and even more so from inanimate things. While movement and behavior is attributed to all of life, Ricoeur will assert that the actions and passions of the individual are “signified by projects, aims, means, circumstances, and so on. All of these notions taken together constitute the network of what we could term the *semantics of action*.”¹⁶³ Human movements are most often embedded with meaning and are purposeful. Behaviors in one's network of action can be interpreted and read in an attempt to extrapolate their meanings. Action and passion become an anchor of the life as narrative, becoming a synthesizing force of the heterogeneous aspects above. It is through these signifiers that happenings are not merely occurrences, but events. Further, the events are understood as being a part of a greater whole, not remaining discrete circumstances, but part of the network of a narrative.

The second point of anchorage is that life is embedded in a “symbolic field of praxis.”¹⁶⁴ By this Ricoeur means that for a life to be recounted it is “already articulated in signs, rules and norms...*implicit* and *imminent* symbolism.”¹⁶⁵ To elucidate, Ricoeur uses the example of a person raising and waving his hand. This event has different meanings in different contexts. Waving one's hand could be either engaging another in greeting or hailing a cab. In this rather simple way, he shows that the life of the self becomes a “quasi-text”¹⁶⁶ opened for the sake of reading within a larger contextual field. This is connected with the first anchoring point—actions are pregnant with meaning as embedded in the contextual situation of the actor.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid.

¹⁶⁵ Ibid., 28–29.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid., 29.

The third and final anchoring point that Ricoeur develops in “Life in Quest of a Narrative” is the “*pre-narrative quality of human experience*.”¹⁶⁷ He writes, “We are justified in speaking of life as a story in its nascent state, and so of life as an *activity and passion in search of a narrative*.”¹⁶⁸ Life as a narrative, like the fictive story, does not emerge without the completion of two components. First, the narrative life of the self requires a retelling that leads to the reconfiguration of the heterogeneous aspects. Yet, it also requires completion. Life as being-towards-death, in Heideggerian terms, is continuously an unfinished work until death. For Ricoeur, life as a *work*, that is, an incomplete project, can take shape, but does not manifest as a narrative-whole until it has become complete in death and reconfiguration in the recounting of one's life posthumously. This is also akin to Sartre's example of the genius of Proust in his early discussion in *Being and Nothingness*. The genius of Proust is neither his work in isolation, nor his own ability to produce those works. Rather, the genius of Proust is “considered as the totality of the manifestations of the person.”¹⁶⁹

Ricoeur admits that as we consider one's life we do not generally understand it as successive events leading toward a unified whole. To clarify he gives the example of the therapeutic relationship of the psychoanalyst and the analysand. In this relationship, the role of the analyst is to empower the analysand to reconfigure the chronology of his life. Through storytelling, the patient makes known the successive moments—things remembered about his life—moving toward the present. “This narrative interpretation of psychoanalytic theory implies that the story of a life grows out of stories that have not

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, trans. H. E Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press; Pocket Books, 1992), 5.

been recounted and that have been repressed in the direction of actual stories which the subject could take charge of and consider to be constitutive of his *personal identity*.”¹⁷⁰

Ricoeur's pursuit of narrative identity provides a framework that allows a personal identity within a substantial entity. It opens the possibility of sameness over time while also providing room for evolution of the self. In the concordance of the discordant aspects of the story Ricoeur develops a temporal unity of the self (found in the narrative) that is able to allow for extreme change over time in continual innovations which lead to successive sedimentations in the self, while the narrative whole maintains sameness without the necessity of appealing to a Kantian substance to make claim to sameness.

The Role of Place in the Narrative

Having investigated Paul Ricoeur's narrative identity theory of the self, I will now turn toward place and its role in the narrative. Ed Casey makes the claim that, “Narration cannot help but favor the temporal dimension of human experience.” He continues, “Even though it certainly does include allusions to space throughout, a given narrative cannot privilege these allusions—or else it ceases to be narrational, i.e., a recounting of happenings.”¹⁷¹ Although I seldom disagree with Casey, here I take exception. In this section I will work to exhibit the necessary role of place in the life of the self (both fictive and lived) and to show that the role of place is not a supporting actor or even foil for the hero of time. Rather, I will argue that there should be a co-privileging of place and time in the notion of emplotment. Time and place will be exhibited as not only co-present, but also bound up in one another.

¹⁷⁰ Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” 30.

¹⁷¹ Edward S Casey, “JE Malpas’s Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography: Converging and Diverging In/On Place’,” *Philosophy & Geography* 4, no. 2 (2001): 230.

My thesis is that the primary oversight of Ricoeur's narrative theory of identity is its loss of the importance of place. Through considering the role of place in the narrative we will find a more rich portrayal of the way in which one is constituted through her narrative, not simply by means of recounting the actions of her past, but also through the places in which the story abides. In doing this I will recount Ricoeur's own framework, interweaving (or reweaving) the tapestry with attention toward the significance of place. I will begin by asserting that place is the necessary condition for action. Then I will move to identify the problem of the *idem* as not only an aporetic of time, but also one of place. Next I will demonstrate the role of place in both the development of character and the syntheses of the heterogeneous aspects of emplotment. Finally I will conclude that even the recounting of story is necessarily a place-based event. Here I will focus on the consideration of place and self-identity in regards to Ricoeur's own theory.

To begin, I must note that Ricoeur never actively denies the importance of place in his work. Yet, similar to what we saw in Casey's comment above, he holds the temporal aspect of human experience as the apex of the narrative identity. Further, although he does not profess a disavowal of place or space in the narrative, he virtually never gives heed to even the existence of place when considering the storied life of the self. However, there is an aspect of Ricoeur's work that indicates the role of place in identity. This occurs in the chapters of *Oneself as Another* that precedes his studies on narrative identity. In his careful development toward the narrative theory, we find the role of the body, as a spatiotemporal schema, as a key component in his conception of selfhood. In the first four chapters, the body emerges as the resolution of the aporias regarding personhood in language theory and action theory. In Study One, Ricoeur

explores Strawson's theory of particular individuals. Strawson demonstrates that the act of referring is directed toward a primitive concept. The primitive concept of a person, in contrast with Cartesian dualism, is the body as a single spatiotemporal schema and mental acts. The subject then is a body ascribed with two kinds of predicates: the physical and the mental. While Strawson's individual particulars provide a starting point for Ricoeur, there nevertheless remains problematic in this conception of the subject. There are two that are noteworthy here: (1.) the body, as sameness, covers over selfhood (*ipseity*) and (2.) the body as a reference is still just *a* body—it is never my body. Ricoeur explains that in Strawson “the self is indeed mentioned...but is immediately neutralized by being in the same spatiotemporal schema as all the other particulars. I would readily say that, in [Strawson's] *Individuals*, the question of the self is concealed, on principle, by that of the same in the sense of *idem*.”¹⁷²

In Study 2, Ricoeur considers the reflexive speech acts, in which the author of the utterance is established in the first person position. Ricoeur considers the act of promising to illustrate the difference between this and the previous speech act theory. Strawson's theory of reference relies upon the constative speech act that references an individual in the third person (“he promises”). Reflexive speech acts self-designate the speaker as the author of the utterance (“I promise you that”). Ricoeur employs the body as a way to converge the two language theories. He explains how this convergence can occur: “This can only be done, in my opinion, by stepping outside of language and inquiring what kind of being that can lend itself to a twofold investigation—as an objective person and as a reflecting subject.”¹⁷³ With reference to Husserl's “Fifth Cartesian Meditation,” Ricoeur

¹⁷² Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 32.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, 54.

asserts that the body, as a sphere of one's ownness, will be one that has a double allegiance.¹⁷⁴ The body at once belongs to the world (and therefore is a basic particular within the world), and it is also the “vehicle of the utterance,” that is, the self that does not belong to the other which it speaks about. The body serves to configure the once divergent language theories.

Finally, after a consideration of the action theories of Anscombe and Davidson, Ricoeur establishes the role of agency in selfhood. He explains that the body within the context of causality extends the double allegiance previously considered through language theory. He writes:

What would make this discourse based on the “I can” a different discourse is, in the last analysis, its reference to an ontology of *one's own body*, that is of a body which is also *my* body and which, by its double allegiance to the order of physical bodies and to that of persons, therefore lies at the point of articulation of the power to act which is ours and of the course of things which belongs to the world. It is only in this phenomenology of the “I can” and in the related ontology of the body as one's own that the status of primitive datum accorded to the power to act would be established definitely.¹⁷⁵

Although Ricoeur does not utilize the concept of place per se in the development of the self in the narrative, spatiality does not go completely unnoticed in his work. The body's double allegiance exhibits a significant role of spatiality and place in Ricoeur's theory of the self.

¹⁷⁴ For more on the relationship between Ricoeur and Husserl's work see: Lenore Langsdorf, “The Doubleness of Subjectivity: Regenerating a Phenomenology of Intentionality,” in *Ricoeur as Another: The Ethics of Subjectivity*, ed. Richard A. Cohen (New York: SUNY Press, 2002), 33-55.

¹⁷⁵ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 111.

After his establishment of the double allegiance of the body, Ricoeur does not engage the concept of place specifically in his consideration of narrative. Yet, we can surmise that Ricoeur comes by his oversight of place honestly, as much of his work is founded upon Aristotle's *Poetics*. Although Aristotle is perhaps the first great philosopher of place, his work on tragedy is a clear representation of the loss of the concept of place in the history of philosophy. Aristotle never mentions the role that place plays in the development of a truly great story. As a consistent heir, Ricoeur retains the hegemony of time and action at the expense of the role of place in narrativity. Following Aristotle, the impetus of his work is in emplotment: the confluence of action and character. In his pursuit of the question regarding the life-world and the text-world, Ricoeur leaves out the utter importance of *world* as starting point for narrative. Without place there remains neither action nor emplotted characters. It is in and through place that we find the beginnings of self-narrative. We find justification to consider narrative theory as always already place-based, beginning with place as the necessary condition for story. Yet, the role of place in narrative goes well beyond being the stage that is necessary for the play. In Ricoeur's framework we can find ways in which place (which has remained veiled) can claim a key role in nearly each stage of his development of the narrative self.

Place will be able to support Ricoeur's theory of the problematics of sameness. As Ricoeur outlines the four types of sameness, he finds the impetus for the development of narrative theory in his pursuit of that which perdures in the self over time. At issue is the question concerning how one is to be considered the same in different times of appearing. How is one to tell if two appearances are in fact recurrences of the same? Interestingly, as he sets up the aporia of time, he fails to acknowledge that this also has implications for

the spatial, not only the temporal. The problem of identifying the same person is not only embedded in the issue of the appearances occurring in different points of time, but also, most often, in different places.

This becomes evident as one considers Ricoeur's own example of the trials of war criminals. The recognition of sameness becomes an issue not only over time, but over space, that is, in different place(s). So, attaching the crime of the alleged war criminal is difficult years after its occurrence, but difficulty increases as the man is extradited from and tried in a different place. Although moving a trial may be useful in encouraging objectivity, the lack of orientation of the alleged in the place of the crime can create further discrepancy. Recognition of one by another can be facilitated by environmental context. The re-experiencing of someone or something in the same place aids the triggering of the memory. On the other hand, place plays a helpful role in continuity over time. Considering the acorn that comes to fruition in the oak, it is said that the oak is the same in its development from acorn to sapling to mature tree not only because it remains an oak (substantially), but also because it has continuity, not only through time, but continuity of space. Here, spatiality aids in the notion of sameness when considering the unmoved oak, but the life of the human self (and spatiality) is more difficult as it is a moving being.

From the problem of sameness, Ricoeur finds the solution in the selfhood of *ipseity*. As has been seen, his immediate move is to found the self that endures throughout time in both the development of character and keeping one's word. Each of these are then embedded in the intersection of plot and self, becoming his notion of *emplotment*. Through the acts one does and the promises one keeps (or breaks) one

develops a storied self. Beginning with the development of character through habit shaped, sedimented, and innovated over time, the notion of place may be seen to play a key role beyond simply being the site of and condition for these actions. When we consider emplotment with place as a primary concern, we find that it is not only the repetition of action that creates dispositions. Rather, the state of simply being-in place creates a set of traits that become indicative to what and who one is. Perhaps more significant than considering action-based habit—one who has developed a nervous laugh or a distinctive gait—the residue left on a person by dwelling-in contributes more significantly to one's disposition. As Casey writes, “Where something or someone is, far from being a causal qualification, is one of its most determining properties. As to the *who*, it is evident that our innermost sense of personal identity (and not only our overt, public character) deeply reflects our implacement.”¹⁷⁶ Becoming acquainted with someone, often the first question posed is: where are you from? Far from being a mere nicety, this evidences the deeply rooted significance of place-identification.

This idea of being-from becomes a mark of identity. Having moved from New England to western Pennsylvania, I brought with me a set of distinctive marks that made me, to many, “the guy from Boston.” This manifested itself in a thick accent, a penchant for a distinctive flavor of progressive politics, and a naiveté concerning the cultural milieu of the place to which I came. Accent and political affiliation are not themselves aspects of place per se. But they are examples of how certain environments are points of gathering and development of certain traits that are habitualized. Francis Violicich enacts an intuitive reading of several different islands off the Dalmatian Coast of former Yugoslavia. His aim in this reading of the different islands is to show the qualitative

¹⁷⁶ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 307.

difference in the lives of the islands' inhabitants and in turn to have this research shape the future development of the urban built environment. Violich's primary concern is to find the source of the sense of place. He writes, "It is not enough to reveal the sense of place as a generalized quality of a chosen environment. One must be able to understand the sources of a particular sense of place and to specify the environmental elements that make one place different from another."¹⁷⁷

In Violich's study, the inhabitants are geographically close to one another yet they exhibit significantly different traits due to variation in environment. In particular he is interested in showing that the land/water interface of the islands (including the shape of harbors) significantly affects the character of the people. In her memoir, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, Kathleen Norris chronicles her move from Manhattan to the Dakotan plains. Moving from a radically enclosed urban setting to the open region of the midwest, she records the way in which Big Sky Country leaves identifying marks on people. One is known by his attunement toward the plains. To show how one is marked in his psyche and his outward action by life on the plains Norris writes, "It's the old North Dakota farmer asked by the sociologist why he hasn't planted trees around his farmhouse. No shelter belt, not even a shade tree with a swing for his children. 'Don't like trees,' he said, 'they hem you in.'"¹⁷⁸ The land and environment—the place itself—create identifying traits upon the dweller that distinguish him from others. In contrast, during an interview with a man who had moved from Pittsburgh to Sioux Falls, I found that the open expanse had an inverse effect, "The boundaries [of properties] are where

¹⁷⁷ Francis Violich, "Towards Revealing the Sense of Place: An Intuitive 'Reading' of Four Dalmation Towns," in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, eds., (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co., 2000), 131.

¹⁷⁸ Kathleen Norris, *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*, 1st ed. (Mariner Books, 2001), 179.

trees are, but that's it. It's a weird thing. For whatever reason, the flatness is omnipresent. It is the opposite of claustrophobia; you can almost lose your balance. There's too much space. It makes you feel drunk.”¹⁷⁹

This perspective of place-based traits conforms to (and strengthens) Ricoeur's stance on sedimentation and innovation. Over the past fifteen years of being away from the Northeast, the traits I developed by having been there have evolved—they have innovated. There are aspects remaining, but no longer is my identity strongly tied to the habitualized aspects marking the former place. It is now more firmly rooted in the place where I currently reside. The sedimentation of character of my earlier life has been innovated over time *and* over place. It is the change initiated by place-change over time. Yet, there remains residuum of the traits acquired from my former home embedded in my current identity.

The centrality of time and action in the narrative is seen very clearly as Paul Ricoeur outlines the “concordant discordance” in the synthesis of emplotment. The syntheses of the heterogeneous aspects of disparate events are understood when considering the narrative as a whole to bring a unity to the fictive tale and to the story of a life. Each synthesis focuses on the claim that, taken individually, events seem to be discrete occurrences. Taken together, they are considered as events giving significance to a holistic view of the entirety of the narrative. Seemingly discordant events emerge as a concordant whole, shaping what he calls “concordant discordance.”

The depth of the “concordant discordance” can be enhanced by considering the role of place in the narrative within this framework of the synthesis of the heterogeneous.

¹⁷⁹ Scott Calgaro, interview by author, June 20, 2009, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

This is true in the narrative of the human experience and in fictional accounts.¹⁸⁰ Similar to identifying seemingly discrete actions, apparently separate places also emerge in the story of the human life experience. As said above, place is always the necessary condition for these events (both as successive and unified). In this we find that place can be the locus of the synthesis in the life of the self. Often, environment broadens the notion of heterogeneity as place and the experience of story can be considered in the same way. The movements of a story occur in particular places. But stories most often move, not only through the succession of events and temporal moments, but also in and through places.¹⁸¹ A focus on place grants access to a fourth synthesis. A story, when considered in its parts, yields what appears to be a succession of places, sites in which the events happen. Reflection on the story shows a concordance in seemingly discordant places. These places do not stand alone. Instead, they become an itinerary, a unified whole. Individual places emerge as aspects of a larger field of interconnected and bleeding places on which the plot is able to unfold.

Let us consider a most obvious example and then one more difficult. Casey points toward Homer's epic to elucidate the way in which the fictional tale is place-based and progressional. It proceeds through a succession of places crucial to the story told. Drawing on Michael Seidel, he writes, "The *Odyssey*, that ur-epic of Western tradition, is densely place-beset in its structure. The names of its primary episodes are place-names or surrogates of place names: toponyms or eponyms. Moreover, 'the essential rhythm of the

¹⁸⁰ We can identify uncommon examples of fictional and life stories that seem to not include place change. Below I will utilize examples of both stories that are indicative of evident place change (Homer's *Odyssey*) and then move to two works of Samuel Beckett. Beckett's work will show that even in examples of extreme platial homogeneity place nevertheless plays a key role.

¹⁸¹ below I will consider both less likely and also puzzling cases regarding stories that do not "move."

Odyssey is set up in the *spatial* alternations of its episodes.”¹⁸² The story of the hero can be read as individual spatial encounters, yet these encounters find concordance within a final conception of the itinerary of the tale. In this, the unified whole can be considered as mapped.

Place-based configuration can also be realized in less traditional fictional narratives which have been assumed by many critics to be “placeless” or spatially monolithic tales. The lack of abundance of these placeless/mono-spatial tales testifies to the significance of place in the narrative structure. Perhaps the best examples of these outliers are found in the pieces of Samuel Beckett, particularly in his works dating after the 1950s. One of his works that initially could be assessed as placeless or at least spatially unmoving is his one act entitled “Play.” In “Play” the curtain rises to show three burial urns approximately three feet high with heads emerging from each—a man and two women. Beckett writes, “They face undeviatingly front throughout the play. Faces so lost to age and aspect as to seem almost part of the urns.”¹⁸³ The size of the urns gives the impression that the audience is looking upon three disembodied people. The lack of any other props on the stage gives a sense that the urns are in a space otherwise devoid of characteristic. As the play commences, the heads speak as a single spotlight shines upon each, swiveling from head to head. The actors lack emotion and, although the urns are touching, there is no indication that they are aware of the presence of one another. The audience quickly becomes aware that “Play” is about a man, his long-time lover, and his mistress. The act progresses through the recounting of the events of the love triangle. Many agree that the story unfolds in hell or a sort of purgatory. When the dialog draws to

¹⁸² Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 276.

¹⁸³ Samuel Beckett, *Play: And Two Short Pieces for Radio* (London: Faber and Faber, 1964), 9.

a close, it begins again and unfolds nearly identically to the first movement. With the coda, Beckett is rehearsing an eternal returning of the same—a re-telling of the cycle of infidelity, denial, confession, repentance, and a return to infidelity.

While the *mise en scène* might suggest the unimportance or absence of place, David Addyman argues that a “misconception is the widespread assumption that Beckett's works move toward placelessness or pure displacement.”¹⁸⁴ He continues, “Critics of all persuasions, then, seem to confuse an indisputable lack of a sense of placefulness—meaningful emplacement or presence in a well-defined locale—with placelessness.”¹⁸⁵ Addyman is correct to challenge this presumption. “Play” is drenched with platial characteristics, although to simply watch the production, one might say, there is neither “significant place,” nor movement between places. But in this, similar to many of Beckett's works, place plays an important role. First, the movement of the spotlight between actors, paired with their lack of awareness of one another, is able to construct what can be interpreted as a sense of place-difference and movement. The swiveling light creates a feel of different places or platial zones. These zones could be interpreted either as adjacent or perhaps altogether discrete and dis-located from one another—only represented as together on the stage.

There is also a deep sense of place in the remembering and recounting of the cycle of the love triangle. In the characters' recounting of the events Beckett utilizes very place-based language that is continually emphasizing coming and going, moving in and out of places. The lover “bursts in” to confront the mistress,¹⁸⁶ the husband “slunk in” to

¹⁸⁴ David Addyman, “Phenomenology ‘Less the Rosy Hue’: Beckett and the Philosophy of Place,” *Journal of Modern Literature* 33, no. 4 (2010): 113.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 113–114.

¹⁸⁶ Beckett, *Play: And Two Short Pieces for Radio*, 10.

the room,¹⁸⁷ and one woman remembers how she told the other that she “dropped in to say I bear you no ill-feelings.”¹⁸⁸ Throughout “Play” there is also the development of a remembered story unfolding. It involves the movement between houses and rooms. The play also describes the fantasy of the man waking with both of his lovers, moving to the shore, and setting sail on the sea. The dialog of the en-urned heads is shockingly similar to the concordant-discordance of the analysand telling her story to the analyst in Ricoeur's narrative theory. The light, moving from character to character, draws out the confession of each character. The retelling of the story by each of the characters pulls together once disparate events. “Play,” once considered as placeless can be considered as a story mapped—a narrative moving through place.

Another Beckett play, “Happy Days,” revolves around Winnie and Willie. Winnie is a woman whom the audience initially finds buried up to her waist in sand. In this immobilized position she is awoken by an alarm and progresses through what appears to be daily rituals. Willie, while not completely immobilized, enters and leaves the stage through a small hole in the ground near his companion. The place, particularly place change, becomes an indicator of movement in the drama. As the play continues, the sand becomes progressively higher on Winnie's body, finally moving around her neck. Beckett uses the change of place to mark not only temporal change, but also Winnie's progression toward death. Here, even in this famously mono-platial dark comedy, place change (the change of place, not the change from one place to another) draws together the events into its concordance marking the movement of the characters from naïve optimism to eventual despair.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 11.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 13.

Place, as “concordant discordance,” strengthens Ricoeur's anchorage point of the narrative of oneself as nascent—the life of the self is a pre-narrative. He has established that the narrative of the self is a set of actions of the past, but it also pushes into the future—only finding its completion in death. It is the same for place in the narrative. The self's story is a place-based story. The itinerary (or map) of the life is not yet fully manifest. The future will hold new places. The journey of the narrative is an ongoing one. It has moved through places in the past and will continue through places in the future. But, how do we consider the example of one who never leaves his place? This is a question pertaining to extreme cases, for even the recluse who confines himself to a single house can point to actions taking place at different times, in different rooms, that is, different places. But what about someone who remains in a single room for the entirety of his life story? Even in this unlikely case, we can consider the way that emplotment can be mapped in relation to being in different parts of the room or, perhaps, by the orientation of the body in relation to the room (facing east, against the wall, toward the bookshelf, etc.). Further, as in Beckett's “Happy Days,” the progression of the life story can be platially mapped, even in a single place, through place-change. For instance, the reclusive can configure the temporal aspect of action in his narrative according to difference found in the place of confinement (before the tree outside the window fell or after he moved the wardrobe to the west wall).¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ One could suggest the puzzling case of an individual who has been restrained to a single part of a single room and has no way of perceiving place change or orientation. In this extreme case, the individual's life could consider a homogeneous, mono-platial existence. Yet, this returns to Ricoeur's conception of spatiality, the body, and selfhood. A person, with a body constrained in movement and without primary acts of perception, would ultimately be limited in her development as a self according to Ricoeur's concept of identity. The immobile person, who also lacks sensation adequate to perceive orientation and place change, would be hindered in her body's role of enacting the double allegiances in the initial studies of *Oneself as Another*. Would this person then lack selfhood? Such puzzling cases would suggest that lack of any place change, platial orientation, *and* place perception, over an entire

Finally, place maintains a vital role in the reconfiguration of the narrative of the self in the retelling of the story. For Ricoeur it could be said that the act of reconfiguration in storytelling is the climax of the narrative theory. To grasp the significance of life as a narrative, the story must be recounted; in this the self emerges in the memories of emplotment. The self is “found” as the story emerges. Again, this emergence of the self in narrative is to be lauded. Yet, with the paradigmatic shift toward place in the narrative, how do we find the loci of the past as significant to the emergence of the narrative? The notion of place-memory and the narrative of the self will be explored further in proceeding chapters. Here, I will simply lay the groundwork by elucidating the ways in which the intersection of place, memory, and narrative connect to Ricoeur's work.

Considering the configuration of narrative and its relationship to place, the strength of Jeff Malpas's text comes to the fore as he examines what he calls the “Proust Principle.” Looking at Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past*, Malpas explicitly connects the action of recounting and remembering to the places in which the subject has lived, dwelt, acted, and interacted. Through the remembrance of place, the story of the self emerges. Narrativity is foundational for Malpas and his pursuit of unifying the self through place. It is no surprise that he explicitly responds to Ricoeur, writing, “Most often, of course, narrative is understood, not as connected to space or place, but, along with memory, as tied much more specifically to time...But, just as time and space are properly understood only together as interconnected forms of *dimensionality*, so, too, is

life, would challenge the selfhood of the individual. This question requires further investigation. Puzzling cases such as this only strengthens the argument for the importance of the role of place and spatiality in the identity of the subject.

narrativity properly understood as connected, not to time alone, but also to space.”¹⁹⁰

How then does place impact the memory of story, its recounting, and the unity of the life of the self?

It was shown that Ricoeur turns to the practice of the psychoanalyst to exhibit the ways in which narratives are drawn from the analysand in therapy. Although not explored by Ricoeur, place has been a tool in the work in psychotherapy. This is, in fact, the foundation of Bachelard's *Poetics of Space*. Bachelard offers his topoanalysis as an alternative to the psychoanalyst's approach. It is in this lengthy passage of the poet-philosopher that we find the power of place, memory, and narrative:

Thanks to the house, a great many of our memories are housed, and if the house is a bit elaborate, if it has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges that are all the more clearly delineated. All our lives come back to us in daydreams. A psychoanalyst should, therefore, turn his attention to this simple localization of our memories. I should like to give the name topoanalysis to this auxiliary of psychoanalysis. Topoanalysis, then, would be the systematic psychological study of the sites of our intimate lives. In the theatre of the past that is constituted by memory, the stage setting maintains a character that is constituted by memory, the stage setting maintains the characters in their dominant roles.¹⁹¹

According to Bachelard, the analyst, pursuing the story of the patient, would do better to access the memory of past by way of place.

¹⁹⁰ Malpas, *Place and Experience*. I hold that place can be substituted here for Malpas's notion of space.

¹⁹¹ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 8.

Through this we find two primary aspects of place and memory. Bachelard's argument is that place is not simply the necessary condition for the possibility of story (setting), but it is the dwelling place for and means of access to the narrative. We recall story through places. In place, memories are nested. This can be considered in the work of the analyst who engages the memories of places (the childhood home, a classroom, the bed, etc.) to bring about the remembrance of action and passion. This does not only occur on the couch of therapy, but in the day-to-day recollections of the self. Not long ago, a friend inquired about a past romantic relationship. Having been asked in what year the relationship occurred, my means for remembering was by accessing place. I recalled a visit we had had. I pictured her coming to the city in which I lived. Yet, this only narrowed the field of time. I then recalled the house she visited, bringing forth images of our talking over a meal at the kitchen table with the snow falling outside. Only then was I able to recall not only the year, but also the season in which we had dated. While time can be deceptive in our memories, in place we find more faithful anchorage points—place, in memory, orients time and enhances the possibility of recollection.

To say that place only aids in the recollection of the time of events would be to do a great disservice to the role of place in memory. If this were the case, place would simply serve as the handmaiden of time, there only as a point of access to the temporal. But it is in the notion of the remembrance for Bachelard that we are able to picture the “whereness” of memory. The where contains more than the temporal. Places remembered also contain the sensuous aspects of story. The images conjured in the memory of place can encapsulate things such as moods, sounds, and even smells of a moment. Beatley considers the connection between odor and place memory: “Smells often provide the

most vivid memories and recollections of place...There are many seasonal smells that characterize our place memories—the smells of falling leaves in the autumn along the Eastern U.S., the smell of snow, the smells (and other sensations) of summer thunderstorms.”¹⁹² Here Beatley brings us into place-memory by way of the sense of smell. A very poignant personal memory of place that is significantly sensual is of being in Acapulco at twelve years old. Recalling this time, I first find myself with a mental picture of my family dining on the outdoor patio of a restaurant overlooking cliffs and watching the divers. I recall a visual memory of the place: torch lights, the undulating movement of the water, the wet rocks, the divers, and my sister craning her neck to watch. Yet, the place memory is not confined only to the pictorial image. In that memory I also have other aspects of the sensuous. I remember the night being warm with a bit of a cool breeze. I remember droplets of water misted on my arms. I remember the smell of salt air. I remember the rough rock wall on which I rested my arm. I am even now able to acknowledge the emotive aspects of decades ago. Although priority is often given to the visual, there nevertheless are other aspects of the sensual nature of place memory.

The memory of the scene in Mexico is a nearly ideal memory connecting place and its sensuous nature. I can recall memories of every sense. But this would be an exception for most place memories. There are seldom moments in which we can retrieve all of the senses in place-memory (especially distant memory) so clearly. Yet, it remains difficult to conjure or even imagine a place-based memory that does not contain aspects of a multi-sensual experience. Often the multi-sensual experience is remembered in pairs: the sight of the carnival and the smell of popcorn, a view of an ocean sunrise and the crisp air, a panorama of the cityscape and feel of hard concrete. For the visually impaired

¹⁹² Beatley, *Native to Nowhere*, 26–27.

the memory of place is still, often, a multi-sensory experience—even as visual representation of place is not available. The carnival-place is remembered aurally (the sound of games) and osmically (popcorn and fried foods). Quite often we only really remember one sensation of place—for most it is usually a visual memory. But is it possible to have a place memory that lacks sense data? Can we remember being in a place and have no memory of any sensation? If I try to retrieve a place memory without sight (it is difficult for one with vision) another sense (at least one) fills into the primary sense position. I can remember being in complete darkness as a teen in a Halloween maze. I could see nothing. But in this place memory I remembered the sounds (laughter and screams), feel (plastic over plywood on either side of me and a sweat-dampened shirt in front of me), and smell (body odor). Sensation and memory of place cannot be wholly separated. What is a memory of a non-sensuous place?¹⁹³

The remembrance is the key to the notion of story. Memory is often archived in, accessed through, and embellished by way of the sensual encounters of place. The experience of remembering can then become an archeology of memory beginning in and developing through the field of the platial. As Bachelard writes, “Memories are motionless, and the more securely they are fixed in space, the sounder they are. To localize a memory in time is merely a matter for the biographer...For a knowledge of intimacy, localization in the spaces of our intimacy is more urgent than the determination

¹⁹³ It is important to note that this is a consideration of place-based memory in the self's narrative, not memory altogether. The question of sensation and memory more generally is an interesting query that does not need be raised here as we consider “whereness” of place memories in consciousness. Indeed we can consider memory that is non-platial. When asked to sing the “National Anthem” I remember words and music. While being memories that do not necessitate place, these types of memories still maintain spatial consequence: music requires the movement air over an object (a reed, string, vocal chord) creating vibrations. Even this requires the consideration of physical space.

of dates.”¹⁹⁴ We have found here the significant role of place-memory in the narrative of a self. In a subsequent chapter the role of place in fictive works will be explored more fully.

Ricoeur's pursuit of one's selfhood in the recounting and living out of a nascent narrative remains a helpful alternative to the “exalted *cogito*” and the “humiliated *cogito*.” It is able to exhibit the person as sedimented sameness that innovates in selfhood throughout time. But Ricoeur misses the role of place in the narrative in his theory that focuses on time and action to the exclusion of environment. I have endeavored to show that a consideration of the narrative identity theory, within a paradigm that grants importance to action and passion, time and place, we are able to find a more rich, helpful, appropriate, and convincing notion of self-identity as rooted in story. A place-based narrative is one that more accurately describes the experience of the self in the narrative, that is, the appearing of the self through embodied experience in place. Ending his work on the narrative identity of the self in the “concordant discordance” of time and action, Ricoeur holds that in ways the temporal consideration of self-hood maintains the “cruel bite of time.”¹⁹⁵ Temporality continues to contribute to the discordance of the narrative, even as it is being draw together by the syntheses of the heterogeneous aspects of narrative. Taking a phenomenology of place into consideration within the narrative, giving it co-primacy with the temporal, the teeth of time are dulled as place grants a greater since of coherence to the narrative of the self.

¹⁹⁴ Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, 9.

¹⁹⁵ Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” 31.

Chapter Three

The Veil of Place

All architecture is what you do when you look upon it.
Walt Whitman, "A Song for Occupations"

In the previous chapter I argued that Paul Ricoeur, in his narrative identity theory, overlooks the importance of place in the development of identity. Ricoeur has valorized the temporocentric notion of plot and based the identity of the self upon the synthesis of events occurring over a lifetime into a story-whole, which becomes the foundation for one's identity. In his assertion that self-identity is based in the unification of the heterogeneous actions of one's past, he has missed the importance of place. I argue that the narrative should be understood in terms of a place-based narrative. Place is not just important in that it is the necessary condition for the possibility of story, but further, it has active implications for the shaping of the narrative and the characters within that story through their experience in place. Place is not only the bare stage, nor is it a supporting actor, but rather place holds co-primacy with action in the development of the self. In the preceding chapter I have shown that when we consider the important role of place in the story of the self, Ricoeur's theory is in fact strengthened and place can be found to be an important aspect in understanding narrative. In the following chapters (four and five) I will utilize the fictional works of Wendell Berry in his Port William chronicles to exhibit the ways in which place holds a key role in the life of the self.

Before moving on to Berry we need to consider the loss of place in the work of Ricoeur. If place holds such a significant role in the development of the identity of the subject through the framework of narrativity, why do some of the great minds of the 20th century miss this key concept? In a sense, this omission of place should not come as a

surprise. Chapter one outlined significant characteristics of place and experience. It should be recalled that place emerges from the intentionality of the subject, but this intentionality is most often unselfconscious. Further, it was established that place is tacitly known. To accept the unselfconscious intentionality and the tacit knowledge of place is to argue that place is overlooked, not despite its nature, but by virtue of one of its characteristics in experience. This unselfconscious dimension of place as an aspect of being in the world provides insight into the inattention to place in narrative theory. Yet, the chapter one did not demonstrate why or how place is unselfconsciously experienced and tacitly known. Here I will conduct an investigation into why place, being crucial to the human experience, is so often experienced unselfconsciously. In this chapter I will argue that place is overlooked by narrative theorists, not because it is unimportant or in spite of its significance, but rather, it is omitted precisely on account of its importance. To explain this seemingly quizzical assertion I will utilize Martin Heidegger's conception of tools and their use in *Being and Time*. By considering place through the lens of the present-at-hand and the ready-to-hand nature of equipment we will find answers to this query regarding place. I will then continue to show the moments of the appearance of place in the experiences of partial breakdown, in the aesthetic gaze, and in building and cultivating places.

The Veil of Place and Heidegger's Tool

An important aspect of Heidegger's phenomenological investigation of Being-in-the-world is Dasein's interaction with entities in the world. This was briefly considered in chapter one. Heidegger is regarding, "those [entities] which show themselves in our concern with the environment. Such entities are not thereby objects for knowing the

'world' theoretically; they are simply what gets used, what gets produced, and so forth.”¹⁹⁶ These things Heidegger refers to as *Zeug* (or as Macquarrie and Robinson translate, “equipment”). Heidegger is clear to determine that the examination of equipment is not one that proceeds thematically, but rather as Dasein engages entities concernfully in everyday dealings with the world. The hammer-thing can be thematically considered in inspection: it consists of an 18” long wooden shaft shaped to meet the ergonomics of the hand. At one end of the shaft there is attached a piece of metal, a balled head on one side with a claw on the other. It weighs five pounds. The being of the hammer is not found in staring at the hammer and its physical qualities. The attempt to understand something such as the hammer in this theoretical and objective way is to see the hammer as a thing present-at-hand. Heidegger argues that this posture toward the tool, knowing it as present-at-hand, does not encapsulate the essence of the tool. He is interested in entities in a different way. He writes:

The phenomenological question applies in the first instance to the Being of those entities which we encounter in such concern...In the domain of the present analysis, the entities we shall take as our preliminary theme are those which show themselves in our concern with the environment. Such entities are not thereby objects for knowing the “world” theoretically; they are simply what gets used, what gets produced, so forth.¹⁹⁷

The essential nature of equipment is found in its use. It is Dasein's everyday involvement with the world, and entities within the world, that Heidegger will consider as he

¹⁹⁶ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962), 67.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

investigates the meaning of Being. This involvement is what Heidegger terms one's concernful dealings with the world.

An entity encountered, considered as equipment, is “something in-order-to.”¹⁹⁸ In this way, the hammer is no longer described as present-at-hand in objective analysis. Instead it is understood through the ways it is utilized, manipulated, and interacted with. Defining a hammer, one does not enumerate its parts, aspects, makeup, etc. When asked, “What is a hammer?” One replies, “A tool to pound nails with.” Or as Richard Polt puts it, “It is only by using things that [one] can realize what they are.” He continues, “We have to pay attention to equipment as it reveals itself in use. The only way to understand...entities is to handle them.”¹⁹⁹ This way of being of equipment Heidegger terms *Zuhandenheit*, readiness-to-hand. While the equipment is understood in its in-order-to, we find embedded in this the necessity of a task at hand, that is, a project. Every piece of equipment with an in-order-to is connected to a task with a goal, what he refers to as a towards-which. For Heidegger, when the tool is utilized it gets lost to ordinary perception. He explains, “The peculiarity of what is ready-to-hand is that, in its readiness-to-hand, it must, as it were, withdraw in the in-order-to quite authentically.”²⁰⁰ Dasein, manipulating the hammer, is absorbed in the task at hand, the toward-which of the project. During the act of hammering, the hammer itself is lost in the project. While working with a tool, the craftsman is focused on the project in such a way that the tool itself becomes obscured. It is virtually unseen and not considered. The tool falls away as

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 68.

¹⁹⁹ Richard F. H. Polt, *Heidegger: An Introduction* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1999), 50.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 69.

the project becomes the focus of concentration. Here, the equipment is “tacitly use(d).”²⁰¹ Yet, even in its withdrawal, the tool remains in sight of Dasein in what Heidegger describes as a special kind of sight. It is encountered in circumspection—the sight epitomized in involvement. He explains that in use there is not a lack of seeing altogether, but a seeing that is manifested in manipulation. It is a sight that is able to handle equipment while still keeping explicit perception focused on the project at hand.

The tool can nevertheless become conspicuous. Heidegger writes:

When we concern ourselves with something, the entities which are most closely ready-to-hand may be met as something unusable, not properly adapted for the use we have decided upon. The tool turns out to be damaged, or the material unsuitable. In each of these cases equipment is here, ready-to-hand. We discover its unusability, however, not by looking at it and determining its properties, but rather by the circumspection of the dealings in which we use it. When its unusability is thus discovered, *equipment becomes conspicuous*.²⁰²

Here the tool becomes “seen” in its breakdown. When the hammer breaks it comes to the fore as something unready-to-hand and the focus of Dasein is shifted from the project to the tool itself. Heidegger explains that breakdown can occur when the tool literally breaks, when it is missing, or when something is obstinate, that is, when something stands in the way of Dasein’s project. Each of these shifts the focus from the engagement of the task at hand to the entity and it becomes thematized and conspicuous as a thing.

Tools and Places

²⁰¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 73.

²⁰² Ibid.

What is the correlation between tools and places? There may seem to be a substantial difference between a hammer and the environment in which we dwell. Heidegger bridges this gap in a few brief lines. He writes, “What we encounter as closest to us (though not something to be taken as a theme) is the room; and we encounter it not as something 'between four walls' in a geometrical spatial sense, but as equipment for residing.”²⁰³ Herein lies the turning point for understanding the fate of place as lost, not only in the narrative theory of Ricoeur, but also in much of the history of philosophy. Once Heidegger explicitly identifies place as equipment for residing, it becomes clear how it fits into the framework of equipment. Within Heidegger's theory of the tool we find place falling out of the explicit sight of Dasein.

To elucidate this notion of place as tool, it is helpful to examine Heidegger's conception of place in experience more closely. It has been determined in chapter one that, for Heidegger, places are discovered or set up by the intentional acts of Dasein. Also, equipment is always considered in terms of being part of an equipmental totality. This equipmental totality has platial characteristic as well. He refers to this as equipment's “whither.”²⁰⁴ Heidegger refers to the whither of the equipmental totality as a tool's region. He writes, “This ‘whither,’ which makes it possible for equipment to belong somewhere, and which we circumspectively keep in view ahead of us in our concerned dealings we call the ‘region.’”²⁰⁵ Equipment has its place and that place has its region. What we find here is a dual consideration of place and the concept of the tool (and other entities), which adds complexity to thinking of place and the tool. While Heidegger

²⁰³ Ibid., 68.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., 103.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

considers a region (or a set of corresponding places) as the where-in of tools, places are also tools themselves (as seen above). A place is a tool that contains other tools.

Since Dasein deals with tools within an equipmental totality within regions, we can think of the hammer (equipment) as being on the pegboard (its place) that is attached to the workbench (region). The workbench as region contains other places: a shelf (place) that holds screwdrivers (equipment) and a drawer (place) that contains tape measures (equipment). Heidegger argues that Dasein must first find a region before it discovers or allots a place. For instance one would not generally consider going to the place of something, rather they are more likely to think about the region, the totality. I would not typically say I am going to the pegboard to find a hammer, rather I consider going to the workbench, i.e. the region. A region then determines what was described in chapter one as the interconnected network of places bleeding into one another. Regions, made up of places, Heidegger contends, is what makes up the “round-about-us.”²⁰⁶ The environment in which we dwell in our everydayness is not made up of a homogeneous space that simply includes entities present-at-hand. We gain our perspective in the lived environment by way of these regions. He writes, “all ‘wheres’ are discovered and circumspectively interpreted as we go our way in everyday dealings; they are not ascertained and catalogued by the observational measurement of space.”²⁰⁷ Here he is emphasizing the ready-to-hand nature of place as it is discovered and interpreted in use. Yet this “finding” and interpretation of place remains one that occurs in circumspection, not the explicit seeing found in the inspection of a present-at-hand thing. Both discovery and interpretation of place is done in an unselfconscious manner for Heidegger.

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Finally, Heidegger explains that the totality of places can be both conspicuous and inconspicuous. He writes:

The readiness-to-hand which belongs to any such region beforehand has the character of inconspicuous familiarity, and it has in it an even more primordial sense than does the Being of the ready-to-hand. The region itself becomes visible in a conspicuous manner only when one discovers the ready-to-hand circumspectively and does so in the deficient modes of concern. Often the region of a place does not become accessible explicitly as such a region until one fails to find something in its place...The bare space is still veiled over. Space has been split up into places.²⁰⁸

For Heidegger, place, as ready-to-hand, is inconspicuous because it is in use—place is a tool. Dasein does not clearly see the region because it is embracing the project occurring within the region. The project is Dasein's point of focus. This is similar to the ready-to-hand nature of the hammer. The hammer is inconspicuous when one is hammering. Yet, as Heidegger argues above, the region is more “primordially inconspicuous” than the Being of the equipment ready-to-hand. The region of the hammer in use is “less seen” than the hammer that is inconspicuous. Heidegger says little in his text regarding this notion that the region is more primordially inconspicuous. What are we to make of these degrees of primal inconspicuity? The hammer itself is not clearly seen as it is ready-to-hand in hammering; the site in which the hammering takes place is seen less so. I take these levels of inconspicuity to be connected to Heidegger's conception of de-severance. De-severing, for Heidegger, is a bringing something near through circumspection. It is not necessarily correlate with spatial dimensionality, but instead it is related to closeness

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 104.

in use. He writes, “That which is presumably 'closest' is by no means that which is at the smallest distance 'from us.’”²⁰⁹ Although we are ultimately close (in strictly spatial terms) to the region in which we dwell, work, and utilize equipment, we are circumspectively further from this region because we are closer, in use, to the hammer that we swing because it maintains a more integral involvement in the task at hand. The further the entity is from the project, the less conspicuous the apparatus. Further, Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, is always in a region. It is the primary tool for dwelling. Its very everydayness makes it more primordially inconspicuous in its familiarity because Being-in is the most familiar way of Being for Dasein. These levels of inconspicuity further connect with Ricoeur and his loss of place. For Ricoeur, that which takes place on the stage (action) and its corresponding apparatus (the tool corresponding to the action) is a step closer to the actor circumspectively than the stage itself. While the apparatus of the action is unseen, the stage is somehow less seen circumspectively by Dasein.

I have already shown above that, for Heidegger, place is equipment for residing and that it is “encountered as closest to us.”²¹⁰ Place is, in this sense, the most primordial tool for dwelling. In its equipmental capacity, place has the same characteristics as the hammer in use. Entering the room, one has a circumspective sight of the room. The room itself is inconspicuous, as the act of residing is at the fore. This role of the room as both region of equipment and tool becomes clearer when considered through an example. Waking up each morning, I walk into my kitchen. Entering that room I move to the sink, fill the kettle, and place it on the stove to make coffee in the French press. In this way, we see Heidegger's example come to life. The room I have entered is not a space denuded of

²⁰⁹ Ibid., 107.

²¹⁰ Ibid., 68.

meaning, but its meaning is embedded in the task at hand: making coffee. I have entered with this purpose. Focusing on the task at hand I do not “see” the kitchen itself, but move within it, as I am fixated on making and consuming a beverage. The kitchen has the in-order-to of making meals, cleaning dishes, etc. We also find here support for Heidegger's assertion that there is not, precisely, an equipment, but that each tool is related to others within a tool-context or an equipmental totality. The kettle, the faucet, the French press, and the stove are all aspects of the larger equipmental totality (extending beyond to the entirety of the house) in the region. Each of these fades out of explicit focus when I go about the task of making coffee.

The dimensional space of the kitchen is always already there. It is covered over by place in circumspection. Heidegger explains that in circumspective Being-in-the-world “bare space is still veiled over. Space has been split into places.”²¹¹ Space, nevertheless, can come to the fore in the act of inspection for Heidegger. Space, as present-at-hand, emerges when Dasein turns from utilizing the environment as a tool and engages in looking at the space theoretically. For instance, I consider the time when, having my home assessed, I walked through the house with an inspector. Coming to the kitchen, the place was investigated spatially. Measurements and calculations were made. The geometrical aspect of the home was still present. Through non-circumspective inspection, the kitchen was considered as a thing. In use the kitchen is circumspectively seen (but inconspicuous), while in inspection it is seen in “normal” sight (and conspicuous).

Reflecting on a diversity of places encountered, one can see how the place is lost in the in-order-to of its usefulness. The market is lost in the towards-which of shopping,

²¹¹ Ibid., 104.

the classroom lost to learning, the synagogue lost to worship, and the interior of the car to driving. Considering place and its inconspicuity in use, the error of Ricoeur becomes understandable. It may even be said that his error is one that bears little culpability. Ricoeur loses place in his theory because place, as considered within the confines of use, hides itself. Narrative theorists, in their pursuit of the identity of the self, do not see the importance of place because it is veiled by the actions that occur in place. Understood through the lens of Being-in-the-world, it is only sensible that places are unseen. And in this way, place is missed as the heterogeneous actions of a story (although always occurring in place) are fixated upon. The place is veiled in circumspection as plot emerges to the fore. Through Heidegger's conception of the tool we find entrance into how place is veiled over in the narrative of the subject. Place is veiled through our conscious attentiveness toward the task at hand—the action of the narrative played out on the unseen stage. Holding to place as veiled behind the focal point of action, it would appear that place necessarily bows to its fate of being covered over. Here I want to make a shift to examine ways in which place does in fact emerge in a phenomenological investigation of environment in times of breakdown, but also in times when place is properly functioning.

But first we must realize that in Heidegger's conception of environment we come upon a problematic regarding place in experience. A tool is only encountered *as* a tool when it is in use. The tool becomes conspicuous when something impedes circumspection. Yet, when the tool emerges as conspicuous Heidegger asserts that it appears as a present-at-hand thing. Once Dasein moves from circumspective sight and into seeing the entity explicitly—once Dasein “stares” at the tool—the entity loses its

equipmental characteristic. It transforms from being seen circumspectively as a useful piece of equipment to becoming an ontic entity for inspection. Having established that “the kind of Being which equipment possesses” is readiness-to-hand, he continues to explain that “no matter how hard we just *look* at the ‘outward’ appearance of Things in whatever form this takes, we cannot discover anything ready-to-hand...we can get along without understanding readiness-to-hand.”²¹² It is in this non-circumspective looking that the tool becomes thematized; losing its equipmentality, it becomes detectable, but no longer as a tool. For Heidegger, place seems to succumb to this same fate in two different ways. First, place is transformed into dimensional space when the once ready-to-hand tool (in its place) is encountered as present-to-hand in deficient modes or other encounters in which it is thematized as a thing. Heidegger writes:

In the ‘physical’ assertion that the ‘hammer is heavy’ we *overlook* not only the tool-character of the entity we encounter, but also something that belongs to equipment ready-to-hand: its place. Its place becomes a matter of indifference. This does not mean that what is present-at-hand loses its ‘location’ altogether. But its place becomes a spatio-temporal position, a ‘world-point’, which is in no way distinguished from any other. This implies not only that the multiplicity of places of equipment ready-to-hand within the confines of the environment becomes modified to a pure multiplicity of positions, but that the entities of the environment are altogether *released from such confinement*.²¹³

Here we see environment becoming conspicuous as the space of the thematized present-to-hand entity comes to the fore. A utilized tool is in a place. When the entity is

²¹² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 69.

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 362.

considered as a thing, it still maintains a locale, but this is not a place for Heidegger. It is rather dimensional space, the pure position of the entity. The hammer as tool is utilized in place, the hammer-thing is an objectified entity appearing in space. There is a second way in which place fades into space for Heidegger. Tools belong in place and therefore in regions, but places themselves are also encountered as “equipment for residing”²¹⁴ and thus ready-to-hand. For Heidegger, when tools breakdown they become present-at-hand. Just as when a tool breaks it becomes a conspicuous thing, so also when the circumspection of place (as tool) is disrupted in a place's malfunctioning (for instance, a house damaged by a fire) it becomes present-at-hand space.²¹⁵

However there are some questions that arise when we consider place and space for Heidegger. First, the conception of place and space seems ambiguous at times. There are several situations in the text where the place/space relationship becomes blurred and not nearly as distinguished as the dichotomy between a tool and an objectified thing. While Heidegger aligns non-circumspection to things in space he refers to “circumspective space” (for instance in the example of workers—including builders) in this way: “The spatiality of what we proximally encounter in circumspection can become a theme for circumspection itself...as in building and surveying. Such thematization of the spatiality of the environment is still predominantly an act of circumspection by which space in itself already comes into view in a certain way.”²¹⁶ In this case the environment is being manipulated and used, but is nevertheless considered as space. This is clear in that Heidegger refers to it as “that which we encounter in circumspection,” but at the same time he regards it as thematized space. It is circumspective space. The spatiality of

²¹⁴ Ibid., 68.

²¹⁵ Partial break down will be considered more fully later in the chapter.

²¹⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 112.

the work of the builder is significantly different than the theoretical looking of the scientist (which he proceeds to discuss in the same section). It is a working in and a working on environment, yet this environment is then still considered as space rather than place. Heidegger must make this concession because there is a working with and a working on places that necessitate the conspicuity of place. How would the surveyor or builder work on a place that is inconspicuous? The necessity of the emergence of environment in work becomes a difficulty for Heidegger which he spends little time justifying.

Secondly, it is curious that place disperses in the breakdown of a tool while at the same time place itself is our primordial tool for residing. Are we then to presume that in the face of a present-at-hand entity Dasein ceases in its capacity to dwell? Is Dasein not always enacting the task of residing in the midst of non-circumspective looking at entities? If I am building a desk and my hammer breaks, am I suddenly not a dweller? Am I not being in the world, but taking up space? This seems to belie Dasein as Being-in-the-world. Even when we are inspecting an entity that has become a thing in non-circumspection we are nevertheless still working at or working out this inspection. In the action of non-circumspective looking we are nevertheless still dwelling-in the world circumspectively. To dwell in the world without question requires a tool-place in which to dwell. Place seems to be required, even as we are in the mode of inspection of a present-at-hand thing. Even if places become spaces for inspection, Dasein nevertheless remains dwelling in place. Place, as a tool for dwelling, is even utilized in the act of looking at space as a theme. Place would remain unselfconsciously tethered to Dasein (as the tool for residing during inspection) even as Dasein experiences the emergence of

space encountered in non-circumspection. For instance, to follow Heidegger, in the moment when the tool breaks, the entity then emerges as a present-at-hand thing in space. Yet, Dasein nevertheless remains as Being-in-the-world—still residing. This residing (in the mode of inspection) necessitates a place (as tool) for residing. There is a complex layering of place as tool for residing and space as inspected that is not as easily sorted out as Heidegger seems to assert. Can there remain a space for a hammer-thing at the same time that Dasein resides in the world and utilizes a place for this inspection? Does this then become a space and a place at the same time? Is there a space that can be ascertained for equipment in the same locale as a place as equipment for residing? All of these questions remain unanswered in *Being and Time* and problematic to the space/place dichotomy established in the text. The clarity of the spatiality of equipment becomes unhinged when one attempts to apply it to place as a tool.

In the end, Heidegger's conception of place as fundamentally based upon the concerned dealings of Dasein is a difficult one to configure. Dreyfus contends that issues of spatiality as founded upon Dasein's concerned dealings with the world is a project that Heidegger himself later, in *On Time and Being*, admits does not work. Dreyfus writes, "Later Heidegger accepts that spatiality cannot be grounded directly or indirectly in the individual Dasein's concern about its own being."²¹⁷ And it is of Heidegger's "turning" (*die Kehre*) in his later writings that Edward Casey argues is "very much a (re)turning to Place and associated notions—as much a turning in their direction as toward Being and Language."²¹⁸ Later in this chapter I will briefly consider his work in "The Origin of the

²¹⁷ Hubert L Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 133.

²¹⁸ Edward S Casey, *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 259.

Work of Art” and in the next chapter will consider his concept of place in “The Question Concerning Technology.” These are two of the significant pieces in which place is reconsidered by Heidegger.²¹⁹

Conscious Place in Experience

The problem we have in the conception of place within *Being and Time* is that, almost exclusively, when place is being used, it is inconspicuous. How are we then to find place in the narrative to understand its role in the story of the subject? Is place necessarily lost in circumspection or are there times when place can still emerge as a rich component of experience? Heidegger's conception of entities as ready-to-hand in use provides an adept handling of *why* a primary characteristic of place is that it is most often an unselfconscious aspect of human subjectivity. In his work on the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand modes of entities (and spatiality), we find that place is fated to be veiled. When pushed to its limits, the ultimate consequence of Heidegger's framework is wither the loss of place to space in some of the most vivid aspects of the human experience, or place as veiled in circumspection. A study of place necessitates finding ways places emerge in conscious experience. As I proceed, I will first investigate the way place emerges in experience during moments of breakdown. Above I have argued that even in times of non-circumspective looking, place must remain a tool for residing, as Dasein is nevertheless Being-in-the-world and requires a tool for residing in these moments. With this posture toward place in times of inspection, I will modify Heidegger's argument that place in these situations becomes dimensional space. While seen, the environment remains a tool, and we can have a conscious awareness of the place in which we reside

²¹⁹ For a detailed investigation of place in Heidegger's oeuvre see: Jeff Malpas, *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006).

and have experiences. After considering the appearing of place in breakdown, I will continue beyond Heidegger and develop ways in which places come to the fore which do not necessitate breakdown or the theoretical gaze of the scientist.

Broken Places

Platial dysfunction ruptures the usual task of residing or aspects of that task. The acute awareness of environment during times of the dysfunction of places is elucidated by Malpas, who claims that the only time we come to a state of place-awareness is during flux. He writes, “Places and spaces are themselves disclosed only through the processes that bring change and alteration in their wake—indeed, such places and space are disclosed only in relation to movement, agency, and, one might say, to change.”²²⁰ This is experienced in something as mundane as a leaking roof that disrupts the task of residing. The attention of the subject is turned from the acts of everyday living toward the place that is flawed. When something goes amiss in a place it shifts our attention to the place itself and our awareness becomes acutely focused on the environment. As quickly as the place comes into focus, it fades back out as the dweller’s attention shifts to the task of repair.²²¹

Place breakdown is not always as pedestrian as a drip of water through a ceiling. At times it is catastrophic and communal. One of the most significant examples in our recent past is the devastation of places in the aftermath of the damage of hurricane Katrina. Farrar chronicles the extent of loss stemming from the disaster:

²²⁰ Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 190.

²²¹ Even in modes of disruption, the place remains a tool for dwelling. While I maintain his notion of breakdown and conspicuity, I part here with Heidegger and contend (as argued above) that malfunctioning environments remains a place *and* conspicuous. They do not, by necessity, become space.

In New Orleans alone the storm damaged 134,000 (out of 188,000) occupied housing units, and 68,000 (out of 100,000) available rental units. In fact, the monetary measure of "property loss" doesn't do the storm justice, because in some places the most basic shape of the city was obliterated. Ultimately Katrina impacted nearly 93,000 square miles across 138 parishes and counties, completely destroyed or made uninhabitable 300,000 homes, and created 118 million cubic yards of debris.²²²

Before the flooding and its catastrophic effects, homes, neighborhoods, and the city itself were often not focused upon by its inhabitants. They were simply the tools for residing, fading into the task at hand of day-to-day living. Places in New Orleans and the surrounding areas before the flood were overlooked in the acts of working, raising families, and strolling Bourbon Street. Yet, upon the ruination of workplace, homeplace, and places of recreation, the places themselves were brought to the fore. Places become conspicuous in their lack of usability. Even in the reading of Farrar's piece, we lose a sense of place in the statistics. The significance of the devastated places is overlooked in the recounted statistics. Those thousands of houses are not only a minute part of a grand statistic. Each of them, within the context of the lives of its dwellers, becomes intimately opened up in its ruination.

The appearance of places destroyed explicitly brings place to the fore as described. But there is a more subtle place awareness that occurs in place breakdown, that is the awareness of one's own lived body as place. The lived body, being closest to the subject, is often the furthest from conscious awareness. As we found in the previous

²²² M. E Farrar, "Home/Sick: Memory, Place, and Loss in New Orleans," *Theory & Event* 12, no. 4 (2009).

chapter in considering Husserl's zero-point of orientation, our perceptual posture is horizontal and directed out from the here. Casey, influenced by Husserl writes, "Thus it is by my body—my lived body that I am here. My lived body is the vehicle of the here." Casey continues, "When I felt securely *here* in my living-room chair, I was feeling here not just *in my body* but, more exactly, *as my body*."²²³ I am here—in my body-place. A second aspect of the appearance of place that occurs during place ruptures is that we are suddenly made aware of our bodies as place. In chapter one I discussed that a characteristic of place is that places are often "nested" in other places. The body needs to belong somewhere. It is always a place that needs to be in another. When one's home is broken to the extent that it cannot sustain dwelling, he becomes keenly aware of the body-place. The body is a place that becomes keenly aware of its home-place through habit, memory, and psycho-emotional connection. There is a certain disembodied feel we get when we try to "fit in" to a place that is foreign. The body is itself a moving locale. It is bounded yet nomadic. It always moves with us.

Lost in Place

Heidegger argues that entities come to the fore when the tool is lost. Lostness in place holds sway over the self, bringing place in which he resides into focus. Heidegger writes concerning the lost tool:

In our concerned dealings, however, we not only come up against unusable things within what is ready-to-hand already: we also find things which are missing—which not only are not 'handy' ["handlich"] but are not 'to hand' ["zur Hand"] at all. Again, to miss something in this way amounts to coming across something

²²³ Edward S Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993) 52.

un-ready-to-hand. When we notice what is un-ready-to-hand, that which is ready-to-hand enters the mode of obtrusiveness.²²⁴

For Heidegger, when the hammer is missing an entity becomes conspicuous, appearing to Dasein. However, it is important to realize that in the mode of obtrusiveness (during the experience of a missing the hammer), it is not the hammer that appears as present-at-hand. Instead, it is that which is to-hand before Dasein instead of the hammer. The entity that we do not need, but is nevertheless handy, becomes conspicuous and obtrusive. This example is interestingly when we consider place as equipment for residing. When we become lost, we are in a place that we do not know. While the place that we are in is “handy,” it is not “useful” for us. It gets in the way of our dwelling in familiarity. Ultimately, being lost is an experience of not having the place that we need for the purpose of dwelling at-hand. In this, the focus on the project ceases and the formerly unselfconscious place in which we are lost becomes conspicuous in its obtrusiveness. We are in an unfamiliar place and cannot find the familiar. The unfamiliar place takes center stage.

Reconsidering my story of being lost in the woods of North Central Pennsylvania from chapter one, we find an example of equipment and place. Before realizing I was lost, the place in which I was residing held little attention. It was unselfconsciously resided in. While hiking out away from camp, I was focused on the task at hand. Yet, becoming lost in place got in the way of my project. In a somewhat ironic twist, not knowing where I was granted particular access to where I was. The unfamiliar place became conspicuous in the disruption of action. Trying to return to my camp I realized I did not know in which direction it lay. Suddenly, the surroundings became the focus of

²²⁴ Ibid., 73.

my attention. In Heidegger's terms, this place was obtrusive. Place emerged in an extremely conscious way. I first realized that this place was not the place in which I thought I was. It appeared first as a disoriented massive place. Moments later I began trying to discern my location. In this the particularities of the environment came to the fore. I surveyed rocks, rises, and contours in the landscape. I was trying to reorient myself in place.

As the place began to become familiar again, as I started to realize that I recognized the landscape, I moved more quickly. I began to think about what I would tell my fellow travelers when I returned. I had already begun to lose my grasp of consciously reflected place. Coming fully out of the state of lostness brought me back to an explicit focus on the task at hand. Returning to camp, the place once again fell out of view, it became inconspicuous again, hidden behind the veil of the dwelling project. Naturally, one does not need to be bewildered in a pine forest to have place emerge in this way. The conspicuity of place is evident when lost driving in an unfamiliar city or turned around in a shopping mall. No matter the extent, we can find place when we lose ourselves.

As above in platial breakdown, there is also the awareness of the body-place in lostness. When we become disoriented, the here external to our bodies is unfamiliar. We become intimately aware of the here-place of the body. Husserl's notion of the zero-point of orientation remains helpful as we consider the body in the situation of being lost. He writes, "All worldly things there for me continue to appear to me to be oriented about my phenomenally stationary, resting organism. That is, they are oriented with respect to here and there, left and right, etc., whereby a firm zero of orientation persists, so to speak, as

absolute here.”²²⁵ In lostness we have a sense of how close the *here* of the body is. Even when we do not have a clear conception of our location, we are always already here—in this place. The here of the body reveals a multiplicity of horizontal theres (locations beyond our body). The body engenders the possibility of moving toward a there. Navigation is body relative. When we move north we are moving north *of* where our body is. In lostness this perspectival directionality comes to the fore and we can conceive of our bodies as moving places in ways that they are seldom contemplated.

During the experience of being lost, the subject may also engage in places in memory. In lostness place-memory is accessed. In the initial stage of being lost, the environment rushes in—the place of being lost comes into view. Often, at this point, we turn to maps in our memory. We picture places in our attempt to reorient ourselves. No longer do we unconsciously and even habitually move within a landscape in our acts of dwelling, rather we access places stored in memory. We have a memorialized view of a former familiar place and, in an attempt to find our way, we at once remember the path taken into our unfamiliar territory, while also trying to match the map in memory with the immediate surrounding landscape. The lost person attempts to coordinate two places: the place in which her bodily being resides, and the place in which it had resided. Being lost brings to the fore not only the place that we are lost within, but also places remembered. When one becomes hopelessly lost he may find solace in remembering familiar dwelling places. The hiker lost in the woods will often engage in place-memory and find a deep connection to places that are familiar and at-home in an attempt at finding comfort. Place, memory, and experience will be considered more fully later in this chapter and will be given significant attention in chapter five on place and temporality. Here, in the context

²²⁵ As quoted in Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, n. 332.

of place breakdown and lostness, we find place becoming conspicuous not only in the external environment, but also in the conscious experience of place in memory.

In his haunting psychological thriller *Gerry*, Gus Van Sant explores the human experience of lostness. The film commences with two twenty-somethings (each refers to the other as Gerry) embarking on a hike in the wilderness. After a long single shot of the two men driving on a dusty road, they arrive at a trailhead. Finding the trail, they set off on a brisk run, turning down a side trail to avoid others hiking. They are a pair of seasoned outdoorsmen at ease within their environments. Stopping to catch their breath, they look up to realize they are completely disoriented in the desert. In that moment, Van Sant is able to turn the focus of the young men (and the viewer) from the act of hiking to the landscape, from action to place. The place is opened for the viewer to participate in the emergence of place within the context of being lost. Silently, the protagonists and the viewer slowly begin to realize the severity of their unfamiliarity. The movie unfolds as the men attempt to replace themselves into familiarity.

Astutely, Van Sant draws on each of the themes delineated above in the appearing of place in the experience of being lost. First, there is the appearance of place in the sudden awareness of unfamiliarity. The disorientation ruptures the action aspect of the narrative and draws the environment into view. When the hikers are first lost, Van Sant portrays initial place awareness by means of a large panned out shot of the barren and seemingly homogeneous desert. Only after this does he draw the camera close in to the bodies of the travelers localizing the only known place—the here of their bodies. The horizon then opens out from the zero-point into the unknown landscape. Unfolding the psychological terror of being lost in place, the men move about, most often slowly—only

to further disorient themselves. As desperation sets in, the men kneel to the earth and begin to draw maps of the landscape in an attempt to orient the there of the trail with the here of their bodies. In a subtle transition, the director moves the viewer into the minds of each traveler. Van Sant cuts to grainy, unsteady shots of the journey into the lost place. Their focus is cast on the memory of the places through which they had come to the place within which they are.

Throughout the film, the viewer is overcome with a focus on environment through spatially large and temporally long shots. For nearly the entirety of the 103-minute film there is virtually no action except for walking in place. In contrast to action-oriented films, in this film place is in charge—it drives the plot. The film is established in place. The hopeless condition of being lost finds its genesis in the place veiled by movement. Van Sant draws the viewer into the experience of being lost and the emergence of place in unfamiliar landscapes. He exhibits the access of mental place and the body as zero-point of orientation.

Ergonomics of Place

We can also find place becoming conspicuous in a consideration of ergonomics of place. At times the subject finds herself physically unfit for the place at hand, making the place consciously evident. Just as much as we can know we are lost in place, most often conjured through the sense of sight, we can also become focused on place when we do not “fit” in a place. To get into this notion of fleshy unfit, I turn to a piece by Alphonso Lingus. Our home-bed is most often a place of comfort, rest, and at times, the erotic. We slip into our own places—losing consciousness of place to at-homeness. Lingus writes:

My bed was, the first night, crisp and brittle, foreign; little by little it has become intimate. It has acquired a very decided and very obvious fleshy texture; as I lie enveloped with it I no longer distinguish where my body leaves off and where an alien surface begins. At first I had that very vivid awareness of these sheets touching me, an alien surface in contact with the frontiers of myself. Little by little, this frontier fades, obliterates itself, and becomes indefinite. The intimacy of the flesh diffuses throughout the whole bed sheet, finally into the bed itself, and the room also by a sort of contagion. They have become incorporated.²²⁶

Yet, Lingus juxtaposes the familiarity of one's own bed with the experience of being in a place with which one is unaccustomed. Lingus turns to investigate the phenomenon of being in an unfamiliar place that produces an uneasiness. He continues:

Obviously, this nausea is not aroused by something merely accidental, like their smelling, or being stained. Because, after all, we are not nauseated in sleeping in our own bed sheets even after they have become quite dirty...This nausea is the flesh's own revolt against what is not of itself; the flesh knows its own. One violates the house of another like one violates a virgin.²²⁷

Lingus explains our violation of another place, but in this we can understand a reciprocal transgression. At once we are both violators and violated. We feel the unfit nature of a new and different bed. While it is Lingus's intent to elucidate the existential experience of being in another bed, this notion of unfit and the place of the body manifest the appearance of place when the flesh does not conform to the environment. We can recall

²²⁶ As quoted in Richard Lang, "Phenomenology of Transition," in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer, eds., (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co., 2000), 203.

²²⁷ Ibid.

times, having to sleep somewhere else, when we become aware of the place of the bed. It arises in discomfort or unfamiliarity. At home, lying beside my wife, sleeping is familiar and my mind is not turned toward the bed-place. But away from the familiarity, I encounter the bed which is not my own. This is decidedly not a situation based in the sight of place, but rather I have a deeply felt tactile awareness of the place in which I reside. My body is out of place and the place becomes vividly *there* in its felt unfamiliarity.

There is a further sense of place in which places push back on us. In everyday experience the body is free to move about its environment, making place inconspicuous. The built environment is made to fit our bodies. The proficient architect and design engineer shape places and things in place that are kinesthetically unnoticed. But when places do not conform to our bodies they become evident in their resistance. This is apparent in things made and used. Interestingly, right now I sit in a local park at a picnic table writing. Well-made furnishings will be ones that our bodies “melt” into; their dimensions fit the average-sized person. In such a situation we do not notice that the table is in conformity to our bodies. Yet, this table at which I sit currently has been built with uncommon dimensions. The space between the bench and the tabletop is disproportionate to my body, causing me to slouch. The bench is lower to the ground than most others. When I first entered the place of this table it was vividly perceived because of its awkward proportions. But the longer I stay, the more my body conforms to it. The bench has faded now and I focus on writing. My body has adapted to the unfitness of the place. The body can be malleable in its interface with its place. Places, once unfit, can become so familiar that they become habitually sedimented in the experience of the body in place.

Over time, I may become so accustomed to this table that others, once more suited to my body, may feel foreign and unsuitable—making these previously inconspicuous places conspicuous in experience.

Places can have a way of pushing back on us, calling us to acknowledge them consciously. This call is not always one of adversity, but in ways it can be a dance between our bodies and the unfit places that draws delight and focus. It can be this way with wild places. For many, this unfitness between body and environment is sought when we go into the wild. As Casey writes, “The sensuous surface is an aspect of the surrounding array that stands out in our first encounter with a particular wild place. The surface is the moment of impingement, what my sensing body first notices.”²²⁸ The path draws our focus through its uneven downhill camber. Jutting roots require care in movement. Wild places come to the fore in the difference between flesh and place. In the commodification of wild places there is an effort to thwart this difference. Roads are built, paths are paved, and handrails are erected. This is done to overcome the way nature pushes back on our bodies. While the smoothing out of resistance is meant to grant access to place, these acts of manipulating the environment have a tendency to veil place. Resistance necessitates a careful navigation that requires attention to place. The ease of interface between body and place once again creates a veil, even just in part—losing aspects of place to the focus on moving and acting. In this, place again becomes a tool for residing. Habitual movement replaces a navigation that required careful, conscious effort. The once conspicuous wild place once again tends toward inconspicuity.

Obstinacy of Place

²²⁸ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 209.

Heidegger's third and final conception of the emergence of the ready-to-hand tool is when an entity disrupts our projects by physically blocking our work. In this, entities become obstinate. Heidegger claims that this third way is neither when something is unusable nor missing, but something "stands in the way' of our concern. That to which our concern refuses to turn, that for which it has 'no time', is something un-ready-to-hand in the manner of what does not belong here, or has not as yet been attended to."²²⁹ This is experienced in the emergence of place as unexpected and inconvenient. This obstinacy can be established by considering the historic drive westward across the frontier. Moving across an open plain, the travelers encounter a wide canyon cut deep by a river. Standing on the edge of the scar in the earth both the ravine and what lies beyond become obstinately evident—in plain view—as the ravine-place disrupts the goal of the venture.

The heightened sense of place in obstinacy has to do with a characteristic of place that nurtures its often-veiled existence. Chapter one outlines how places have bleeding boundaries, that is, they move in and out of each other in a way that manifests their porous nature. We easily lose attention to place in its bleeding nature because it regularly does not require self-conscious reflection to move from one place into another. There is a continuity between places routinely moved through unnoticed. Urban planning utilizes this bleeding nature of place to create platial flow. The nearly seamless transitions facilitate the veiling of place. At times this unselfconscious movement through places is interrupted through a rupture in the continuity of place.

Place Awareness Beyond Dysfunction

Until this point I have investigated place as it emerges in breakdown, lostness, unfitness, and interruption. These examples of place becoming conspicuous are the extent

²²⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 73.

to which place becomes apparent for Heidegger in his consideration of entities.²³⁰ Each example of platial dysfunction raises the role of place in human experience to attention, bringing what is veiled out of the background. They create ways of seeing the all-important role of place in the life of the subject while intensifying Ricoeur's oversight of place in his narrative identity theory of the subject. Yet, it would be unfortunate if place came to the fore only in breakdown. Not all place-awareness necessitates the devastating or vexing. There remains opportunity for the unveiling of place that is productive and even enjoyable. Here we will move beyond Heidegger's moments of platial breakdown in *Being and Time* for an examination of the appearing of place in other ways. Although there are several ways to engage this notion of place-appearance, I will limit myself to two: the platial gaze and place making.

The Platial Gaze

As mentioned above, Heidegger does not hold fast through the entire body of his philosophical endeavors exclusively to the place/space framework as proffered in *Being and Time*. Interestingly, in his later work he modifies his earlier conception of place. In "The Origin of the Work of Art," Heidegger configures a new sense of place that his earlier work did not explore. Although it is often considered an essay concerning art and truth (*alethea*), it is as much (if not more so) a meditation on place and the locale of art. Here he maintains a place for equipment (the site of circumspective engagement in the world), but he also indicates a different place for the work of art. In *Being and Time* there were two types of entities that Heidegger considered: Dasein and all other entities in the world. However, in "The Origin of the Work of Art" Heidegger is interested in art as a

²³⁰ Ergonomics and unfitness are not explicitly considered as its own mode for Heidegger in the breakdown of the tool.

third category for entities. “The work is not a piece of equipment that is fitted out in addition with an aesthetic value that adheres to it. The work is no more anything of the kind than the bare thing is a piece of equipment that merely lacks the specific equipment characteristics of usefulness and being made.”²³¹

This third category—the work of art—is interesting as we consider the aesthetic aspect of place and its appearing in experience. Place may still fit into the category of tool for residing, but it can also be considered in other ways. In place as a work of art (within the aesthetic gaze) we find place emerging out of the unselfconscious realm into explicit awareness in human experience.²³² And this is not far from Heidegger’s notion of the place that he calls the “temple-work” in “The Origin of the Work of Art.” He makes the turn in his exploration of the built place of the temple as a work of art that enacts the transition of places from useful tools to aesthetic landscapes. Whether standing on a mountain viewing the valley below or within a cityscape taking in the surrounding architectural built-places, the places on which we reflect become explicitly seen before us. As Casey writes, “My body is an insistent interloper...it transforms the kaleidoscopic presentations of the surrounding array into a readable text of qualities and forms.”²³³ In the aesthetic gaze on places, natural and built, one directs her intentionality outward toward the place. Heidegger begins with the temple. He explains, “The temple-work that first fits together and at the same time gathers around itself the unity of those paths and

²³¹ Martin Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1972), 164.

²³² One might here raise the question: does a work of art require an artist? This query could open a further philosophical work on theistic notions of creation of place (see Casey *Getting Back into Place* pp. 18-19, 43-45 for a discussion of creation narratives and place). However either considered as a place crafted by a transcendent deity, a built place shaped by human hands, or place as “made” by the geo-scientific effects of erosion and ruptures, places can be considered as “made” and “shaped” into a work by a force enacted upon them.

²³³ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 205.

relations in which birth and death, disaster and blessing, victory and disgrace, endurance and decline acquire the shape of destiny for human being.”²³⁴ The temple as built place resists fading because it is a work. The temple as place maintains a task at hand. It gathers the multi-form experiences of humans and unifies them in the destiny of the gatherers at the temple. The temple is art and also a sort of tool. But it is a tool that does not become inconspicuous in its use.

Heidegger continues to describe what makes the temple (and other pieces) a work of art and how it differs from a tool. First, the work of art is “consecrated”²³⁵ by being set up. Heidegger uses this religious terminology not because it is a temple to a god, but rather because the work of art itself is to be made “holy,” set apart from the mundane entities that have been regarded as tools. It is different. The art is sacramental for Heidegger. He asserts that the work is set up because “the work, in its work-being, demands it.”²³⁶ The beauty of the work mandates that it become separate from other things. While set apart from the tool, nevertheless, the art does not lose an aesthetic utility. We are told that the work opens a world where we can dwell in “the overtness of beings.”²³⁷ Secondly, while the tool causes its matter to “disappear into usefulness...in contrast the temple-work, in setting up a world, does not cause the material to disappear, but rather causes it to come forth for the very first time.”²³⁸ Place, as a work of art, coincides with Heidegger's characteristics of the work-place. Places of beauty and wonder, terror and the sublime draw the gaze toward them. In their aesthetic utility they do not fade into dimensionality, but rather remain as places and hold the attentive viewer.

²³⁴ Heidegger, “The Origin of the Work of Art,” 167.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*, 169.

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*, 170.

²³⁸ *Ibid.*, 171.

A landscape or cityscape can be so colossal or beautiful that it demands the attention of the viewer. While the “matter” (following Heidegger's term in “The Origin of the Work of Art”) fades when place is a mere tool for residing, the place that is looked upon aesthetically remains a place. The matter of the place as tool for residing fades into the background, the matter of place—the place itself—comes forth in the aesthetic gaze.

The appearing of place before the aesthetic gaze is at times purposefully pursued and taken in by a sightseer. It can also happen by surprise. We can be taken in, or perhaps better, we are taken out of our everyday dwelling and we become aware of a conspicuous place. Experiencing the gaze toward place often comes upon the subject when his involvement in abiding is disrupted. His focus on the task at hand is assaulted and halted by a place. Robert Mugeraur recounts the experiences of settlers traveling west on the Oregon Trail. Having moved through semi-arid flatlands, they were astounded by the opening of the places into which they moved. They experienced the “shock of the difference” in landscape and were drawn into the contemplation of place. Traveler John Bidwell wrote in 1851: “The scenery of the surrounding country became beautifully grand and picturesque—[the bluffs] were worn in such a manner by the storm of unnumbered seasons, that they really counterfeited the lofty spires, towering edifices, spacious domes, and in fine all the beautiful mansions of cities.”²³⁹ The travelers were taken aback by the change in landscape. However it is not the same dismay accompanied with the previous example of a westward journey that is halted by the ravine cutting across their path. Instead, it is a delightful surprise, which draws the attention from the repetitious lulling plains to the grandeur of the bluffs rising all around them. The

²³⁹ Robert Mugeraur, “Language and the Emergence of Environment,” in *Dwelling. Place and Environment*, ed. David Seamon and Mugeraur (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 54.

attention is once again drawn from the journey to place in a way that surprises and delights.²⁴⁰

A final mode of the appearance of place in experience is found in a consideration of building and cultivation. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger writes about a circumspective engagement with the world in terms of building and surveying.²⁴¹ Oddly, even here, while this is juxtaposed with the sight of those intuiting place formally, Heidegger maintains that this circumspective looking remains a looking which engenders space rather than place. This is inconsistent of Heidegger.²⁴² The gaze of the builder as craftsman is not the activity of one who measures off space and considers it in a barren coordinate system. Rather than being lost as a tool or inspected as space, the emerging built-places come forth. It is similar with the act of cultivating places. The garden in my backyard is not only a space measured out (although that may be how it began), instead the garden is an intimate site wherein the place of the raised bed meets our eyes, our hands, our noses, our imaginations, and ultimately our mouths through its fruits.

Paul Ricoeur's narrative identity of the subject has missed a key aspect in the narrative of the subject. The activities of dwelling have furnished a shroud over place in such a way that place's hiddenness is a primary characteristic in the life of the subject. Heidegger's rich explanation of the ready-to-hand and present-at-hand modes of entities has granted a framework to elucidate why place is often inconspicuous in the narrative. Yet, it is also clear that there are significant moments of place's appearance. The veiled

²⁴⁰ Finding place by surprise is not limited to the grandeur of a landscape, but can also be encountered in the devastation of decay. This also disrupts our action. Place can also be found in something like moving from a well-kept neighborhood into a rundown section of town.

²⁴¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 112.

²⁴² Again, here Heidegger also seems to change his view on building and place. See his work "Building Dwelling Thinking," in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1972), 347-363.

nature of place is not a necessity. Instead, place is found not only in times of tragedy, but also in the multiform experiences including the platial gaze, building, and ergonomic unfitness. This chapter has attempted a descriptive approach to the veil of place and environment's appearing in the life of the subject. From here I will turn toward the appearing of place in the literature of agrarian poet and novelist Wendell Berry as a way to elucidate the role of place in the life of the subject.

Chapter Four **Place and Wendell Berry's Membership**

To dwell means to belong to a certain place.
Christian Norberg-Schulz, *The Concept of Dwelling*

In the previous chapters I considered the ways in which place is covered over through the veil of action. I also considered ways in which place can emerge from its hiddenness into the explicit awareness of the subject. The veiled nature of place creates a significant difficulty for the remainder of this work. Place as hidden makes it arduous to explore place's role in the development of the narrative of the self. The appearing of place is difficult to discover through personal reflection, as it is most often unselfconsciously encountered in experience and it is difficult to encapsulate the immense role of place through the recounting of a narrative which spans a lifetime. Part of the human condition, then, is that we do not go about the world "thinking about place." We can of course at times turn our attention toward place and make observations—but this observational work has a way of missing life in its everydayness. It overlooks the way place appears in mundane experience in the life world.

To further study the appearance of place in experience, and particularly the role of place in the life of the subject, I will turn my eyes away from the daily life world and toward the world of the text. In the tradition of many of the key philosophers of place, the following two chapters will utilize literature as a way to see place's unfolding. While Malpas turns to Proust, Casey to Homer, and Seamon to Moberg, I will consider an author more contemporary and local. In the next two chapters I will utilize a reading of the fiction of Wendell Berry to investigate the role of place in experience and narrative.

Berry was born in 1934 in Henry County, Kentucky into an agrarian community. Although his father was an attorney, his grandfather was a farmer, and Berry was raised amidst the life of the farm. After graduate school and teaching literature for a number of years, Berry returned home to take up farming and writing full time. Berry's work is prolific. He is the writer of fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. His work is comprised of twenty-five non-fiction books, sixteen volumes of poems, eight novels, and thirty-two short stories. He is also lauded as an educator and activist. Berry was awarded the 2010 National Medal of Arts and National Humanities Medal.

Berry's fiction revolves around the life of Port William, an elaborate world parallel to his own town of Port Royal, Kentucky. The narrative of the chronicles of Port William begin in 1888, in a world of steam boats and horse drawn buggies, and finds its culmination in 2001 in a world of Gameboys and creeping suburbs. Berry crafted the stories of Port William while at the same time working out his thoughts throughout his non-fiction, interviews, and speaking engagements. Because of the simultaneity of his crafting of fiction and non-fiction, his non-fiction can serve as a kind of commentary to his chronicles of Port William.

While Ricoeur yields place to emplotment, Berry's fiction gives preference to place. His work is at first an epic story dedicated to a place and only then about the people and the events occurring therein. Few authors have ever been able to explore the questions concerning place and experience with such depth and intimacy.²⁴³ Port William informs and transforms the lives of those within it. Berry explains that his life's work is developed in response to being in his home-place, seeing historic destruction, and asking: "What *is* this place? What is in it? What is its nature? What must I do?"²⁴⁴ His answers to these questions (in fiction, non-fiction, and poetry) provide rich insights into the investigation of place and human experience. His work is at once descriptive and prescriptive, psychological and ethical. Berry's work grants access to a phenomenological investigation of the human experience in place in clear and insightful ways.

In this chapter I will explore Berry's conception of membership as found in the Port William chronicles. Membership is instructive for the way in which he understands the human-place relationship. I will discuss the connection of humans and place, the way in which each affects the other, and the role of choice in the human-place relationship. The chapter following will be an inquiry into the role of memory and its connection to the place-based membership of Port William. Although I have a deep respect for Mr. Berry and his work as an author, I will note here that I do not align with every aspect of Berry's ethic or cohesive vision of life. Further, it must be noted that there is a difficulty in examining his work. Berry's work is exclusively about place from a rural

²⁴³ Many point to the similarities of Berry to Faulkner and his creation of Yoknapatawpha County, Mississippi as a model for Berry's own work. It is arguable that Berry's richness and certainly his breadth rivals that of Faulkner.

²⁴⁴ Wendell Berry, "That Native Hill," in *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 22.

perspective. Many of his ideas could be translated into the urban life, but that work will not be taken up here. Nevertheless, his work remains helpful as a portal into the appearing of place in human experience and the affect that place has on the life of the self.

Berry's texts are first and foremost about place, its appearance in the lives of its characters, and the effects on their lives of their shared experience in place. As a point of entry into Berry's work, I will consider the ways in which Berry utilizes antagonists and protagonists in his narratives to emphasize the crucial role of place in a subject's experience. Berry valorizes certain characters within his works and draws out their heroic nature by employing others as foils. Before beginning, it is worth noting that Berry's notion of the antagonist is to be approached carefully. Berry, for the most part, does not ultimately demonize the antagonist. We will find that the antagonist is always seen with pity—a character who, while outside of the fold, embodying frameworks differing from the heroes, is rendered opportunity for redemption. In his critique of the contemporary mindset, Berry endeavors to empower his readers to see that the life of the antagonist is in fact the common path of our current cultural climate. His portrayal will exhibit that the foundational issue for the antagonists is their misunderstanding of place and the role it plays in the life of the self. They are set up ultimately as people in need of reclamation and often the redemption is offered through the heroic characters.

Wheeler Catlett is a character that emerges from many of the tales of the Port William chronicles. He is deeply rooted in the town. Wheeler is also very close to Berry. Reading Berry's own life into the narratives of Port William, we find that Wheeler's character is quite similar to what we know of Berry's father. Wheeler's son Andy Catlett,

the protagonist of many tales and the narrator of several others, encapsulates, in several ways, the life of the author. Wheeler Catlett is peculiar to the Port William of his time. Unlike many of the agrarians living out their vocations on farms, Catlett left Port William to be educated as an attorney outside of the confines of the rural Kentucky community. He represents a transition in the norms of the town from a community that highly valued staying put, into one in which “going” becomes a very real possibility. Beginning with Wheeler, the leaving of place becomes not only a possibility, but also a choice that is valorized for many. In *Remembering*, Berry describes the pilgrimage of Wheeler away from his home place of Port William to attend college. Being an ambitious student he takes a job working for a politician vying for a position in Congress, while also attending law school. The future is opened for the ambitious young attorney through a job offer in Chicago. Having considered the opportunity, Wheeler, to the disgust of his mentor, chooses to return to a small-time job as an attorney in Hargrave, the county seat of Port William. In this decision, Catlett returns to Port William and his family farm to become the preserver of the place and advocate of the membership of Port William.

This role of preserver emerges in several different pieces of Berry’s writing. Catlett remains one of the most noted heroes of the community as he stands with his neighbors against antagonists that enter the narratives. Many of the antagonists in Berry’s work are people who forsake the life of the agrarian for the sake of the city and the illusory ease of life beyond the dirt. Others enter Port William from without. Perhaps the most telling of these arrives during Wheeler’s representation of his neighbor, friend, and father figure Old Jack Beechum after his death, in “It Wasn't Me.” Old Jack is, in many senses, the quintessential farmer of Port William. He has a deep care for his land, a love of those

around him, and an indomitable work ethic. Further, he has a longing to stay where he is. There comes a time when the aging farmer can no longer remain in his place, and he makes his first and his last move to a hotel for aging widowers. In an act of care for Jack and his land, Wheeler helps to find “good people” to reside on the farm to cultivate it. Here we find the entrance of Elton and Mary Penn. The Penns are in many ways outsiders of the community of Port William. Elton is described as a half-orphan, raised by his mother and abusive stepfather. He and Mary run away to be married. The marriage to Elton alienates Mary from her family. Working as tenants on Elton’s mother’s land, Berry explains: “Mary and Elton began their life together as outcasts, their very being recognized only by themselves.”²⁴⁵ In an act of hospitality by Wheeler, they are invited into the community as tenant farmers Old Jack Beechum’s farm. Old Jack develops a deep care for this couple and an admiration for their strong work ethic. They were “good, they were Old Jack's kind, they listened to him and cared about him, they were the chief pleasure of his final years.”²⁴⁶ In subsequent stories of Port William, Elton Penn will develop to be a foundational character.

Just before his passing, Old Jack makes it clear to Wheeler that he desires his land to be sold to the Penns for half the price of its market worth. But in an unfortunate turn, this last request was not legally documented. Thus we find the entrance of the first antagonists: Beechum’s daughter Clara, who has left Port William for a life in the city, and her husband Glad Pettit who is a city banker whom Old Jack despised. On her return Berry writes, “No one would know from looking at her that Clara ever rode into Hargrave

²⁴⁵ Wendell Berry, “A Place in Time: Some Chapters of a Telling Story,” <http://hudsonreview.com/new/issues/81/a-place-in-time-some-chapters-of-a-telling-story>.

²⁴⁶ Wendell Berry, “It Wasn’t Me,” in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 267.

behind a team of mules. She looks like a stranger—which, Wheeler guesses, is how she means to look.”²⁴⁷ Seeing an opportunity to turn the place into profit, they are insistent on selling the land. The couple refuses to honor Beechum's last wishes and they put the land up for auction. Nervously, and with the urging of Wheeler, Elton bids beyond his means and purchases the land.

This story is significant in Berry’s conception of the appearing of and experience with place in the life of the subject. One of the primary motifs of Berry’s work is the theme of membership. Membership is what holds together and impels nearly every aspect of his fiction, non-fiction, and poetry. J. Matthew Bonzo and Michael R. Stevens explain Berry’s notion of membership in *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life*. They write, “In Berry’s fiction, the ‘qualifications’ of membership in the community seem to have much to do with taking care of one’s own place and caring about the well being of other people’s places.”²⁴⁸ Although the authors represent many aspects of Berry’s work correctly, this explanation of membership does not represent Berry’s conception accurately. While membership today has been diluted to have the ability to represent any gathering of people with a common purpose,²⁴⁹ Berry is endeavoring to radicalize the concept of membership. For him, membership is not only a gathering of people with common purpose. It also has everything to do with place. The commentators' error is that their focus on place in the Berrian conception of the world is a concentration on care for place (one’s own and others'). Although this gets closer to Berry's own view in contrast to

²⁴⁷ Wendell Berry, “It Wasn't Me,” in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 267.

²⁴⁸ J. Matthew Bonzo, *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life: A Reader's Guide* (Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos Press, 2008), 70.

²⁴⁹ Many examples of membership today are far from being place-based. We only need to consider credit card companies and web communities that consider those who have “signed up” as members.

a standard definition of the term, it does not go far enough. Berry extends the relationship of person with place beyond the point of care. Berry conceives of place as an integral aspect of membership. For Berry, place is not simply a site that gathers people in membership and calls for care. It is also part of the membership. Or as Dresser points out, for Berry, “The land is a character in itself.”²⁵⁰ Berry elaborates this in his essay “Conservation and Local Community”:

In talking about health, we have thus begun to talk about community. But we must take care to see how this standard of health enlarges and clarifies the idea of community. If we speak of a *healthy* community, we cannot speak of a community that is only human. We are talking about a neighborhood of humans in a place, plus the place itself: its soil, its water, [and] its air.²⁵¹

Here Berry expresses that the community (or membership) encapsulates those abiding in the membership as well as the place of this abiding. Place then is not simply the site of membership that requires care, as Bonzo and Stevens would have us think. Instead, place itself is a member.

Further, place is the only member that cannot leave. It is primary and is at once the progenitor of membership and the indicator of the health of the community.²⁵² Berry will disallow any attempt to relegate place to a gathering site or even to a locale of intimacy and care. Being in place appears time and again as the core of being human for Berry. To be healthy is to be within membership and to understand the notion of membership as being with others in the land—bearing co-membership with place. He writes, “If the

²⁵⁰ N. Dresser, “Cultivating Wilderness: The Place of Land in the Fiction of Ed Abbey and Wendell Berry,” *Growth and Change* 26, no. 3 (1995): 352.

²⁵¹ Wendell Berry, “Conservation and Local Community,” in *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 202.

²⁵² Each of these aspects of place will be addressed later in this work.

place is well preserved, its entire membership, natural and human, is present in it, and if the human economy is in practical harmony with the nature of the place, then the community is healthy.”²⁵³ In Berry’s work there is a triadic conception of membership, indicated in the passages above. There are three members: oneself, the other, and place. For membership to be authentic it necessarily contains each of these in harmonious relationships. He writes, “If the word *community* is to mean or amount to anything, it must refer to a place...and its people. It must refer to a placed people.”²⁵⁴

Although membership necessitates being-with others and being-in the land, it does not find its completion through simply being-with and being-in. Berry's notion of membership is not fully manifested in just any interaction of community (human, natural, and platial), but rather community expressed in what Berry considers “healthy ways” (as indicated above). While his work may be read as an environmentalist/agrarian/localist ethic, the ethic begins in the way humans engage with place. As we will see throughout this chapter, the way a human member understands place in experience will be indicative of his status regarding membership. Whether or not the character is receptive to place as a member will determine membership and affect his or her posture toward place. It is not enough to simply be in place, but one's understanding of and being *toward* place is critical for Berry. The author is consistently describing ways that people are able to understand a relationship *with* place and *see* place as a co-member. He writes, “If one preserves the consciousness of the world, is faithful enough and graced enough, and pays enough attention, then there will be times when this world reveals itself.”²⁵⁵ And in “A

²⁵³ Berry, “Conservation and Local Community,” 202.

²⁵⁴ Wendell Berry, “Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community,” in *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 178.

²⁵⁵ Wendell Berry, *Harlan Hubbard: Life and Work* (University Press of Kentucky, 1997), 41.

Native Hill,” his own partial autobiography, he explains his experience with the presentation of place upon his return to his homeland: “I began to *see* the place with a new clarity and a new understanding and seriousness. Before coming back I had been unwilling to allow the possibility—which one of my friends insisted—that I already knew this place as well as I ever would.” He continues:

I walked over it, looking, listening, smelling, touching, alive to it as never before...And so what has become the usual order of things reversed itself with me; my mind became the root of my life rather than its sublimation. I came to see myself as growing out of the earth like the other native animals and plants. I saw my body and my daily motions as brief coherences and articulations of the energy of the place, which would fall back into it like leaves in autumn.²⁵⁶

In his rejoicing, Berry came to understand place in a new way. Through a multi-sensory encounter with the place, upon his return to rural Kentucky, Berry encounters what is “essentially *given*...that which appears as such.”²⁵⁷ While the protagonists in the Port William chronicles encounter place in this way, the antagonists will have a different understanding of place.

Self, other, and place are always held together, in care, by work. Toil consummates and coheres the membership. Hands in the soil, one encounters the earth in a significantly intimate fashion. Berry has a way of exhibiting the nature of the work of the membership and the work that coheres the members. How is it that the work itself does this? What is the nature of work which brings forth self, other, and place into a consummated whole? In “Building Dwelling Thinking,” Heidegger offers an intriguing etymological

²⁵⁶ Berry, “That Native Hill,” 7.

²⁵⁷ Edmund Husserl, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*, trans. William Ralph Boyce Gibson (New York, Collier Books, 1962), 240.

investigation into the relationship of people and place. Heidegger instructs us that *bauen* (the German for building) when related back to the Old High German, *buan*, means to dwell. He writes, “The proper meaning of the verb *bauen*, namely to dwell, has been lost on us. But a covert trace of it has been preserved in the German word *Nachbar*, neighbor.”²⁵⁸ He establishes building as dwelling and this building/dwelling is then connected to *Nachbar* or *Nachgebauer*—near dwellers. He further moves to connect *bauen* (through *bauen*→*buan*→*bhu*→*beo*) to *bin*, that is, “to be.”²⁵⁹ Through language, Heidegger has set the stage for Berry’s notion of the triune membership: to be is to dwell (in place) with one another. Heidegger continues to consider work, place, and the dwelling: “The old word *bauen*, which says that man is insofar as he dwells, this word *bauen*, however, also means at the same time to cherish and protect, to preserve and care for, specifically to till the soil, to cultivate the vine.”²⁶⁰ As he draws out the essences of the words, he arrives at care and cultivation. Further, to cultivate, from the Latin root *colere*, is to care for.

Heidegger's work with language is helpful in that it exhibits the development of the meaning of the words over time. Although some might accuse Heidegger of etymological contortions to arrive at his conclusions, it is quite useful to show that even through etymology, self, other, and place can be drawn together in such a way that they are interwoven into one another’s meanings. To build in and cultivate places is dwelling. Dwelling is done with neighbors or near-dwellers. And dwelling in place has a qualitative

²⁵⁸ Martin Heidegger, “Building Dwelling Thinking,” in *Basic writings: from Being and time (1927) to The task of thinking (1964)*, ed. David Farrell Krell (HarperCollins, 1993), 348-349.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 349.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

tone. To truly dwell, to truly be in place, is to dwell in such a way as to care for that place together with one's neighbors.

Life in Port William is caught up in partnerships of people in place. A significant component of the membership is the shared work in place. In an earlier story of the Penns, Berry describes the life Mary Penn experienced in a different place (her old home) with the life she finds after moving to Port William. He writes, “In the world that Mary Penn had given up, a place of far larger and richer farms, work was sometimes exchanged, but the families were conscious of themselves in a way that set them apart from one another. Here, in this new world, neighbors were always working together.” He continues, “It was an old community. They all had worked together a long time. They all knew what each one was good at. When they worked together, not much needed to be explained.”²⁶¹ In her previous community, work was exchanged only when absolutely necessary—the people of the region remained set apart, coming together only in times of need. The work in Port William was different. Co-laboring was a way of life. It was seen as a good in itself. In the communal work of the land in Port William, there is a transformation of the young Mary Penn: “Slowly she learned to imagine where she was...Now she thought of herself as belonging there, not just because of her marriage to Elton but also because of the economy that the two of them have made around themselves and with their neighbors. She has learned to think of herself as living and working at the center of a wonderful provisioning.”²⁶² We find the fusion of people and place through the commonwealth created in work. Work creates, strengthens, and holds

²⁶¹ Berry, “It Wasn't Me,” 200.

²⁶² *Ibid.*, 200-201.

the bonds of self to other. Work in Port William is associated with, but never defined by utility. Berry recounts the harvest of tobacco in “That Distant Land”:

We had a big crew that year—eight men working everyday: Jarrat and Burley and Nathan Coulter, Arthur and Martin Rowenberry, Elton Penn, Danny Branch, and me. Hannah Coulter and Mary Penn and Lyda Branch kept us fed and helped with the hauling and housing. And Nathan and Hannah's and the Penn's children were with us until school started, and then on Saturdays. We worked back and forth among various farms as the successive plantings became ready for harvest.²⁶³

In this piece we see the people brought together in working the land by necessity. Yet, it is a necessity planned into the planting. Berry makes it clear that the plantings were successive, that is, they planned for and expected to work the fields together. Within this necessity of working together, Berry insists that, “The members of a community cohere on the basis of their recognized need for one another, a need that is in many ways practical but never utilitarian.”²⁶⁴ While useful to one another, the members never exploit those relationships—one member is never “used” by another. It is not only the work of the fields, shared experience, and need for one another that strengthen the bonds of the community, but also it is what happens during those times. The labor of agriculture creates space for fellowship. As Berry writes in his essay “Does Community Have Value?”: “Their work was mingled with amusement. At times it *was* their amusement. Talk was very important: They worked together and talked; they saw each other in Port Royal on Saturday and talked; on Sunday morning they went to church early and stood

²⁶³ Wendell Berry, “That Distant Land,” in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 314.

²⁶⁴ Wendell Berry, “The Purpose of a Coherent Community,” in *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays* (ReadHowYouWant.com, 2010), 79.

around and talked.”²⁶⁵ Work provides cohesion to the people of the membership through necessity, shared experience, and fellowship.

The work of the land does not only connect the human members together through time spent and knowledge shared. It also binds the self with the land. Berry asserts clearly in his essay “People, Land, and Community,” “People are joined to the land by work.”²⁶⁶ Berry's characters are bound with the land as they grant meaning to the place through the careful tending of the place. As Lang deftly explains, “The labor of my caretaking turns this place into a home, into a place that addresses me as familiar, as belonging to me.”²⁶⁷ The work of the land is not simply effectual in its process of creating fruits of the earth. It is a work that bears the fruit of belonging. The tending to the land inscribes on the land a meaning of the relationship of place and person. It transforms place into an intimate site. As hands dig into the soil, the flesh is entangled with the place. Labor transforms landscape into a farm. Care-filled work transforms the fields into the home-place of the farmer. Yet, the work does not only inscribe meaning onto the environment, it also shapes the farmer. The slow steady work of cutting tobacco fields engenders patience; the ecological requirements of a healthy earth creates an attentive awareness of its need; the cycles of diligent work from spring to summer to autumn to winter catalyze an understanding of the movements of life and perspective on timeliness. For Berry, the work of the land transforms the self in still another, more grand way. It integrates the life of the self into the life of the farm. While many are able to

²⁶⁵ Wendell Berry, “Does Community Have a Value?,” in *Home Economics* (North Point Press, 1987), 182.

²⁶⁶ Wendell Berry, “People, Land, and Community,” in *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 189.

²⁶⁷ Richard Lang, “The Dwelling Door: Towards a Phenomenology of Transition,” in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, ed. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (Malabar, Fla.: Krieger Pub. Co., 2000), 202.

reduce aspects or roles of the life into work-life and non-work life, the farmer knows no bifurcation. Berry writes, “The best farms have always been homes as well as workplaces. Unlike the factory hands and company executives, farmers do not *go* to work; a good farmer is *at* work even when at rest.”²⁶⁸ The work of the land is a co-inscriptive procedure for Berry. The labor of the soil casts meaning upon the earth, shaping it into what it is. Reciprocally, meaning is inscribed upon the worker.

Secondly, work weds people and place through knowledge. This knowledge is not instantaneous. Rather it is developed over time. As Hannah Coulter recounts in her remembrance of her life with her family: “We had to get used to our house. We had to get used to our place. It takes years, maybe it takes longer than a lifetime, to know a place, especially if you are getting to know it as a place to live and work, and you are getting to know it by living and working in it.”²⁶⁹ This platial knowing is at first the development of familiarity, but through work the knowledge develops further. Berry insists that this place knowledge is not the knowledge that is learned in the classrooms of Land Grant Universities. Instead it is always gained through experience. It is knowledge as art. “Farming itself, like life itself, is different from information or knowledge or anything else that can be verbally communicated. It is not just the local application of science; it is also the local practice of a local art and the living of a local life...You can't learn to farm by reading a book, and you can't *tell* someone how to farm.”²⁷⁰

Above we have seen Berry's understanding that membership is the culmination of healthy community (including the human, natural, and platial). The notion that pervades

²⁶⁸ Wendell Berry, “Six Agricultural Fallacies,” in *Home Economics* (North Point Press, 1987), 124.

²⁶⁹ Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter* (Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005), 91.

²⁷⁰ Wendell Berry, “Local Knowledge in the Age of Information,” in *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2006), 125.

Berry's fiction and non-fiction alike is that “health *is* connection.”²⁷¹ And we see throughout his writings that connection necessitates that each part of the membership is respected²⁷² and relationships between members are harmonious.²⁷³ Ultimately, the Berrian healthy community requires that the members can never use other members as resources to be exploited. Membership is a network of relationships marked by care for others in the membership (humans and places). This includes practices in and toward land that are sustainable and lead to flourishing. He considers these practices as care for place. To care for the place, the author believes one must have a knowledge of the place and of what actions lead to its flourishing. In “Conservation and Local Economy,” Berry writes, “Land that is used will be ruined unless it is properly cared for. Land cannot be cared for by people who do not know it intimately, who do not know how to care for it, who are not strongly motivated to care for it, and who cannot afford to care for it.”²⁷⁴ One of Berry's recurring critiques of agribusiness and the mechanizing of the farm is that it removes “hand labor” from the process of agriculture. When one removes the work of the hands he loses “intimate knowledge of the land” and “in thus debasing labor, he destroy[s] the possibility of meaningful connection with the land.”²⁷⁵

The Berrian conception of membership and place emerges through the relations between protagonists and antagonists. It is exhibited particularly well in the legal interactions surrounding Old Jack Beechum’s place and inheritance in “It Wasn’t Me” in which Berry configures a dialectical relationship between the members and the non-

²⁷¹ Wendell Berry, “The Body and the Earth,” in *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 132.

²⁷² Berry, “Conservation and Local Community,” 199.

²⁷³ Berry, “People, Land, and Community,” 192.

²⁷⁴ Berry, “Conservation and Local Community,” 195.

²⁷⁵ Wendell Berry, *The Hidden Wound*, Second Edition. (Counterpoint, 2010), 105.

members. Something that makes membership profound in this piece is that membership here has a way of transcending what may be considered more traditional notions of people being in membership together. For Berry, membership and loyalty are not necessarily tied to family. Sometimes it is in contradistinction to familial relationships. This is so in Catlett's interactions with Old Jack's daughter and her husband. The granting of the land to the Penns is didactic. The reader is taught that blood is not thicker than dirt. Membership, at times, is indicative of familial breaks. The cohesion of people is often through their understanding of (and care for) a place rather than through genetics. Wheeler explains Beechum's choosing of the Penns through an unconventional notion of "succession." Catlett explains, "The land expects something from us. The line of succession, the true line, is the membership of people who know it does."²⁷⁶ While subject, place, and other are necessary conditions of membership, family is not. Membership modifies succession. Exemplifying this modification, he says, "The line of succession is long, and not straight."²⁷⁷ The straight line of succession is familial. Often, for Berry, this is the way of succession. But at times the line diverges. Membership transcending family is particularly haunting in the works of Berry because most often the family plays a significant role in the pastoral lives of the Port William farming community. When the tie of family is broken, the understanding of the true membership thickens.

Berry writes, "Clara cared nothing for the place...for her the sale of the farm is a freedom, her own connection with it, her own early life there, being merely an

²⁷⁶ Berry, "It Wasn't Me," 284.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

encumbrance, probably an embarrassment.”²⁷⁸ Yet, the breaking of membership happened long before Old Jack made the decision to give the land to the Penns. Clara was born into membership and was tied to the people and the place. For Berry this familial bond to place is strong initially, but it can be broken. Years previous Clara left the membership to be wed to Glad Pettit, a banker in Louisville.

While the Pettit’s refusal of the last wishes of Old Jack manifests their loss of place and misunderstanding of the Berrian good life, the auction of the land opens an opportunity for two additional antagonists to emerge. Earl Benson, a neighboring farmer, is one who buys up land for the sake of increasing the borders of his own farm. Although he is geographically an “insider” to Port William, he remains outside membership in a two-fold manner. According to the author, he lacks a healthy understanding of the role of others and land which is required for a healthy community—for membership. Earl prefers the increase of the farm to the asset of having “good neighbors,”²⁷⁹ but what is clearly worse is his disregard for what is good for Old Jack's farm. An aspect of Berry's view regarding one's care for place is that a farm can become too large for a farmer to cultivate properly. He writes, “Questions about farming become inseparable from the questions about propriety of scale. A farm can become too big for a farmer to husband properly or pay proper attention to. Distraction is inimical to correct discipline, and enough time is beyond the reach of anyone who has too much to do.”²⁸⁰ Berry recounts the commitments that Benson maintains and concludes that the farmer “has something to gain, and perhaps more to lose.”²⁸¹ Benson is represented as a character that chooses self-interest at the

²⁷⁸ Ibid., 268.

²⁷⁹ Ibid., 274.

²⁸⁰ Berry, “People, Land, and Community,” 187.

²⁸¹ Berry, “It Wasn't Me,” 279.

expense of what is good for the land and others. For Berry, this places Benson outside of the membership.

While Benson is depicted as within proximity to (and may even have a modicum of sympathy for) the membership, another arises who is further removed. Dr. Stedman, the third antagonist of the tale, is looking to enter the fray to purchase the land as investment property. He views the land as a way to increase his holdings while having no other connection whatsoever. Stedman tells Catlett, “My thinking is this. If I bought the farm, [Penn would] make *me* a good tenant. With my obligations, you know, I’d need someone there who wouldn’t require a lot of seeing to. Do you see what I mean?” He continues, “So if I could get the place and a good man on it at the same time, it would solve my problems, don’t you see? It would kill two birds with one stone.”²⁸² Wheeler attempts at winning the doctor over by arguing that it would be a “public service” for Stedman to allow Elton Penn to buy the farm. Against Catlett’s hope of persuasion, the doctor is in attendance at the courthouse prepared to bid on the property.

This relegation of place as asset reshapes place as a member into an object plotted on balance sheets. Gains and losses for the antagonists are charted in currency, not in the goodness of the triadic conception of the membership of self, other, and place. Ultimately, Stedman spatializes place and sets it up in a relationship of owner and asset in contrast to the relation of co-membership. The doctor is the exploiter of the membership and in this he dissipates place. Place as investment is akin to the Heideggerian act of enframing (*Gestell*) found in “The Question Concerning Technology.” Heidegger describes enframing as: “The gathering together which belongs to that setting-upon which challenges man and puts him in the position to reveal the actual, in the mode of

²⁸² Ibid., 275.

ordering, as standing reserve.”²⁸³ The act of enframing is the calculative configuration of resources for the sake of gain—particularly gain that is dislocated from the local environment and economy. Heidegger offers several ways to consider the enframing. One of his most poignant examples is of the power plant set up on the Rhine. The power plant disrupts the landscape through the use of this kind of technology. The resources present are set up for the sake of exploitation with disregard for the integrity of place and people in place.²⁸⁴

Neither Heidegger nor Berry is strictly against technology. However, each is critical of its use in exploiting the environment merely for gain. For Heidegger, there remains a place for the gentle gristmill in the river. This type of setting up is a utilization of the aspects of place for the sake of the commonwealth of its community. It is capable of doing local work while being unable to store up mass reserves strictly to be sent off as commodity. The waterwheel does not cause the same sort of rupture in the landscape as the power plant that obliterates. The power plant has a way of transforming the place of the Rhine into something wholly different. He writes, “In the context of the interlocking processes pertaining to the orderly disposition of electrical energy, even the Rhine itself appears to be something at our command...the river is dammed up into the power plant. What the river is now, namely, a water-power supplier, derives from the essence of the power plant.”²⁸⁵ He is critical of the exploitation of a place (among other things) and recognizes the loss suffered when place is set up exclusively as an object and commodity. Just as in the works of Berry, the matter at hand for Heidegger is the way in which one

²⁸³ Martin Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” in *Basic Writings*, ed. David Farrell Krell (New York: HarperCollins, 1972), 329.

²⁸⁴ Berry, “It Wasn’t Me,” 267.

²⁸⁵ Heidegger, “The Question Concerning Technology,” 321.

conceives of and engages with nature. We have already seen that, in enframing, the Rhine appears *as* something, that is, standing reserve. This appearing of the land (in enframing) is one that “sets upon it in the sense of challenging it.”²⁸⁶ The problem then, for Heidegger, is that seeing the land through the lens of enframing keeps us from seeing the more originary appearing of place in experience. For Heidegger, enframing also increases the possibility of saving. He writes, “‘To save’ is to fetch something home into its essence, in order to bring the essence for the first time into its proper appearing.”²⁸⁷ Heidegger and Berry share the notion that “danger” lies in covering the originary appearing of place through the pursuit of exploitation of place.

The story of Mattie Chatham in Berry's fiction exemplifies Heideggerian enframing. In *Jayber Crow* we find the heroine married to a harsh man named Troy whose desire is for increase in land, money, and ultimately prestige as a farmer. Upon the passing of her parents, Mattie inherits a tall stand of old timber that has been adoringly named by her father “The Nest Egg.” Her father had always made jest around the fact that this stand of trees would serve as insurance if any misfortune ever happened to him. When asked if he wanted to sell it he would always price it far beyond what it was worth to a buyer. For Mattie and her family it is anything but a “standing reserve.” It is a place of intimacy for them. It is where Mattie would retreat from her husband and find solace from her disconsolate life. Yet, Mattie's husband develops other plans. Troy has wandered from agriculture as care and into the realm of “agribusiness.” Having gone

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 320.

²⁸⁷ Ibid., 333.

deeply into debt, he has been beaten in what he often calls the “game” of business. Troy's last move is to sell the timber of the nest egg—the “desperate merchandise.”²⁸⁸

“The Question Concerning Technology,” from the later Heidegger, is emblematic of an important aspect of place for Berry. Place, in enframing, is conceived of as only a resource and a standing reserve. In Berry's utilization of the antagonists, those outside of the membership do not engage with place as member—they do not understand place in the same way as the protagonists. The antagonists lack a consideration of the bound nature of people and place in membership (consummated through work). In *Harlan Hubbard: Life Work*, Berry explores the work of this fellow Kentuckian, naturalist, and artist. Hubbard, inspired by Thoreau from his youth, becomes an influence on Berry in his early career. Berry's exploration of Hubbard provides key insights into the way in which Berry considers the appearance of place in experience. Hubbard was skeptical of the scientific naturalists who attempted to explain and order nature. Berry writes, “To see the earth and its creatures...is not to see them merely as they would appear to the eye of the naturalist, for he said, 'I have little sympathy for the viewpoint of the naturalist.' It is rather to see into their life, to be aware of the informing spirit they manifest.”²⁸⁹ For Hubbard (and Berry), theoretical ordering and explanations disallow the scientist to conceive of place as a co-member in the membership.

Further, in “The Way of Ignorance,” Berry considers the way in which “knowledge” is able to blind us to a proper engagement with the place in which we live.”²⁹⁰ Benson and Stedman are of this ilk. According to Berry, these men cannot

²⁸⁸ Wendell Berry, *Jayber Crow: A Novel* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2000), 361.

²⁸⁹ Berry, *Harlan Hubbard*, 42.

²⁹⁰ Wendell Berry, “The Way of Ignorance,” in *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2006), 67–68.

understand the place as member because they are blinded to it by the knowledge they maintain regarding bigger farms and investment. The antagonists' desires cause them to ignore the givenness of place. Instead of conceiving of place in membership, they view place as an object—a tool to be utilized for their individual flourishing alone. For Berry, the distinction between protagonist and the antagonist in Port William begins with how they understand place. In “People, Land, and Community,” Berry tells us that if “one's sight is clear...one's love gradually responds to the place as it really is.”²⁹¹ However, often, a person's place-sight “is blinded by [his] vision of what [he] desires.”²⁹² This is the demise of Stedman, Benson, and Clara Pettit. Their desire to acquire (or, in Clara's case, to dispense of) Old Jack's land blinds them to the place's involvement in membership. They consider the land not as member, but as resource and standing reserve. Their motivation is not, in Berry's eyes, a nefarious plot to disrupt the fabric of the Port William membership. Rather, at issue for these actors is their inability to engage with place as a subject due to their desire.

Stedman's actions are most clearly influenced by his desire for increased of wealth. For him place is real estate. He considers the place as an investment from which he will have a sizable return. Bensen as a farmer has a degree of appreciation for the place, but he has gotten a taste of the possibility of land as asset through past success. Benson longs to increase his boundary for the sake of solidifying himself as an achieved farmer. Clara Pettit's reading of the farm is different from either of the men. While she and her husband consider the place as an asset to be sold, Clara's childhood under the diligent hand of her father has made her also hate the place. She sees the place as a site of captivity, formed

²⁹¹ Berry, “People, Land, and Community,” 187.

²⁹² *Ibid.*

by her experiences under Old Jack's hard work. Each of the antagonists is motivated in their actions and is separated from the membership through a different understanding of what place *is* and how they are to interact with it. Wheeler Catlett shrewdly understands these "misunderstandings." The agrarian-attorney attempts to appeal to the characters based upon what they value. With Clara it is an attempt to honor her deceased father, with Bensen an appeal to the humanity of the Penns, and with Stedman (who has neither connection to place, nor to the other) an appeal to a transcendent ideal of citizenship. However, each of these attempts fails.

Giving and Receiving in the Membership

Throughout this chapter we have encountered Berry's presuppositions regarding the meaning of place and its role in experience. We have seen that place is co-member with the dwellers in place and that place has an effectual role in the life of the subject through work, while the subject at the same time reciprocally affects the place. There are two considerations remaining to encapsulate Berry's vision of membership and place's role in the membership: First, all members give to and receive from other members, and secondly, the way in which one belongs to the land.

Berry contrasts the antagonist's understanding of place as merely an asset with the notion that, in membership, the human members also have a responsibility to give to the place. Berry's conception of place is revealed through Catlett, who tells Elton Penn: "The place is not its price. Its price stands for it for just a minute or two while it's bought and sold, and may hang over it a while after that and have influence on it, but the place has been here since the evening and the morning were the third day. The figures are like us—

here and gone.”²⁹³ Berry proffers an invitation to consider experience in place in a much more primordial manner than the antagonists. In this dialogue between Penn and Catlett we find his disgust of the notion of real estate. While at times useful, the pricing of land is a convention that is constructed and laid upon place in such a way that it perverts the meaning of place and the relationship the subject has with place.

For Berry, the construction of a purely market view of land objectifies and subjugates place. Place is not an object to be purchased, but a member that gives and receives—as Catlett continues, “Everything about a place that's different from its price is a gift...The life of a neighborhood is a gift.”²⁹⁴ In his *Citizenship Papers*, Berry argues against the conception of land as held by agribusiness. He writes, “the agrarian standard...requires [one to] bring local nature, local people, local economy, and local culture into a practical and enduring harmony.”²⁹⁵ This enduring harmony necessitates a reciprocal relationship between every member. Each gives and each receives. Place calls on the people in the place toward responsibility. Berry considers this call of place through Catlett’s speaking of the land with the young Elton Penn: “We start out expecting things of it. All of us do, I think. And then some of us, if we stay put and pay attention, see that expectations are going the other way too. Demands are being made of us, whether we know it or know what they are or not. The place is crying out to us to do better, to be worthy of it.”²⁹⁶ The problem with obligation is that it can be understood in a pejorative manner. Clara Pettit embodies this as she misunderstands obligation as a burden. She sees

²⁹³ Berry, “It Wasn’t Me,” 282.

²⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, 288.

²⁹⁵ Wendell Berry, “The Agrarian Standard,” in *Citizenship Papers: Essays* (Counterpoint, 2004), 152.

²⁹⁶ Berry, “It Wasn’t Me,” 284-285.

the farm as “merely an encumbrance.”²⁹⁷ When the reciprocity of membership is engaged, work is understood as a good obligation. For Berry, people and place, in health, have a relationship entangled in giving and receiving.

In his newness to the membership the young Elton Penn initially understands the responsibility as “the suffering of obligation.”²⁹⁸ But in the lines above, Berry shows us that those who remain in the place and pay attention to the land with, over time they will come to discover that the land grants while maintaining requirements. The giving and receiving relationship between people and the place is a difficult concept for those outside of the membership to comprehend because they continually understand the relationship to place as a subject-object relationship. While outside of the membership it is difficult to consider the land differently. But as Relph observes, “[In] experience an authentic sense of place is rather like a type of relationship characterised...as 'I-thou,' in which the subject and object, person and place, divisions are wholly replaced by the relationship itself, for this is complete and mutual.”²⁹⁹ For Berry, the fundamental commonality shared by Pettit, Stedman, and Benson is that they cannot conceive of this “I-thou” relationship. And with this lack of understanding they can only see the place as an object—as asset or encumbrance. These characters are lost in their presuppositions regarding place. In the young Elton Penn, Berry exhibits hope. Catlett believes that over time, as the Penns pay attention to the land, they will develop a healthy understanding and engagement of place.

Mutual Belonging

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 277.

²⁹⁸ Ibid., 283.

²⁹⁹ E. C. Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (Pion, 1976), 65.

The final aspect of Berry's interpretation of place in membership concerns his conception of belonging. Throughout the Port William chronicles, Berry challenges even the most basic unilateral notion of people and place. We have already encountered his contention with the contemporary notion of the human relationship of place that surfaces in a capitalistic ethos. While our culture will argue that we buy, sell, trade, and “flip” properties, Berry strongly disputes this understanding. For Berry place is indeed an “asset,” but not one that should so mundanely be dealt on the open market. He is not only claiming that place is not in a price, but he is also asserting that just as much as a place belongs to a person, so also a person quite literally belongs to a place. In “The Wild Birds” the reader finds Berry's multi-faceted perspective on “belonging.” In this piece, Wheeler is called upon to be the attorney over the creation of a will for Burley Coulter. Burley is shown throughout the stories of membership as the perennial bachelor who is tied to his love of the land and the wild. In his earlier life Burley becomes the father of Danny Branch. Throughout his life Burley is committed to his son and cares for both him and his mother. Although most in Port William are aware of the relationship, the father/son relationship is never formally made public. During the dusk of Burley’s life he makes the decision to will his land to Danny. Burley’s decision to grant his land to Danny is a symbol before the community that Danny does in fact “belong” to Burley as kin. Yet, there is a dual aspect of belonging. Burley insists, “Now I have to say that what belongs to me will belong to him, so he can belong to what I belong to.”³⁰⁰ Belonging becomes the final aspect of the Port William membership. For Berry there is an understanding that self, other, and place are bound up with one another. It is a tie that is not easily untangled.

³⁰⁰ Wendell Berry, “The Wild Birds,” in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Counterpoint, 2005), 344.

Membership: Accident and Choice

As mentioned earlier, Berry's own life runs parallel to Andy, the son of Wheeler Catlett. Berry left his home of Port Royal for the sake of education. Like the Catletts' story in his fiction, he also became quite successful beyond the boundaries of his Kentucky farm. He studied literature at the University of Kentucky, creative writing at Stanford, wrote on fellowship in Europe, and was offered a prestigious post as a professor of English at New York University. Longing for home, Berry resigned from NYU to teach creative writing at the University of Kentucky in 1964, only to retire from the faculty thirteen years later—at the age of 43. Berry returned to Port Royal to become a full-time farmer, activist, and writer. It is from the rich soil of his pilgrimage away from home and return that his most significant works are birthed. In his essay "A Native Hill," Berry writes, "I had made a significant change in my relationship to the place: before, it had been mine by coincidence or accident; now it was mine by choice. My return, which at first had been hesitant and tentative, grew wholehearted and sure. I had come back to stay."³⁰¹ From this testimony of his own life arises one of the most ubiquitous themes in his fictional accounts: membership of the human members is first through accident and only later by choice.

While the triadic relationship of self, other, and place, held together in membership through work, is emblematic of Berry's fictional brush strokes which create Port William, there is another aspect of place and the characters in the tale. This is the theme of choosing place. We see this in many of the stories. In *Hannah Coulter* the heroine reflects, "My children were born into that story, and into the membership that the story is about, and into the place that was home to the membership, and home to them as long as

³⁰¹ Berry, "That Native Hill," 7.

they wanted such a home. We brought them up, teaching them as well as we could the things the place would require them to know if they stayed. And yet...they chose to go.”³⁰² And again in the story of Andy Catlett, “He knows that some who might have left chose to stay, and that some who did leave chose to return, and he is one of them. Those choices have formed in time and place the pattern of membership that chose him, yet left him free until he should choose it, which he did once, and now has done again.”³⁰³ Each of these examples exemplifies and amplifies Berry’s notion that membership, in its initial stages, is not something gained by assent. Most within the membership are initially there by being chosen by the place, that is, quite literally being born into the membership, like young Catlett and the Coulter’s children. But the ultimate power of human membership is then also in the choice. It is a choice to stay and engage in the fullness of the triadic membership or the refusal of this membership by leaving. Membership has a certain contingency to it. Freedom to choose thickens the place commitment of the Port William membership. As the chronicles progress through the twenty-first century, we find the people increasingly drawn away from the land. And as the possibility of leaving becomes more and more attractive, the members who decide to remain (or in the Catletts’ case, return) become significantly more deeply committed to their place.

But as we have seen with Elton Penn and his wife, there are also those who are in the membership by choice who have never been on the inside by birth. Berry necessitates the possibility of welcome for those who wish to be a part of the membership triad. The membership is always open to others outside of it. Hospitality to the outsider is a part of being in the membership. Berry devotes one of his most lengthy pieces to the life of

³⁰² Berry, *Hannah Coulter*, 95.

³⁰³ Wendell Berry, *Remembering: A Novel* (Counterpoint, 2008), 50.

Jayber Crow. Crow, having been twice orphaned (once by his parents' death and then by his guardians'), becomes a wanderer trying to find meaningful life through education. Crow finds his way to Port William and settles in as a barber, a bachelor, and only later a key part of the membership. Yet, it is earlier in the text that hospitality of the membership is foreshadowed by an experience Jayber has as a child in a schoolyard. Berry writes in the words of Crow:

I remember a little girl, the E. Lawler I mentioned before, who came to The Good Shepherd when she was about seven years old. She was a slight, brown-haired, sad-looking, lonesome-looking girl whose clothes did not fit. She looked accidental or unexpected, and seemed to be without expectation, and resigned, and so quiet that even in my selfishness I wished I knew of a way to help her. I watched her all the time. When her class went out to play, she didn't take part but only stood back and watched the other girls. She always wore a dress that sagged and brown cotton stockings that were always wrinkled. She was waiting. I did not understand that she was waiting but she was. And then one day as her classmates were joining hands to play some sort of game, one of the girls broke the circle. She held out her hand to the newcomer to beckon her in. And E. Lawler ran into the circle and joined hands with the others.

I wrote E. Lawler into my tablet so that I would not forget her.³⁰⁴

Although the reader is unaware at this early stage of the journey of Jayber Crow, his observations of E. Lawler are precisely his experience in the world of Port William. He is the newcomer, disoriented and himself quite lonely in the place that was rich and alive in its membership. Yet, the human members opened the circle to Jayber and

³⁰⁴ Berry, *Jayber Crow*, 38-39.

welcomed him to join. The interesting turn regarding a person's membership (first by accident for most and later by choosing) is that the obligation of the membership of place in Berry's world requires those on the inside to open the circle up to the other, the outsider, and the marginalized.

Even the villainous are offered entry. In the short story "Fidelity," we are introduced to Kyle Bode, a detective with the state police who is investigating a "missing person"—Burley Coulter who has been secretly taken off of life support and away from the hospital by his son Danny. Bode is represented as perhaps the most reprehensible of all characters who emerge from Berry's pages. Himself one who has left a farming community, he is characterized as someone with a deep animosity for the people of the country and vitriol toward what he refers to as "these damn hills and hollows."³⁰⁵ He is a man marked by discontentment and bitterness. During the investigation Bode comes to the law office of Wheeler Catlett where the family and friends of Burley are assembled. Berry writes, "Standing with his right arm outstretched and then with his hand spread hospitably on Kyle Bode's back, Wheeler gathered him toward the door, which he had opened onto a room now full of people."³⁰⁶ The Port William community is opened up by its preserver Wheeler Catlett to this man who holds a deep distaste for the membership and is intent on disrupting their community. But they are obliged to offer hospitality to even him. The members are required to offer the choice; the choosing is in the hands of the outsider alone. This is a break from a contemporary platial understanding. In a world of gated communities and private membership, Berry is insistent on place's being, in its essence, an opportunity for welcome. In contrast to the privacy fence so common in my

³⁰⁵ Wendell Berry, "Fidelity," in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Counterpoint, 2005), 397.

³⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 420.

own urban context, the fences of Port William are both physically and metaphorically porous. They allow entrance into and through the land of one another.

There is a subtle metaphor established for the choice concerning membership through a location just outside of Port William, aptly named Goforth. There are two primary roles of Goforth in Berry's work. It is the site of the school that the children of Port William attend. It also is the place of the local church. The school and the church epitomize the two major ways that the world, in a sense, is opened for the member's leaving Port William. First, through the church, members born into the membership by no choice of their own can make the decision to leave through marriage. We have seen this explicitly in the marriage of Clara to Gladstone Pettit. Her marriage was a means of escaping the life of the agrarian and the membership of Port William. The second is through death. Although not a choosing, death remains a significant aspect of Berry's work and his investigation of membership. The subsequent chapter will more fully investigate death, membership, and temporality.

The Goforth schoolhouse is also indicative of the shift in the culture of Port William in which the possibility of getting out is offered through the means of education. Mentioned earlier, this possibility of getting out of the membership is initially found in the character of Wheeler Catlett. He is the first of the Port William community that we find leaving the membership and its place to be educated. For most, staying remains the lot of the people of the community. Yet, the option to leave becomes more and more viable and, for some, more and more attractive. Andy Catlett follows in his father's footsteps. Higher education becomes increasingly accessible throughout the years in Port William.

Berry is known for his scathing critique of the displacing effects of higher education and the effects that these institutions have on local communities. Once gone and educated only the exceptional (by Berry's estimation) return. While his public engagement with the world of higher education is rather brazen throughout his written words and speeches, his work in fiction is slightly subtler. We find this in a particularly poignant passage in which Hannah Coulter laments the loss of all her children through higher education: "It just never occurred to either of us that we would lose them that way. The way of education leads away from home. That is what we learned from our children's education. The big idea of education, from first to last, is the idea of a better place. Not a better place where you are...but a better place somewhere else."³⁰⁷ While the displacement, for Berry, has negative consequences on the displaced and the community one leaves behind, nevertheless, there remains an intriguing way in which displacement strengthens the bonds of the community and the relationship that one has to place. As leaving becomes increasingly attractive to the younger generations of Port William, choosing to stay becomes more difficult. It may then be said that the increasing accessibility to leave makes the choice to stay more significant. Further, those who return also experience a strong relation to the place. They have tasted what the world had to offer, and in their return (as we saw in Berry's own geobiography) they find a deepened understanding of and engagement with place.

In this chapter we have discovered a significant a perspective on the role of place in the life and experience of the subject through the works of Berry. He has offered a unique picture of membership which is encapsulated in the triadic relationship of self, other, and

³⁰⁷ Berry, *Hannah Coulter*, 112.

place. Throughout his works Berry does not allow place to slip behind the action of the story or to be relegated to a necessary condition for the narrative. Instead place becomes a co-member. Through the dialectic of protagonists and antagonists we recognize that their understanding of place and their treatment of place engenders the difference between the two. Finally, Berry's understanding of the nature of the membership (including humans and the place as subjects) necessitates reciprocity in giving and receiving. Membership, always requiring a choice, thickens as people choose to stay. A key component of Berry's notion of place rests in the fact that his narrative of Port William spans over a century, while almost exclusively occurring in the same town—a vast expanse of time in a singular place. Berry's work on place will be significantly enriched as we turn to the next chapter that will offer an investigation of place and temporality.

Chapter Five Remembering in Place

For it is a fact that memory of place, of *having been in a place*, is one of the most conspicuously neglected areas of philosophical or psychological inquiry into remembering.
Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*

In chapter four I investigated the works of Wendell Berry to provide an example of the way place is able to appear in experience and how it shapes the life of the subject. I established place, for Berry, as a member in the triune membership of Port William, and exhibited the way in which one's understanding of and engagement with place transforms the way he or she interacts with and encounters the other members. We have found that Berry, explicitly through his non-fiction and implicitly in his fiction, believes that the antagonists have misdirected engagements with place. Their visions of place are clouded by a desire for land, money, and the ease of life.

A second aspect of the subject's experience in place that I will consider here is the way in which place and time intersect in place-based memory. Place, for Berry, is indelibly tied to time. By way of Casey's phenomenology of remembering and Berry's short story "The Boundary," we will consider how place can play a vital role in the act of remembering. Berry's story provides multiple memory experiences that allow for an investigation of place-based memory. By way of the previous investigation of the appearing of place in membership and this consideration of place and temporality, we will ultimately have examples of ways that place appears in the life of the subject—and ways in which places may have an effectual role in shaping the narrative of the subject.

One could turn to virtually any of the stories throughout Berry's chronicles of Port William to find a connection between place and memory. Perhaps the most helpful work to find place's involvement with memory is his short story "The Boundary." In this piece, Mat Feltner, one of the primary members of Port William, has grown old. He has handed over the difficult tasks of farming to Nathan Coulter, the second husband of his widowed daughter-in-law. While Nathan keeps up the Feltner place diligently, Mat spends his days working at the house and tending to what has become his most immaculate garden ever. At the commencement of the tale, Mat has become concerned about the condition of the fence line on the distant part of his land. Although he knows it may be outside of his physical limitations, Feltner leaves the comfortable confines of his porch and walks out toward the boundary. Throughout the story Berry enacts several different manifestations of place memory.

Phenomenology of Memory

Rather than turning directly to Berry, let us first investigate the role of place in memorial experience. Berry's work will then be utilized to provide examples of place and memory in experience. In *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, Casey outlines a nearly exhaustive work on the act phase and object phase of the experience of remembering.³⁰⁸ Casey initiates his study through Brentano's framework of the intentionality in experience. He quotes Brentano:

Every mental phenomenon is characterized by what the scholastics of the Middle Ages called the intentional (or mental) inexistence of an object, and what we

³⁰⁸ While much of Casey's work on the phenomenology of memory is drawn from Husserl, I choose to follow Casey's work on in particular here because in his text he particularly focuses on the experience of memory in place in consciousness. I will also reference Husserl at times throughout the chapter.

might call, though not wholly unambiguously, reference to a content, direction toward an object (which is not to be understood here as meaning a thing) or immanent objectivity. Every mental phenomenon includes something as object within itself, although this does not always occur in the same way.³⁰⁹

In his pursuit of a phenomenological investigation of memory he will attempt to identify the structures of the experience of memory manifested as the act phase and the object phase. The act phase is the means through which one experiences the phenomenon. The object phase is the content of the experience. These two phases are co-present in memory and “each phase is equally essential, since an actless memory is as unthinkable as a contentless memory.”³¹⁰

Casey develops a multi-form notion of the act phase of memory. First, memory is always either an act of primary remembering or secondary remembering. Primary remembering, for Casey, is that which is either of an event that has just happened (and remains in the forefront of memory) or one that may have lapsed temporally, but remains in the awareness of the rememberer. This includes recent occurrences, past significant memories that remain in day-to-day awareness, and habit memory that is utilized without effort, regardless of when it was sedimented. Secondary memory includes those things that have lapsed. While he claims that primary memory is omnipresent, secondary memory requires retrieval or “the capturing of experiences no longer extant in perception

³⁰⁹ Edward S Casey, *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 39.

³¹⁰ Edward S Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*, 2nd ed. (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000), 48.

or in primary memory.”³¹¹ Following retrieval, secondary memory content undergoes revival, which is a re-experiencing of the content of the once-lapsed remembered object.

Casey explains that there are several possible “forms” of memory in the experience of remembering.³¹² One possible way into memory is “remembering on-the-occasion-of.”³¹³ This is the particular “form” of remembering that will be most clearly examined in the chapter on place and memory. For Casey this act of the memorial life coincides with certain dates and/or occurrences. For instance, on December 7 we remember those who died in the attack on Pearl Harbor. This remembering on-the-occasion-of can also be more personal: remembering fidelity on an anniversary, remembering someone's life on his or her birthday, etc. For Casey a date or event acts as a trigger to cause remembering to occur. It initiates the retrieval and revival of a remembered state of affairs or event. These can be memories of events that we were a part of or one that we have been told about. Although I was not at Pearl Harbor, I can still remember *that* the event occurred and even the things I have heard and learned about it. In a way, the memories that we will find in “The Boundary” are similar to remembering

³¹¹ Ibid., 51.

³¹² Casey explicates several different types of remembering which fall under the categories of primary and secondary (see: *Remembering* 52-63 for a full explanation of each). I only examine remembering-on-the-occasion-of in the chapter since it will play a primary role in this chapter. The other main types are: remembering *simpliciter* (single, discrete things), remembering-that (states of affairs which include subjects, actions and attributes), remembering-how (including both habitual know how and knowing-how which is not yet fully habituated), and remembering-to. Casey explains that there are also subsidiary types of remembering: remembering-as (object remembered with attribute or quality), remembering-what (a summary version of remembering-that), and remembering the future (recalling an event to be done). He develops this multi-faceted notion of memory as a response to Bergson's bifurcated theory of the memorial life (primary memory and habit memory). In this he develops a taxonomy of memory that encapsulates the memorial experience in a more detailed framework. While each of these types of memory can stand alone, they also, often, overlap and coincide with one another. Remembering the future is a kind of remembering-to, albeit one that “relates to the future even more expressly” (*Remembering*, 62). Remembering on-the-occasion-of is a remembering-that or remembering *simpliciter* that is particularly contextual—connected to a day, moment, or season (a birthday, holiday, etc.).

³¹³ Ibid., 62.

on-the-occasion-of. The memories are catalyzed on the occasion of *being-in*. That is, memory, in this story, occurs in and is activated by being in place.

As he transitions into the description of the object phase, Casey reiterates, “The act of remembering is never entirely empty of content. To be remembering at all is to be directed, however deviously or indistinctly, toward *that which* we remember.”³¹⁴ The “what” of the remembering is the object phase. Within the object phase, there are two components. First, there is the mnemonic presentation, which is “*all that* we remember on a given occasion...everything save for the particular *way* in which what is remembered manifests itself.”³¹⁵ This includes the specific content, the memory frame, and the aura of the particular memory. Specific content is the totality of the memory in its barest form, “shorn of all features that are crucial in its description and/or identification.”³¹⁶ Memory frame is the context of the memory including space and time. It also regards whether or not the rememberer has a self-presence within the memory. The memory frame can include a “worldhood” or the scene of the memory and its surroundings. This worldhood (present in more elaborate memories) includes place and time, but is more intricate in that it is the larger context of the memory. Worldhood can include the memory's immediate setting and its nonimmediate surroundings. It is the “arena in which the scene and specific content can emerge and unfold.”³¹⁷ The mnemonic presentation also maintains an aura. The aura “appears...in the form of a blurred fringe or *margin* surrounding specific content and its memory-frame.”³¹⁸ This hazy fringe can be attributed to the sensuous details of a memory—the image in a memory can be more or less blurred in an

³¹⁴ Casey, *Remembering*, 65.

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

³¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 66.

³¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 69.

³¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 76.

atmospheric haze. It also can be considered in terms as a temporal aura of a memory. The remembered event blurs back into the more distant past and ahead toward the present.

Finally, Casey explains that in the object phase memories have modes of givenness. The object of remembering can be given with varying degrees of clarity, density, texture, and directness.

Memory and Place

Timothy Ingold writes, “To perceive the landscape is therefore to carry out an act of remembrance, and remembering is not so much a matter of calling up an internal image, stored in the mind, as of engaging perceptually with an environment that is itself pregnant with the past.”³¹⁹ But how are we to consider this pregnancy of place with memory? How does place “hold” memories? Casey explains that memory requires attachment points and that “place *holds in* by giving to memories an authentically local habitation: by being their place-holder.”³²⁰ Although other entities can serve as a means of attachment and deployment of memory (photographs, people, etc.), place can serve as a way into memory that has a certain density that a single object might not allow. It can be able to capture the breadth of the memory frame. Place-based memories often present a time and a place, a worldhood, and, usually, a self-presence. According to Casey, there are three characteristics of place that allow for its possibility of being a suitable place-holder for memory. First, is variegation. Places, by their very nature, differ from one another. “Everywhere we encounter diversity of content, even on the barest plain or the emptiest shopping mall parking lot.”³²¹ This variegation, these place-distinctions, whether

³¹⁹ Tim Ingold, “The Temporality of the Landscape,” ed. Richard Bradley, *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (October 1993): 60.

³²⁰ Casey, *Remembering*, 189.

³²¹ *Ibid.*, 98.

profound or subtle, allow for the possibility of recognizable attachment points for memories. As places differ, they allow for memories to be nested in the place and recognized by the emplaced subject. Casey points toward the design of Chinese gardens to exemplify the place-characteristic of variegation: “Not only were gateways strenuously varied in name and shape—being vase-shaped, moon-shaped, fan-shaped, leaf-shaped—but windows were asymmetrically different, both in terms of grillework and in terms of vistas offered.” He continues, “The sixteenth-century Garden of the Unsuccessful Politician in Suzhou includes no less than thirty-one sub-places, each with its own distinctive design.”³²² Variegation of landscape facilitates the ability to distinguish places. These distinctions allow for places to be recognizable during subsequent encounters—facilitating the memory of events occurring therein. Secondly, places have a sustaining character. As we have seen in chapter one, a place has boundaries. That which is contained within these perimeters is the place’s field. Casey explains that the delimited nature of place provides a “continuing durable ground”³²³ in which memories abide. The field within the perimeter is able to “underlie a potentially immense stock of memories.”³²⁴ While the variegated nature of place allows for attachment points for memories through recognition, perimeters create a limited field—a limiting habitat. As place has a certain “in-ness” to it, it can be a gathering point for memories. Finally, places are expressive. The expressiveness of place has the power to “act on us, to inspire (or repel) us, and thus to remember vividly is a function of such emotionality.”³²⁵ Whether it is the experientially profound and explicitly memorable occurrence of

³²² Casey, *Remembering*, 208.

³²³ *Ibid.*, 198.

³²⁴ Casey, *Remembering*, 199.

³²⁵ *Ibid.*, 199.

standing in a gothic cathedral or a much subtler example of walking through a halogen-lit office corridor, we can locate a variety of moods that come upon us in place. Throughout this chapter we will see ways in which Mat Feltner, Berry's protagonist in "The Boundary," encounters memorial experiences as he moves into and through places. We will investigate the ways in which the experience of memory can be considered through his fictional work.

Remembering at the Tree in the Woods

In "The Boundary," Mat Feltner begins his journey and leaves the security of the house and barn to venture out through the fields and check on the boundary lines of his property, which he has not seen for years. Weary from his walk, he sits beneath a large white oak tree. Berry writes:

As many times before, he feels coming to him the freedom of the woods, where he has no work to do. He feels coming to him such rest as, bound to the house and barn and garden for so long, he had forgotten. In body, now, he is an old man but mind and eye look out of his old body into the shifting leafy lights and shadows among the still trunks with a recognition that is without age, the return of an ageless joy.³²⁶

Mat has not been in these parts for some time. His retirement has confined him to a life that is safe and comfortable. Berry reiterates several times that the retirement to the house, barn, and garden has been intended for him to rest. He rests on the porch, reflecting on the completion of what was once light work. He has the customary post-dinner nap. But here, Berry is drawing out a mood of rest that is different from that which

³²⁶ Wendell Berry, "The Boundary," in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 291-292.

Feltner experiences in the day-to-day life of retirement. Although rest now marks his life, Feltner, in his confinement to the house has forgotten a different kind of rest—a deep rest found in the woods away from the home-place. This first foray into memory and place in “The Boundary” will direct us toward particular aspects of place-memory in experience.

Turning to Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, we find a framework that aids us in understanding the deep and necessary connection between mood and place. In chapter one we saw the ways in which places are set up and interpreted in Dasein’s comportment toward the world. Chapter three demonstrated the veil of place and place’s appearance in and through Dasein’s comportment toward the world. As we turn our attention toward mood in particular, we are able to uncover another, perhaps more primordial, connection between the self and the environment. Concerning Dasein (literally “Being there”), Heidegger writes, “Being-in is rather an essential kind of Being of this entity itself.” He continues, “By its very nature, Dasein brings its ‘there’ along with it. If it lacks its ‘there,’ it is not factually the entity which is essentially Dasein; indeed, it is not this entity at all.”³²⁷ Dasein is essentially platial as Being-in-the-world and always Being-there.

There are two equiprimordial ways that the “there” is constituted for Dasein: understanding and mood. For Heidegger, mood (*Stimmung*) is a primary existentiale. Dasein always has a mood whether or not it is aware of the particular mood it is in.³²⁸ While a mood can be public,³²⁹ each individual Dasein has a mood and this state-of-mind exhibits Dasein’s “there” in three ways. The first and primary characteristic of moods is

³²⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 132.

³²⁸ Heidegger points to the fact that moods are always changing and /or deteriorating to exhibit that we are always in a mood or transitioning between moods. See *Ibid.*, 139.

³²⁹ *Ibid.*

that they “*disclose Dasein in its thrownness.*”³³⁰ Heidegger tells us that Dasein finds itself thrown in the world, and is disclosed to itself, not through a self-perception per se, but rather, as Dasein is “brought before itself in the mood which it has”³³¹ (whether explicitly acknowledged or not). Secondly, mood discloses the essential nature of Dasein as Being-in-the-world. Not only is Dasein’s thrownness disclosed, but also mood opens up the fact that Dasein is thrown into a *world* that includes other “Things and persons.”³³² Moods are not only indicative of the basic Being-in, but also Being-with other entities within the greater context of Being-in-the-world. And this pushes Heidegger on to the final aspect of mood and Dasein’s “there.” State-of-mind is indicative of Dasein’s comportment toward entities in the world. Circumspection is connected to mood in that it indicates that, for Dasein, things matter. “*Existentially, a state-of-mind implies a disclosive submission to the world, out of which we can encounter something that matters to us.*”³³³ Mood is so pervasive that even non-circumspective inspection of entities present-at-hand is enacted in a particular state-of-mind. Theoretical looking essentially is done in a “*tranquil tarrying alongside.*”³³⁴

When we consider the onset of mood for Heidegger, we discover an insight concerning place that is also particularly apt for the study at hand. Heidegger writes, “A mood assails us. It comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside,’ but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being.” And further, “States-of-minds are so far from being reflected upon, that precisely what they do is assail Dasein in its unreflecting

³³⁰ Ibid., 136.

³³¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*.

³³² Ibid., 137.

³³³ Ibid., 138.

³³⁴ Ibid.

devotion to the ‘world’ with which it is concerned and on which it expends itself.”³³⁵

Moods then are neither merely internal psychological states, nor do they come upon Dasein from something externally detached from it. Rather, moods are always present and their presence is quintessentially tied up in Dasein as Being-in-the-world. They are necessarily a part of Being-there for the subject in place—whether reflected upon and discerned or unselfconsciously present. Hence, Dreyfus writes, “Heidegger would no doubt appreciate the fact that we ordinarily say that we are *in* a mood, not that a mood is an experience *in* us.”³³⁶

Berry’s description of the mood of rest “coming to” Feltner epitomizes Heidegger’s conception of mood and place. Being-in the place is the catalyst—the body situated in the environment prompts the mood of deep rest that he has not experienced since being away from this place. Feltner comes into the place and the mood of rest assails him. Yet, Feltner has not only lacked this experience of rest, he, having been exiled in his home, has forgotten that this particular rest ever existed. Without access to the place of the woods, he has lost access to the memory of (and possibility for) the type of rest previously experienced in and associated with this kind of place. As Malpas explains: “We might say that mental states are themselves organised and their content determined through their embeddedness in a larger system of such states. Memories, for instance, do not have content or significance independently of the wider context into which they fit.”³³⁷ We can see this in the first movement of remembering. Mat has lost the deep rest of the woods. Being in the woods manifests the mood of rest that the porch

³³⁵ Ibid., 136.

³³⁶ Hubert L Dreyfus, *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger’s Being and Time, Division I* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), 171.

³³⁷ Jeff Malpas, *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography* (Cambridge ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 79.

and his garden cannot. The rest—even during this stage of life that is organized around repose—is one that is “localized,” place specific. The mood is inextricably tied to the “there” of the particular place. Feltner can only experience it beyond the borders of the house and garden. As he experiences the mood in the “there” place below the tree, he is able to remember occurrences of this state-of-mind previously encountered.

The woods embody rest not only because of what the place *is*, but also and primarily because of what the place *is not*. Place-based memories tend towards discrimination. As Casey writes, “*Place is selective for memories*: that is to say, a given place will invite certain types of memories while discouraging others. The fact is that we can’t attach just *any* memories to a place...Place is always definite, and regarding a given place only some memories, indeed only certain *kinds* of memory, will be pertinent.”³³⁸ Because places are limited, so also are the memories that inhabit those places. The characteristic of selectivity of place facilitates the memory of this particular restfulness, which is forgotten when away from it. This woods-rest, for Berry, is not encountered in the place of the house and garden. On the other hand, being away from the home-place (and in the woods-place) does not readily allow the memories attached to the home to be given.

As Heidegger would insist, the mood of the place arises because Being-in the “there” (in thrownness) and the entities in the world matter to us. The place that we are away from does not matter directly. The present place pervades us. Feltner loses the mood of the place when away precisely because, at those times, the place does not matter in immediate circumspection. In this, we can discern a dual meaning of the title “The Boundary.” In one way the story is quite literally about the boundary line and the fence

³³⁸ Casey, *Remembering*, 189.

which Feltner fears has fallen into disrepair. But there is also within the text a boundary of place-memory. Memory is bound in and by place. Leaving the bounded place of his house and entering the place of the woods, he has left the realm of a particular set of memories to enter into the possibility of a different set of memories. Near the end of the story, after a series of remembrances, Feltner knows that he is in the last days of his life. He inspects his surroundings and thinks to himself: “I am not going to come back here...I will never be in this place again.”³³⁹ While at first it may seem that this is simply the lament of a man knowing that he is making the final journey through a place that he loves, there is a more fundamental grieving that transpires. This line can also be read as a dirge to the loss of memory. Herein lies the recognition that the loss of the place will be the loss of the memories that are exclusive to that place. The loss of platial access, for Feltner, in these instances, ultimately means the loss of the memories attached to and experienced within that place.

Does place-memory and selectivity suggest that we are only able to experience the place-based memory of events (and corresponding moods) when situated within a place that elicits them? This would seem to fit neither common experience nor Berry's utilization of memory in other aspects of his work. His most profound example of platially decontextualized remembering of place is found in his novel *Remembering*. In this story, the narrator, Andy Catlett, displaced from Port William, retrieves place memories of his childhood from thousands of miles away. His memories are not catalyzed by being *in* the place of the memory (in fact they explicitly emerge from his sense of homesickness); they remain vivid memories of the events and membership of

³³⁹ Berry, “The Boundary,” 300.

Port William.³⁴⁰ There can be a trigger for the appearing of memory—for instance a picture or story (or for Andy Catlett, his displacement and homesickness), which draws forth the memory of a place and its corresponding mood. We only need to turn to Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* for an example of an intricate place-memory triggered by something other than place per se. Proust expressively writes:

As soon as I had recognized the taste of the piece of Madeleine soaked in her decoction of lime-blossom which my aunt used to give me...immediately the old grey house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like a stage set to attach itself to the little pavilion opening on to the garden which had been built out behind it for my parents...and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the Square where I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine...in that moment all the flowers in our garden and in M. Swann's park, and the water-lilies on the Vivonne and the good old folk of the village and their little dwellings and the parish church and the whole of Combray and its surroundings, taking shape and solidity, sprang into being, town and gardens alike, from my cup of tea.³⁴¹

Berry and Proust give examples of the way in which memories of places are triggered by acts other than being-in. They remain richly place-based memories, but are accessed from without.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ For more on the phenomena of homesickness and remembering see: Casey, *Remembering*, 201.

³⁴¹ Marcel Proust, *Remembrance of Things Past*, trans. C.K. Scott Moncrieff and T. Kilmartin (New York: Random House, 1981), I, 51.

³⁴² I raise these examples to exhibit that remembering places is not exclusive to being *in* place. These place memories can nevertheless be considered through Casey's act phase of remembering-on-the-occasion-of. For each of the authors in the examples there is a catalyst that brings about the memories of place. I will not go into this any more extensively here as the purpose of the chapter is to explore memorial experience in (and catalyzed by) place.

However, Berry provides us with an example of a memory of a mood that is forgotten when the subject is out of that place. Although the state-of-mind of rest in the woods is personally significant for Feltner, it is intertwined so tightly with the place that it is forgotten when he is away. The mood is lost in the recesses of his memory. We only need to consider times when we enter into a place and experience a lapsed memory. In these times, being-in acts as the catalyst for the memory. While place memories occur from outside of the place frequently (as seen above in both Berry and Proust), I will examine the peculiarity and difference of remembering on the occasion of being in place further throughout the chapter. Having memories of places is not exclusive to being-in a particular environment, nevertheless, we will see how the intersection of the body with the landscape manifests place-based memories differently. Heidegger makes precisely this point above as we considered the way that mood assails the unreflecting Dasein in the world. We will also see how the body in place is distinct from place-memories occurring in outside of the particular environments. First, in the section below we will see how the body catalyzes memorial experience as it moves in and through forgotten places. In the final section I will exhibit that way that place is a particularly poignant trigger for memory because the subject is literally “within” the reminder.

Remembering at the Natural Pool

Mat leaves the region of the tree and continues down a descent toward a stream that the fence line crosses. Unlike the place of the tree, he moves into a place that is more particularized in his past experience. This place, a spot in the stream, is marked out for him as one that is associated with a clear memory from his past. A drop in the stream into

a pool below distinguishes the environment from others. This area in the woods holds memories of experiences that Feltner had many decades before. Berry writes:

Here, seventy-five years ago, Mat came with a fencing crew: his father, Ben, his uncle, Jack Beechum, Joe Banion, a boy then, not much older than Mat, and Joe's grandfather, Smoke, who had been a slave. And Mat remembers Jack Beechum coming down through the woods, as Mat himself has just come, carrying on his shoulder two of the long light rams they used to tamp the dirt into postholes. As he approached the pool he took a ram in each hand, holding them high, made three long approaching strides, planted the rams in the middle of the pool, and vaulted over. Mat, delighted, said, "Do it again!" And without breaking rhythm, Jack turned, made the three swinging strides, and did it again—*does* it again in Mat's memory, so clearly that Mat's presence there, so long after, fades away, and he hears their old laughter, and hears Joe Banion say, "Mistah Jack, he might nigh a *bird!*"³⁴³

Feltner's memory experience transitions into another memory that occurred in the same place:

Forty-some years later, coming down the same way to build that same fence again, Mat and Joe Banion and Virgil, Mat's son, grown then and full of the newness of his man's strength, Mat remembered what Jack had done and told Virgil; Virgil took the two rams, made the same three strides Jack had made, vaulted the pool, and this time Joe looked at Mat and said only, "Damn."³⁴⁴

³⁴³ Ibid., 292.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 293.

The first thing we observe in this memory-event is that place-based memories can take us by surprise. Throughout his sojourn, Feltner is not actively seeking memory in places. The purpose of his travel is to inspect the fence at the border of his property. As Berry describes Feltner's itinerary, he walks the reader through the travels of the farmer: "He reaches the edge of the stream at a point where the boundary, coming down the slope facing him, turns at a right angle and follows Shade Branch in its fall toward the creek known as Sand Ripple."³⁴⁵ The description continues. It moves fluidly and rapidly as Feltner walks. Suddenly, as Mat continues down the slope toward the pool, his movement is halted by the memory that arises. In this particular memorial event, the catalyst for remembering is Mat's walking down the hillside toward the stream in the same manner that Jack Beechum had decades before. It is his bodily interaction with the landscape that incites the appearing of memory. Casey explains, "The lived body's basic 'interleaving' activity makes it ideally suited as a means for mediating between two such seemingly different things as memory and place. As psycho-physical in status, the lived body puts us in touch with the psychical and moving, it can relate at once to the movable bodies that are the primary occupants of place and to the self-moving soul that recollects itself in place." He continues, "The lived body traces out the arena for the remembered scenes that inhere so steadfastly in particular places: the lived body's maneuvers and movements, imagined as well as actual, make room for remembering placed scenes in all of their complex composition."³⁴⁶ Feltner's body in the landscape, through the mimetic movements of his own corporeality, catalyzes the presentation of memory of the fencing

³⁴⁵ Wendell Berry, "The Boundary," in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004), 292.

³⁴⁶ Casey, *Remembering*, 189. Casey draws the term "interleaving" from Merleau-Ponty. See n. 341.

party from decades past. His movement toward the familiar stream connects with the movement of another he had watched as a young boy. The lived body in landscape, for Berry, activates memories that have remained dormant. Often, when we consider remembering, there is an aspect of an explicit attempt of retrieval. In voluntary memory retrieval, there is effort to bring out a memory from sometime past. In “The Boundary,” however, remembered events appear, not through willed hearkening, but instead through the emplaced body’s moving in its environment. It is the act of moving down the slope toward the stream that actualizes the memory. Being-in and acting-in draws the dweller back to a previous time with immediacy. Similarly, in the previous example, Berry describes the memory of rest for Feltner, when sitting below the oak, as “coming upon” the farmer. There is no attempt of retrieval of the lost memory. Rather, the farmer is a recipient of the memory without volition.

As the place of the stream catalyzes the presentation of memory, there is a givenness of memory content that is lucid. Memory brings Feltner onto the stage of that which occurred seventy-five years earlier. Casey explains that “place is the *mise en scène* for remembered events precisely to the extent that it guards and keeps these events within its perimeters.”³⁴⁷ Standing on the stage, the characters from nearly a century past take their places and reenact their roles. We find, quite clearly, in the mnemonic presentation³⁴⁸ at the pool, Casey's notion of a memory frame in the object phase of remembering. The frame includes the temporal aspect of the memorial experience. Feltner remembers the year and season of the occurrence. Also included in the memory frame is the place of the memory—the spot in the stream where the event had occurred.

³⁴⁷ Ibid.

³⁴⁸ Ibid., 65.

And there is Feltner's self-presence in the scene at the pool. He remembers it through the eyes of himself at a young age. He sees the event unfolding just as he had before. Finally, there is a rich sense of worldhood. It is not a representation of simple time, space, event, and self-presence. But rather, there is an “environing world” that “acts as an underlying field of presentation for the specific content remembered.”³⁴⁹ In Feltner's memory, there is a complex network of sights and sounds, time and place, and human interactions in which the remembered content is re-experienced.

The worldhood that is given in the memory frame leads to what is perhaps the most philosophically rich statement in Berry's Port William chronicles regarding place, memory, and experience. In a subtle move, Berry tells us that this place-based memory is part of Feltner's present—not simply occurring as a memory of the past, but rather it is retrieved, revived, and re-experienced in the present. Again, he writes “Jack turned, made the three swinging strides, and did it again—*does* it again in Mat's memory, so clearly that Mat's presence there, so long after, fades away, and he hears their old laughter, and hears Joe Banion say, 'Mistah Jack, he might nigh be a bird.’”³⁵⁰ This place-based memory transports Feltner into the memory. He presently sees and hears the action. He feels the joviality of the fencing crew. The author exemplifies the importance of the past being brought into the present by making a modification in the narrative. After being asked by the young Mat Feltner to repeat the vaulting action over the pool, he writes that Beechum “did it again.” But then the narrator reconsiders and clarifies that Beechum “*does* it again in Mat's memory.” He explains that the farmer's present self, as an old man alone in the woods, fades. He experiences the memory as the young man he once was,

³⁴⁹ Ibid., 69.

³⁵⁰ Berry, “The Boundary,” 292.

presently dwelling in the memory from seventy-five years prior. This re-experiencing of retrieved memory is what Casey calls revival. “The retrieval of items vanished from view is not a merely mechanical procedure of ‘decoding’ information that has been ‘encoded’ upon being ‘placed in storage.’”³⁵¹ He explains the concept of revival when he considers the difference between primary and secondary remembering. Primary remembering—those memories that are still in the forefront of memory—do not need to be retrieved or revived. But the experience of secondary remembering he explains in this way:

But for those whose date *is* cut off, the resuscitation effected in secondary remembering is required; and the resuscitation is of more than the date alone: at the limit, it is a revival of an entire experience, of our whole stance and attitude, the way we *were* in confronting and engaging the objects of our concern. To revive such an experience and these objects in secondary remembering is to give them a second chance, a second life. This second life is not the strict equivalent of the first, and Husserl is right to caution that “I can relive the present, but *it* can never be given again.” But secondary remembering does make possible an after-life within the current epoch of the remembering mind. It is a main means by which the present and the non-immediate past rejoin each other in present human experience.³⁵²

In Husserl’s words: “My recall of a past event implies, as we have already remarked, the ‘having perceived it’; thus in a certain way we become aware of the ‘corresponding’ perception...in memory, though it is not really contained. Memory in its own essential

³⁵¹ Casey, *Remembering*, 51.

³⁵² *Ibid.*, 52.

nature is a ‘modification’ of perception.”³⁵³ Through Hannah Coulter, Berry clearly exhibits this Husserlian notion of memory as a modification of perception:

And so you have a life that you are living only now, now and now and now, gone before you can speak of it, and you must be thankful for living day by day, moment by moment, in this presence...But you have a life too that you remember. It stays with you. You have lived a life in the breath and pulse and living light of the present, and your memories of it, remembered now, are of a different life in a different world and time. When you remember the past, you are not remembering it as it was. You are remembering it as it is. It is a vision or a dream present with you in the present, alive with you in the only time you are alive.³⁵⁴

Or as Augustine writes regarding memory and time: “the present of things past is memory.”³⁵⁵

While not all secondary rememberings include such an intricate mnemonic presentation, the remembering that takes place by the stream is indicative of what Casey describes above as the “limit” of an elaborate memory frame. Feltner is brought *back* into memory, but also the past action is ushered into the present through its present appearing in his memory.

Remembering at the Built Pool

Berry’s “The Boundary” enables us to consider the way in which varied experiences in place correspond with varying intensities of memory. In the first example, the tree is not connected to a memory of a particular experience, but rather it is of a mood associated with a region of the property. As he moves further into the property, Feltner

³⁵³ Husserl, *Ideas*, 268.

³⁵⁴ Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter* (Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005), 148.

³⁵⁵ Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (Fathers of the Church, 1953), 350.

comes to the stream and remembers past events at the natural pool. This place is connected to personal experiences in that particular place. The defined characteristics of the physical landscape at the pool and movement of his body in place intensify the content of the memory. The farmer experiences the past coming into the present. Unlike the recollection of the mood associated with the tree (and its region), this memory has a greater sense of precision and detail due to the connection of a particular event in place with distinct details. In a final investigation of place and memory in “The Boundary,” I will consider this progression of the vividness of memory-content in place. While the first place and memory concerns a general mood and the second a specific event, the third memorial experience elicits an even more elevated sense of clarity and expressiveness. As Feltner continues his journey through place, he arrives at a second pool in the stream. This pool is different than the first. The first pool was shaped by the forces of nature and was the site of brief, yet memorable interactions with the fencing crews. The second was crafted by the hands of Feltner and his son Virgil during a drought in the summer of 1930. It was a built place, cultivated in the natural environment. “He and Virgil worked several days in August of that year, building the wall and filling in behind it so that the stream, when it ran full again, would not tear out the stones.”³⁵⁶ Mat remembers that he and his son brought with them hand tools and a water jug. While his father worked the rocks into a pool, the young Virgil made a place out of river stones to hold the jug. Virgil wedged the jug between the trunk of a tree and its roots. Later, gathering the tools, Mat and Virgil left their built place in the wild, leaving behind the jug.

Standing beside the pool, Mat remembers the diligent work of cultivating the landscape, the actions of his young son, and the year and season in which they were

³⁵⁶ Berry, “The Boundary,” 295.

there. “Remembering, Mat goes to the place and looks and again finds the stone and the broken jug beneath it. He has never touched the rock or jug, and he does not do so now. He stands, looking, thinking of his son, dead twenty years, a stranger to his daughter, now a grown woman, who never saw him, and he says aloud, ‘Poor fellow!’ He does not know he is weeping until he feels his tears cool on his face.”³⁵⁷ This place has become a memorial for Feltner. He has preserved it as a reminder. He remembers a time before his son died in military duty. Knowing the power of place and memory, Feltner has not disturbed the broken jug or the stone. By design, this place—the natural and the built—becomes a personal site of memory of his son. The preservation of place has been intended for the perpetuation of memory.

In *The Poetics of Space* Bachelard writes, “Of course, thanks to the house, a great many of our memories are housed, and if the house is a bit elaborate, if it has a cellar and a garret, nooks and corridors, our memories have refuges that are more clearly delineated.”³⁵⁸ This notion of more elaborate places having more delineated memories is connected to Casey’s assertion that place “furnishes attachment points for memory.”³⁵⁹ Bachelard is in agreement with Casey, yet he takes the notion to the limit and universalizes the idea. For Bachelard, as distinctive attachment points increase in number and intricacy, memory becomes more demarcated. Although this is most often the case, it is not always true. I can remember with great detail one of the first extended conversations I had alone with my wife. We were sitting on a beach, late at night, surrounded by darkness. I can remember the content of the conversation, the sound of the

³⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 295-296.

³⁵⁸ Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, trans. Maria Jolas (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969, 1994), 8.

³⁵⁹ Casey, *Remembering*, 189.

waves, and the feel of the crisp air. I can even remember the shirt she wore that night, nearly nine years ago. This act of remembering remains richly place-based. The location was one that is not an aspect of my day-to-day dwelling and it certainly enhances the memory experience. However, the place itself was not intricately elaborate. Although uncommon, it was relatively homogeneous—an expanse of sand and water. Further, the darkness added to the homogeneity since I was unable to see characteristics of our surroundings, which may have made the place more elaborate. This memory is more clearly delineated due to other factors: its importance in our relationship, its distinctiveness from the mundane, and the novelty of being on a beach in the middle of a summer night. Although more difficult to conjure, we can remember times when we encountered elaborate places that contain obscure memories. A church with a magnificent vaulted ceiling, detailed stained-glass windows, and an ornate pulpit may hold memories that are tenuous at best.

Nevertheless, in “The Boundary,” we can see the way in which the act of remembering can thicken as the places of the memories become increasingly elaborate in the experiences of Feltner. As each location of memory becomes increasingly detailed, the memories held by those places also become more specified. There are characteristics of the past experiences at the built pool that make the memories more vivid. First, the memory in place of the built-pool is thickened by return to the place.³⁶⁰ Unlike the first two instances, this place was not simply wandered through on the way to somewhere else. This pool was a place that the Feltners visited several times throughout the same

³⁶⁰ As Relph writes: “[Places] are constructed in our memories and affections through repeated encounters and complex associations. Place experiences are necessarily time-deepened and memory-qualified.” Edward Relph, “Geographical Experiences,” in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, ed. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 26.

summer. The project stops them—it holds them in the place. Secondly, there is a thickening that occurs through the manipulation of the wild place. “Cultivation *localizes care*.”³⁶¹ In chapter three I examined the raised awareness of place through the care-filled cultivation of places. The work at the pool was done in this way—crafting stones with hand tools and building a pool that would withstand the movement of water over decades. The manipulation of the earth into a built place further connects the Feltners with the environment through work. Through this cultivation, the meaning of place is transformed. It is no longer a natural pool among others. The work in place increases the connection to the place. Further, the project at hand holds them in place. Casey explains that, “Memory of place entails having been slowed down, stopped, or in some other way caught-in-place.”³⁶² Crafting the pool does just this. A final aspect that thickens the memory for the farmer is the jug that was left behind. It has remained in place as a memorial artifact. The jug is distinct from the natural world around it. The jug and the built pool disrupt the natural landscape and create attachment points for Feltner's interaction with the place. This jug also acts as an agent of thickening the memory. “Things fill out place memories by acting as their gathering-points, their main means of support.”³⁶³ While the natural pool-place was capable of sustaining a memory, the artifacts are able to facilitate putting “*past in place; they are the primary source of its concrete implacement in memory.*”³⁶⁴ Through repetition, cultivation, and the artifacts in place, memory is thickened for Feltner.

Memory and Membership

³⁶¹ Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 175.

³⁶² Casey, *Remembering*, 198.

³⁶³ Casey, *Remembering*, 206.

³⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

Memory, in Wendell Berry's Port William chronicles, is not to be considered as isolated appearances of past events. The impetus of Berry's notion of place-based memory is integral to a fuller configuration of the fundamental framework of his oeuvre—that is, membership as the fusion of the self, the other, and place. Memory and place in Berry's stories transcend the individual experience and have ramifications for the membership. To fully grasp the intent of the author we must consider the ways in which he is intertwining memory and place in experience with the theme that was explored in the previous chapter. In nearly all of the memory experiences, there is not only perspective on memory in place, but we also find a transportation of the past into the present which is almost always connected to the triune framework of membership of the Kentuckian town. For Berry, place-based memory's role is ultimately the convergence of the membership of Port William both past and present. As Feltner's journey to the boundary draws to an end, Berry writes:

Now he is walking in this world, walking in time, going home. A shadowless love moves him now, not his, but a love that he belongs to, as he belongs to the place and to the light over it. He is thinking of Margaret and of all that his plighting with her has led to. He is thinking of the membership of the fields that he has belonged to all of his life, and will belong to while he breathes, and afterward. He is thinking of the living ones of the membership—at work today in the fields that the dead were at work in before them.³⁶⁵

The membership, for Berry, is never merely the people and place in the present, but it also includes all of those who have come before. Membership transcends time.

Throughout the story, Feltner is not alone in the journey through the fields toward the

³⁶⁵ Berry, "The Boundary," 305-306.

boundary—through memory he is together with the membership. He acknowledges the presence of the deceased members in the place through memory and the fact that he himself will remain in the membership once he has died. Although I have utilized three memories that Feltner has throughout his pilgrimage, these do not exhaust the entirety of the place-memory experience in “The Boundary.” He has other memories as well. He thinks specifically of the close tie to his father and their working in the fields, to his son in different stages of life, and then also to those living—at work in different places in the fields. He remembers Margaret, his wife, with whom he has worked most of his life, Nathan Coulter (who currently works his land), and others. While time disposes of the mortal human members, Berry’s chronicles gather them through the memories in the homesteads, fields, and forests of Port William. Place gathers the people of the membership past and present. In the fields he is reminded of those living and dead: the membership. Even in his memory, the membership is consummated by work. He remembers them clearly as they work the fields, as they make fence lines, and as they craft pools.

For Berry, the act of going into the land is significant because it catalyzes memory and enacts a reassembling of the membership through place-memory. Berry writes of another character, Art Rowanberry: “He lived in place, but place is where the memories were, and he walked among them, tracing them out on the living ground.”³⁶⁶ Memory in place, as Feltner experiences in his sojourn through his land, holds the impetus for drawing the dead from the past. There is a sense of resurrection in which the lives of the dead are brought forth; there is a present appearing of those who are no

³⁶⁶ Wendell Berry, “Are You Alright?,” in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Counterpoint, 2005), 368.

longer living. In “That Distant Land,” the recounting of the death of Mat Feltner, Berry writes, “In their talk the history of Port William went back and back along the lines of lineages until it ended in silence and conjecture...the memories and names hovered over the old transfixed sites.”³⁶⁷ Berry shapes a conception of the membership that draws together the living and the dead, the past and the present. In “The Wild Birds,” Burley Coulter, the quintessential bachelor, requests that Wheeler rewrite his will to include his “illegitimate” son as the heir to his estate. In this piece, the human membership is described as all of those who have lived and worked together.³⁶⁸ Berry explains the gathering in Catlett’s office that night: “The office is crowded...the living remembered, the dead brought back to mind.”³⁶⁹

The importance of memory and membership is one reason why Berry considers the displacement of the people from Port William to be devastating. Membership (of the land, those living, and the dead) is continually renewed in the working in the fields, hunting in the woods, and fellowshiping at the table. As we have seen in the previous chapter, a primary concern for Berry in the narratives of Port William (and in his non-fiction) is the allure for the young to leave the region. An increasing number of members are choosing to depart from Port William for the opportunities afforded by higher education and urban life. In memory and membership we find a significant issue emerging regarding the displacement of members of the community. Just as Feltner realizes and laments his loss of memory through the loss of place, those who leave relinquish the catalyst of the land as a reminder, not only of the people who currently

³⁶⁷ Wendell Berry, “That Distant Land,” in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004).

³⁶⁸ Wendell Berry, “The Wild Birds,” in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005), 361.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 363.

dwell and work within it, but also of those who have gone before—whose mortality has slipped away. The author argues that an effect of leaving is the possible loss of memory. Displacement leads to dis-memberment as characters sever the memories anchored in the attachment points of place. As Berry tells us through Hannah Coulter, “By the ones who have moved away, as many have done, as my children have done, the dead may be easily forgotten. But to those who remain, the place is forever a reminder. And so the absent come to into the present.”³⁷⁰

But we must ask: Is the loss of memory through displacement necessarily the case? We can certainly think of times when we enter a place we have not been for a long time and remember people that we have not considered in years. Yet, these associations often tend to be subtler—they are not relations with which we have developed close ties. Over time, memories of the people of our past lapse into secondary memory, but, most often, are not vanquished from our memory altogether. But how do we consider the question concerning the “loss” of those who have held significant roles in our lives—living or dead? Moving away from my parents does not make me forget them. And because I no longer dwell in the place in which I had a relationship with my deceased uncle, I do not fail to remember him altogether—although I might not think of him as often (or remember him as vividly) if I were in the place of past relationships. I think Berry is trying to uncover a different sense of loss, a more nuanced consideration of place, memory, and membership that is constituted when we are in place.

Seven years ago a close friend and co-worker of mine succumbed to cancer at a very young age. He and I worked together in outdoor education. We spent our time in the office, in the backcountry, and at a challenge course near the small college that housed

³⁷⁰ Wendell Berry, *Hannah Coulter* (Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005), 180.

the program. After his death, I thought of my friend daily; for nearly a year I remembered him vividly. I recalled particular times with him and specific conversations. Michael was a part of what Casey considers my primary memory. He was on the forefront of my memory. There was no need to retrieve and revive the memory of my friend—it was a present remembering. Yet, over the next several years, and as I left the place in which we worked together, I thought of him less and less. Now, there are times when I go months without even considering him. The memory of my friend has lapsed into secondary memory. Different things trigger remembering him: pictures, conversations with others, or coming upon a gift he had given me. However, there remain times when I return to the challenge course that we built and worked at together. We had spent hundreds of hours there over a period of years. When I return to the course, the memory of my friend is inescapable. It has become a memorial place. Although there are many placeholders for memory, place as attachment point is distinct in that, by its very nature, it has points of entry and departure. A memorial place can usually be entered with ease. Memory in place holds sway over us because we are literally, bodily within the reminder itself. The reminder contains us and is all around us. Casey describes it in this way: “Places possess us—in perception, as in memory—by their radiant visibility, insinuating themselves into our lives, setting and surrounding us, even taking us over as we sink into the presence.”³⁷¹

The power of place and memory is that when we are in place we remain within the reminders. The possibility of remembering is around us, we are in it. When we are in the place, the memories of the place more immediately “matter” to us, much like how Heidegger’s sense of mood assails Dasein as Being-in-the-world because the world in which it dwells and the entities toward which it comports itself matter. Just as when

³⁷¹ Casey, *Remembering*, 200.

Feltner has an entire mnemonic presentation of the fencing party when he enters the place of the natural pool, I have a remembrance of my friend and our work that is more vivid and present when I go into the places in which we worked together. When I am in the “there,” images involved in the memory field come upon me. As temporal and spatial distance have a way of dispersing memory, place can have a way of gathering it. As Casey tells us, “Place serves to *situate* one’s memorial life.” It gives memory “a local habitation.”³⁷² And as we remove ourselves from memory’s habitation, we do not lose the memory in its entirety, but the memory can have a tendency to *dim* and lapse more deeply into secondary memory. When we remove ourselves from the place of memory we can more readily experience what Ricoeur considers “the cruel bite of time.”³⁷³

Wendell Berry does not afford us the instruction regarding his view of memory and place in his non-fiction to the extent that he does regarding the notion of membership and place that we observed in the previous chapter. The consideration of memory and place in his non-fiction is far subtler, yet finds its way into many of his essays. To bring this section to a close, it seems apt to turn to “A Native Hill.” This essay is his geobiography. Berry takes his readers on a walk through the countryside, over the farmlands, and into the woods in his homeland of Port Royal, Kentucky. Through this walking tour we find many of the ways that Berry's own life has instructed, or better, inspired his writing. And in this we find him also considering memories of the past as he walks through the place. It is intriguing that as he walks and tells the story of his past; the reader finds that it is an itinerary much like Mat Feltner's. For Berry, his memories also are given in place and through place:

³⁷² Casey, *Remembering*, 184.

³⁷³ Ricoeur, “Life in Quest of a Narrative,” 31.

Standing in the presence of these worn and abandoned fields, where the creation has begun its healing without the hindrance or help of man, with the voice of the stream in the air and the woods standing in silence on all the slopes around me, I am deep in the interior not only of my place in the world, but of my own life, its sources and searches and concerns. I first came into these places following the men to work when I was a child. I knew the men who took their lives from such fields as these, and their lives to a considerable extent made my life what it is. In what came to me from them there was both wealth and poverty, and I have been a long time discovering which was which.³⁷⁴

During this walk Berry also comes to stand next to Camp Branch in the woods. Here he remembers hunting trips with Bill White, his grandfather's hired hand. He recalls his own memories of hunting as a boy. In the fields he remembers plowing fields with mules and then the introduction of tractors. He remembers the tobacco grown by Camp Branch, which is now covered by “patches of briars and sumacs and a lot of young walnut trees.”³⁷⁵ He thinks about how this land was overworked and abandoned. And finally, he finishes his itinerary:

The stream has led me down to an old barn built deep in the hollow to house the tobacco once grown in those abandoned fields. Now it is surrounded by the trees that have come back on every side—a relic, a fragment of another time, strayed out of its meaning. This is the last of my historical landmarks. To here, my walk

³⁷⁴ Wendell Berry, “That Native Hill,” in *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry* (Washington, D.C: Counterpoint, 2002), 21.

³⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, 20.

has had insistent overtones of memory and history, eroding and shaping, adding and wearing away.³⁷⁶

Through his fictional work, Wendell Berry has provided a way to understand memory as catalyzed through place. And through his non-fictional account of his own movements in place we find that the movement of Feltner through place and time is not merely fictional, but rather, it is also indicative of his own movement through place and memory.

Throughout these chapters, I have utilized the works of Wendell Berry as a way to exhibit the role of place in human experience. The life of the rural Kentuckian farmer-author is not the world in which many of us dwell, nevertheless, through Berry we are able to locate ways in which place, which has been historically veiled by action in place, is able to appear in experience. We are then able to see how this appearance can be an effectual aspect of the human experience of being-in-the-world. Place, throughout, has been effective in shaping the lives of the people living within the boundaries of the rural landscape. While part of the triune membership, place has served as catalyst for fusing self and others, through work, in the environment. In this chapter, through the work of Berry and Casey, we have found the way in which place plays a significant role in the experiences of remembering. Place becomes a placeholder of the past—providing a suitable habitat for memories.

³⁷⁶ Ibid., 23.

Conclusion

We live, act and orient ourselves in a world that is richly and profoundly differentiated into places, yet at the same time we seem to have a meager understanding of the constitution of places and the ways in which we experience them.
Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness*

I have argued that place is essential to the experience of the self. A primordial aspect of being-in-the-world is being in place—that is, humans are always already emplaced entities. Many, including Heidegger and Casey, take up this claim. However, this investigation has not only considered the embodied being of the self in the world, it has also made the claim that being in the world is to be shaped by the world. Because place, in its effectiveness, is not often reflected upon, I have attempted to make place's role in the life of the self more explicit.

As a way of investigating this claim, I began *in media res*. The starting point of the investigation (chapter one) was a consideration of place's appearing in experience. Through the works of Husserl, Heidegger, and Merleau-Ponty and their considerations of intentionality, the appearance of place was disclosed as a manifestation of human intentionality directed toward the environment. This theme has been utilized most clearly by Relph in his consideration of places as they are “incorporated into the intentional structures of all human consciousness and experience,”³⁷⁷ in Heidegger as he considers the setting up of place through circumspective comportment toward the environment and in interpretation, and through Casey's consideration (heavily influenced by Merleau-Ponty) of the intersection of the body and the environment. While place's appearing occurs within the intentional interaction of humans in their environments, it is evident

³⁷⁷ Relph, *Place and Placelessness*, 42.

that we often dwell unselfconsciously within place and that our place-knowledge is generally tacit. We have a tendency to work and live in place in such a way that place is not generally considered explicitly per se. When we experience place we may become aware that place has bleeding boundaries. That is, place's demarcation is not in the strict Aristotelian sense of being a container, but rather it is porous. Further, I explored the intimate connection between place and the persons in place. Finally, we saw that places are able to affect persons in place.

Chapter two considers the narrative identity theory of Paul Ricoeur as an entrance into an understanding of the self. Ricoeur's aim is to locate a "self" as an answer to the question of "who," as an alternative to the subject posited by Descartes and aptly deconstructed, most famously, by Nietzsche. Ricoeur considers two senses of identity: sameness (*idem*) and selfhood (*ipse*). Whereas sameness allows for re-identification of the same thing over time, Ricoeur's conception of *ipseity* provides a framework for a self that makes possible innovation over time. Ricoeur's theory culminates in his consideration of the identity of the self as found in Aristotelian emplotment. As the story of the self is remembered and told it is reconfigured in such a way as to synthesize the heterogeneous aspects of the plot.

In the second half of chapter two, I argue that while Ricoeur's narrative identity theory is a capable answer to the question of "who," his conception overlooks the role of place in the narrative. We are able to encounter a richer and more accurate understanding of the self, in terms of the configuration of the narrative, when we consider emplotment, not only through time and action, but also with a mindfulness toward place. This is done by exploring the way place is able to take part in the reidentification of the person over

time, the role of local identifications in place, and place as the primary setting of and therefore condition for narrative. Further, I investigate the way in which stories (as nascent) are not only configured over time, but also through places. In this I show examples from literature that are explicit (Homer's *Odyssey*) and those that are much more subtle (the plays of Beckett). And finally, I demonstrate how the fundamental role of memory in the configuration of the narrative is supported by a consideration of place. Place acts as a means of access to memories.

A theme in chapters one and two is our unselfconscious engagement with place. Although I consider this as an aspect of place experience and draw attention to Ricoeur's oversight of place, I do not yet critically examine why place often goes unnoticed. Chapter three is an examination of this loss of place and attempts to establish how place is veiled in experience. I do this by considering Heidegger's conception of the tool and its inconspicuity in circumspection. This inherently affects place due to place's tool-characteristic, that is, place as a tool for residing. The second half of the chapter regards occurrences of place's appearing in experience as it becomes conspicuous in breakdown, in the interface between body and place, and finally through acts of building and cultivation.

Because of place's characteristic of being unselfconsciously dwelled in and tacitly understood, I turn to the works of Wendell Berry's fiction as a "way into place." Berry's work allows us to look at the stories of characters over time, in the same place. I pay close attention to the ways in which the characters are affected by being in place. Chapter four explores Berry's conception of membership, including oneself, the other, and environment, as consummated through work. With the aid of Heidegger, the chapter

explores the connection one has to place and the reciprocal relationship that humans have with place in giving and receiving, care and provision. To close the chapter, I look at the how Berry considers the way in which land does not only belong to the human membership, but also the emplaced people belong to the land.

Chapter five centers around another theme that has shown its face throughout the dissertation: The relationship between place and memory experience. The chapter first outlines a phenomenology of the intentional acts of consciousness in remembering (through Husserl and Casey). It then turns to Berry's work, particularly his short story "The Boundary," to reflect on place-based memory in the human experience. Although Berry never claims to be a phenomenologist, we can clearly see the ways in which place-based memorial experience in his work reflects the characteristics of the phenomenology of memory. Through the journey of Mat Feltner toward the edge of his property, we find place as a place-holder for memory, the variegated characteristic of place providing attachment points for memory, and ultimately discover the way that memory, for Berry, ties together the membership of Port William.

The aim of chapters four and five was to utilize Berry's Port William chronicles as a way of elucidating not only the role of place in experience, but also to show that place has a critical role in shaping the narrative identity of the self. While the chapters are explicit in demonstrating the role that place plays in the life of the subject, do they also exhibit place's role in narrative formation? Are the examples provided convincing that place is a crucial component in identity formation? Before moving to an exploration of future questions concerning place and experience, there remains a need to connect Berry's stories of Port William more explicitly with place-based narrative identity. I will

proceed by taking up several of the aspects of place in the narrative as set forth in chapter two.

Let me begin with what may seem to be the most tenuous: reidentification over time. In chapter two, I explored Ricoeur's consideration that temporality offers a challenge to re-identification of the self as the same entity at different times. While re-identification is more readily accomplished within the short temporal durations, it nevertheless suffers from what Ricoeur calls the "cruel bite of time."³⁷⁸ I argue that emplacement is proficient in aiding in re-identification. Berry does not necessarily elicit a loss of identification in his narratives, but he does show that the appearing of a person to others is connected to one's platial context. The story "Fidelity" begins with the woodsman Burley Coulter nearing death in the county hospital. His son, Danny Branch, enters the hospital to take Burley away from the hospital. Disconnecting Coulter from the machines prolonging his life, Branch transports him to the woods to die. In the woods, Berry describes Coulter's physical appearance:

[Branch] shone the light a moment on the still face. In its profound sleep, it wore a solemnity that Burley, in his waking life, would never have allowed. And yet it was, as it had not been in the hospital, unmistakably the face of the man who for eighty-two years had been Burley Coulter. Here, where it belonged, the face thus identified itself and assumed a power that kept Danny standing there, shining the light on it.³⁷⁹

It is not as though Danny was unable to identify his father in the hospital. Nevertheless, the scene can be understood in this way: One's physical appearance is affected by its

³⁷⁸ Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of a Narrative," 33.

³⁷⁹ Wendell Berry, "Fidelity," in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005), 386.

platial context. Coulter's existence for the extent of his life had been in the farmlands and woods of Port William. This is where those who knew and loved him best most clearly recognized him. Within the hospital, he is platially decontextualized in such a way that he appears as nearly a different man. Through Burley's re-placement into the woods his face "identifies" itself. In the familiar context Burley's body shows itself in clear familiarity to his son.

Another aspect of *idem* identity in Ricoeur's work was the development of character. For Ricoeur, "character designates the lasting set of dispositions by which a person is recognized over time."³⁸⁰ These character traits are developed in two ways. First, they are habits developed through actions repeated over time. We found that, for Ricoeur, the repetition of these actions is sedimented in the self in such a way that they become a part of who one is and facilitate identification. The work of cultivating the land shapes the farmers in particular ways. Berry's characters develop a patience and a work ethic that the land requires of them to produce its yield. In chapter four, we saw the shaping of the self through one's engagement with environment over time. This was made explicit through the dialogue between Wheeler Catlett and Elton Penn regarding purchase of Old Jack Beechum's farm. Catlett says to Penn, "We start out expecting things of it. All of us do, I think. And then some of us, if we stay put and pay attention, see that expectations are going the other way too. Demands are being made of us, whether we know it or know what they are or not. The place is crying out to us to do better, to be worthy of it."³⁸¹ Over time, the farmer in place is transformed. This is exemplified with Berry's juxtaposition of the protagonists and antagonists. Time on the

³⁸⁰ Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 121.

³⁸¹ Berry, "It Wasn't Me," 284-285.

farm changes the way in which the dwellers care for and engage with the land itself. The human members, in contrast to those outside of the membership, are marked by this care for the land, which is created by being-in the land and paying attention to its needs and its rhythms. The enduring farmer learns what causes the land to flourish and responds appropriately.

The second aspect of character in Ricoeur's narrative identity is that persons develop a set of identifications. He explains, "To a large extent, in fact, the identity of a person or a community is made up of these identifications with values, norms, ideals, models, and heroes, *in* which the person or the community recognizes itself. Recognizing oneself *in* contributes to recognizing one by."³⁸² The notion of the identification of the community of Port William is so explicit that it hardly needs to be more fully exhibited. Berry vivifies the characters' connections to the values, norms and ideals through the emphasis he places on the importance of staying in place, through the role of the community in its care for one another, and through the cultivation of the environment through small scale, traditional farming (in contrast to large scale agribusiness).³⁸³ Further, the reader discovers heroes held in common throughout the narrative, including: Wheeler Catlett, Burley Coulter, Elton Penn, Hannah Coulter, and Mat Feltner. They are heroic as they embody and preserve the ideals of the community. The communal ideals and heroes of the place in the Port William chronicles, show with clarity the way in which place is a formative aspect of these identifications. Through the fictional works, we can see the way in which place gathers. Because of Port William's physical stature—its boundaries marked out by aspects of the landscape—it holds the community in. The

³⁸² Ricoeur, *Oneself as Another*, 121.

³⁸³ For the clearest juxtaposition of small-scale farming and what Berry calls "agribusiness" see: Wendell Berry, *Remembering: A Novel* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2008).

people are gathered in place, by the topography, and this gathering is what allows for identifiable communal traits to develop. The gathering characteristic of place, through its boundaries created by physical aspects of the environment, allows for the collection of identifications. In Berry's writing, those outside of the membership exhibit a lack of these common marks. The explicit "inness" of place becomes a cauldron for the shared worldview of the membership.

Chapter five investigates the fundamental role of place in remembering through the journey of Mat Feltner. This also plays a critical role in the narrative identity of the self in the reconfiguration of the narrative through the synthesis of seemingly heterogeneous events into a homogeneous storied-whole. For Berry, memories occur almost exclusively in place and are catalyzed by place.³⁸⁴ He explains, through the commentary of Andy Catlett, that the place is the "strata" of one's history.³⁸⁵ Of Art Rowenberry he writes, "Art was the rememberer. He knew what he knew and what had been known by a lot of dead kinfolks and neighbors. They lived on his mind and spoke there, reminding him and us of things that needed to be remembered." He continues, "It was not that he 'lived in his mind.' He lived in the place, but the place was where the memories were, and he walked among them, tracing them out over the living ground."³⁸⁶ Place provides access to the memories of people and the events of the past. It manifests a frame for memory and is able to synthesize a story that occurs and develops not only through time, but also in place.

³⁸⁴ I also showed how memory of the membership is catalyzed during times of displacement and homesickness. This remains explicitly place-based.

³⁸⁵ Wendell Berry, "Pray Without Ceasing," in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005), 39.

³⁸⁶ Wendell Berry, "Are You Alright?," in *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories* (Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005).

The final connection between the stories of Wendell Berry and narrative identity is the connection between environment and promising. Promising is the culmination of Ricoeur's narrative identity. Making a promise is what allows the active role of the self to innovate the "who" they are over time in the preservation (or breaking) of promises made. Chapter four exhibits the role of promising and place through the eventual choice of the character to remain in Port William or to leave. Characters are at first in place by birth, and then by choice. In *Remembering*, Berry exhibits the necessity for characters to persevere in the promise to stay in place. He does not consider this a choice that is made once and remains effective. Instead, he calls it a "long choosing."³⁸⁷ The decision—or promise—to stay is always capable of being broken. Human members can always choose to leave in the future. We recall that Berry writes concerning his own choosing: "I had made a significant change in my relationship to the place: before, it had been mine by coincidence or accident; now it was mine by choice. My return, which at first had been hesitant and tentative, grew wholehearted and sure. I had come back to stay."³⁸⁸ And it is also exhibited through Andy Catlett: "He knows that some who might have left chose to stay, and that some who did leave chose to return, and he is one of them. Those choices have formed in time and place the pattern of a membership that chose him, yet left him free until he should choose it, which he did once, and now has done again."³⁸⁹ Berry and Catlett each choose hesitantly. The choosing of these men to return to their homes marks their selfhood. However, it is a vow that, while continuously renewed, is able to be broken.

³⁸⁷ Berry, *Remembering*, 60.

³⁸⁸ Berry, "That Native Hill," 7.

³⁸⁹ Wendell Berry, *Remembering: A Novel* (Counterpoint, 2008), 50.

Ending in the Beginning

It seems only appropriate that this dissertation should end in the place in which it began. In the introduction I explained that the seed of my own topophilia was planted in questions regarding how one is to live in place. These inquiries gave root to the fundamental philosophical interests that have been explored in these pages. Ultimately, I have wanted to show that places *matter*. They are the condition for our being-in-the-world, they provide orientation, and are formative in our lives and, as I hope to have shown, they shape our identities. Now, having established the role of place in experience and the identity of the self, I will end with a few questions for future consideration. Place and the way we are to live are closely tied, even etymologically. As Casey explains, “Both ‘politics’ and ‘ethics’ go back to the Greek words that signify place: *polis* and *ēthea*, ‘city-state’ and ‘habitats,’ respectively. The very word ‘society’ stems from *socius*, signifying ‘sharing’—and sharing is done in a common place.”³⁹⁰

The key contributors to my work are those who believe that the way in which we consider place, the ways in which places appear in experience, has certain ramifications for how we dwell. Edward Relph, while doing a phenomenology of place (strongly influenced by Husserl), remains intent on crafting a conception of place and experience that is able to instruct the practices in the field of geography. Gaston Bachelard means to disclose a “better way” into the human psyche than the previous avenues of the psychotherapist. Even Martin Heidegger’s work, “The Question Concerning Technology,” is meant to be instructive regarding the way in which we dwell on earth and the posture we take toward the use of technology and the possible enframing of the environment. Not least of all, there is the work of Wendell Berry. I have attempted to

³⁹⁰ Casey, *The Fate of Place*, xiv.

approach Wendell Berry as an example of the way being-in affects the self. Berry's fiction allows a way of seeing and describing experience in place. Nevertheless, Berry's work is ultimately prescriptive. He is interested in a way to live. This is always exhibited in membership that includes oneself, the other, and place.

If the places we dwell shape our personal identity, this study should have practical implications for various aspects of the lived experience. There are several questions regarding the political life that come into view. A primary theme that has emerged through the reading of Wendell Berry (chapters four and five) is the effects of displacement on memory, membership, and identity. A consideration of the role of place in identity formation can impel us to consider various policies, such as the removal of people from the land in which they dwell. This regards the displacement of indigenous people from their land and the practice of governmental eminent domain. If ties between people and place are deeper than the economic—if displacement has an influence on personal identity—then we must ask: Is a system that seeks merely financial restitution suitable? Is the mandated exchange of money or alternative dwelling places as substitution for one's land an act of a just society?

We have also considered the characteristic of bleeding boundaries (chapter one). Berry's notion of membership is always open to the possibility for hospitality and welcome to the outsider (chapter three). Port William has been shown to be a bounded place that is always opened for entry to the alien. How does this enable us to consider the creation of impassible boundaries through our contemporary border closing and the erection of literal walls? How does this affect the identity of those outside of the boundaries and those within? Also, perhaps the notion of a place-based narrative is able

to reinvigorate questions concerning the institutions that Foucault has diligently analyzed and criticized? This includes not only how and where we *place* those whom we consider physically and mentally ill or the criminal, but also the way we shape the environments in which our young people learn and our elderly find care. And these questions are just the beginning. If place and identity are entangled, as I have attempted to show, then there should be implications for environmental ethics and policy, urban planning and zoning. It should also impact policy that sets up and preserves wilderness landscapes, public places for recreation, and the development of memorials and place of commemoration.

Furthermore, the conception of a place-based narrative has ramifications for our domestic lives. We should investigate the ways in which we build and cultivate the places in which we dwell. We need to set out to understand what a “good place” might be and how our homes and places of recreation can best be configured. Can beautiful and diverse places enable richer emplaced human experiences? And what about Berry’s theme of place commitment? What are the effects (good and ill) of transiency on people in our increasingly nomadic culture? Does developing place commitments by “staying put” have a way of leading to a more significant lived experience or does having dwelling experiences in variegated places shape the subject in more diverse and “better” ways?³⁹¹

It is appropriate to allude here to Casey’s two ways to dwell as developed in *Getting Back into Place*. Casey explains that there are two primary modes of dwelling: hestial and hermetic. Hestial dwelling (named for the Greek goddess of the hearth) is a residing that focuses on “in-dwelling and staying-on, being with.”³⁹² When considering

³⁹¹ Alternately, is there a “both/and” response to this question? Many emerging adults have a desire to “see the world” before making a commitment to place.

³⁹² Edward S Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 132.

hstial dwelling, Casey primarily focuses on built-places. Hstial dwelling places “tend to be at once centered and self-enclosed.”³⁹³ To elucidate the centering and enclosing characteristics of the hstial dwelling, Casey considers both the mundane home-place of the Navajo hogan and the grand architecture of Saint Peter’s Basilica. Each gathers the dweller toward a center and concentrates the intentionality of the subject towards the place’s inwardness.

In contrast, Casey explains hermetic dwelling: “If the hstial mainly gathers in...the hermetic moves out resolutely. The hermetic represents the far-out view, a view from a moving position, in which the slow motions of the caretaker/homemaker give way to the impatient rapidity of the thief, the trespasser, and the traveler. Under the sign of Hermes, the con-centric becomes the ec-centric.”³⁹⁴ Hermetic dwelling is one that moves through expansive landscapes, along roadways, and within the open environment of the *agora*.

This dissertation tends toward focusing on the role of place in human identity through the effects of residing as remaining. We have seen this most explicitly through the topoanalytical approach of Bachelard and in the membership of Port William. I have considered primarily (but not exclusively) the way in which remaining in place shapes the character (habitual traits and identifications) of the self through the narrative. It could be argued that both Bachelard and Berry preference a consideration of residing and remaining in a place in their conceptions of the subject in place.³⁹⁵

³⁹³ Ibid., 133.

³⁹⁴ Ibid., 138.

³⁹⁵ This is not necessarily the case for Berry. The journey of Mat Feltner through the open fields and the forests of his property in “The Boundary” is a clear example of Casey’s hstial dwelling.

Yet, for Casey (as well as for Berry and Bachelard), hestial and hermetic dwelling are not antithetical to one another, nor are they mutually exclusive. Casey argues that the two kinds of dwelling complement one another. The “dwelling-as-wandering...contributes to dwelling-as-residing by returning travelers safely to their hestial origins”³⁹⁶ and, likewise, the inner places of the hesital open up (and out) toward the landscapes and cityscapes and the possibility of the hermetic. For both Berry and Bachelard, there remains a relationship between the two modes. The hestial and the hermetic, the stationary and the mobile (or in Heidegger’s terms the earth and the world) are able to enhance one another. A further analysis of the relationship between the hestial and hermetic would augment the consideration of “ways” to live in place and the affect place has on human being-in-the-world.

Finally, as we consider cultivating places, we are reminded of the words of Martin Heidegger as he writes: “A mood assails us. It comes neither from ‘outside’ nor from ‘inside,’ but arises out of Being-in-the-world, as a way of such Being.”³⁹⁷ If one’s state of mind is initiated through the intersection of the self and place, as Heidegger contends, how then should we cultivate environments in such a way to fit the purposes of particular places? This would seem to have implications for architecture, urban development, and even interior design. How should a living room be crafted differently than a study to elicit the mood that is fitting for it? While most of these queries are pursued in varied disciplines, they are not always considered in terms of the effects that place has on identity. I suggest that considering place, experience, and identity will provide a ground from which to explore some of the most practical questions concerning the human

³⁹⁶ Casey, *Getting Back into Place*, 143.

³⁹⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, 136.

experience. A place-based identity of the subject should serve as a prolegomena to the questions that I encountered years prior to the work of this dissertation.

The aim that I have taken up in this dissertation has been to explore the ways in which place plays a crucial role in our lived experience. Not only do we affect places, but reciprocally, places also shape our behaviors, our experiences, and ultimately our identities. But there is a more implicit purpose to this work. It is one that has dwelled beneath the surface of the text throughout and has shaped its context. In ways it is similar to nearly all other pieces of culture—fiction, non-fiction, painting, music, and film—that make the claim that places matter. Within this dissertation there is an attempt to raise the awareness of place in experience. And this may be the most fundamental question emerging from the investigation herein: If place is often unselfconsciously dwelled within and tacitly know, and if place has a significant affect on who we are, then how should we consider ways in which we can draw place into our conscious awareness? There are certainly times when it is only appropriate for the environment to lapse out of explicit awareness and into the background of our consciousness. With a scalpel in hand, the last thing I want is for a surgeon to be slowed down, distracted, and captivated by his place. Many of our everyday functions of being-in-the-world depend upon the veil of place. But this is not always the case.

A few months ago I was mountain biking in Brady's Run Park with friends. As the group gasped its way to the top of a steep climb, we were completely unaware of the environment that we were working so hard to move *through*. At the top of the hill we gathered just off the trail. While composing ourselves, my friend Don was mesmerized

by the landscape that lay before us. “Look,” he said. “See the way that the trillium spreads out over the contours of that hillside? Just amazing.” It is time to develop such a posture toward place in experience—to draw the places of our dwelling out of unselfconscious awareness. Perhaps it is time to wonder more about place and to pull back its veil. Architect Joseph Grange encourages us to “wonder about nature, wonder about our human powers of construction, wonder about place itself. To wonder about place through fleshy thought is to seek our home...for to examine place is to ask for the roots of our being.”³⁹⁸ In doing so, we will be able to have a thicker and more meaningful encounter with the places of our lives, we will be able to constitute a care for place that is more appropriate to its ever-present provision, and we will be able to come to understand the necessary force that place plays in shaping who we are in our capacity to dwell as being-in-the-world.

³⁹⁸ Joseph Grange, “Place, Body and Situation,” in *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, ed. David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 82.

Bibliography

- Addyman, David. "Phenomenology 'Less the Rosy Hue': Beckett and the Philosophy of Place." *Journal of Modern Literature* 33, no. 4 (2010): 112–128.
- Augustine (Bishop of Hippo). *Confessions*. Fathers of the Church, 1953.
- Bachelard, Gaston. *The Poetics of Space*. Translated by Maria Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press, 1994.
- Beatley, Timothy. *Native to Nowhere: Sustaining Home and Community in a Global Age*. Washington, DC: Island Press, 2004.
- Beckett, Samuel. *Play: And Two Short Pieces for Radio*. London: Faber and Faber, 1964.
- Berry, Wendell. "The Agrarian Standard." In *Citizenship Papers: Essays*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2004.
- . "Are You Alright?" In *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005.
- . "The Body and the Earth." In *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2002.
- . "The Boundary." In *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004.
- . "Conservation and Local Community." In *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2002.
- . "Does Community Have a Value?" In *Home Economics*. New York: North Point Press, 1987.
- . *The Hidden Wound*. Second Edition. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2010.
- . *Jayber Crow: A Novel*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2000.
- . "Fidelity." In *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005.
- . *Hannah Coulter*. Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2005.
- . *Harlan Hubbard: Life and Work*. Lexington, KY: University Press of Kentucky, 1997.

- . “Local Knowledge in the Age of Information.” In *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2006.
- . “It Wasn’t Me.” In *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004.
- . “People, Land, and Community.” In *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2002.
- . “Pray Without Ceasing.” In *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005.
- . “The Purpose of a Coherent Community.” In *The Way of Ignorance: And Other Essays*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2006.
- . *Remembering: A Novel*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2008.
- . “Sex, Economy, Freedom, and Community.” In *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2002.
- . “Six Agricultural Fallacies.” In *Home Economics*. New York: North Point Press, 1987.
- . “That Distant Land.” In *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Shoemaker & Hoard, 2004.
- . “That Native Hill.” In *The Art of the Common-Place: The Agrarian Essays of Wendell Berry*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2002.
- . “The Wild Birds.” In *That Distant Land: The Collected Stories*. Washington, D.C.: Counterpoint, 2005.
- Bogner, Botond. “Phenomenology in the Design Studio.” In *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, edited by David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Bonzo, J. Matthew, and Michael R Stevens. *Wendell Berry and the Cultivation of Life: A Reader’s Guide*. Grand Rapids, Mich: Brazos Press, 2008.
- Bouma-Prediger, Steven, and Brian J. Walsh. *Beyond Homelessness: Christian Faith in a Culture of Displacement*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Pub., 2008.
- Broad, Charles Lewis. *Winston Churchill, A Biography*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1958.

- Casey, Edward S. "JE Malpas's Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography: Converging and Diverging In/On Place'." *Philosophy & Geography* 4, no. 2 (2001): 225–238.
- . *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993.
- . *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study*. 2nd ed. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2000.
- . *The Fate of Place: A Philosophical History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997.
- . *Imagining: A Phenomenological Study*. Indiana University Press, 2000.
- Descartes, René. *Meditations on First Philosophy*. Later Printing. Hackett Pub Co Inc, 1979.
- Dresser, N. "Cultivating Wilderness: The Place of Land in the Fiction of Ed Abbey and Wendell Berry." *Growth and Change* 26, no. 3 (1995): 350–364.
- Dreyfus, Hubert L. *Being-in-the-World: A Commentary on Heidegger's Being and Time, Division I*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991.
- Farrar, M. E. "Home/Sick: Memory, Place, and Loss in New Orleans." *Theory & Event* 12, no. 4 (2009).
- Grange, Joseph. "Place, Body and Situation." In *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, edited by David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Heidegger, Martin. *Being and Time*. Translated by John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson. San Francisco, Calif.: HarperSanFrancisco, 1962.
- . "Building Dwelling Thinking." In *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell. HarperCollins, 1993.
- . "The Origin of the Work of Art." In *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins, 1972.
- . "The Question Concerning Technology." In *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell. New York: HarperCollins, 1972.

- Holenstein, Elmar. "The Zero Point of Orientation: The Placement of the I in Perceived Place." In *The Body: Classic and Contemporary Readings*, edited by Donn Welton, translated by Lanei Rodemeyer. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers, 1999.
- Husserl, Edmund. *Husserl, Shorter Works*. Translated by Frederick Elliston. Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981.
- . *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Translated by William Ralph Boyce Gibson. New York: Collier Books, 1962.
- . *The New Husserl: A Critical Reader*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003.
- Ingold, Tim. "The Temporality of the Landscape." Edited by Richard Bradley. *World Archaeology* 25, no. 2 (October 1993): 152-174.
- Lang, Richard. "The Dwelling Door: Towards a Phenomenology of Transition." In *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, edited by David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer. New York: Columbia University Press, 2000.
- Langsdorf, Lenore. "The Doubleness of Subjectivity: Regenerating a Phenomenology of Intentionality." In *Ricoeur as Another: The Ethics of Subjectivity*, edited by Richard A. Cohen, 33-55. New York: SUNY Press, 2002.
- Malpas, Jeff. *Heidegger's Topology: Being, Place, World*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2006.
- . *Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Forrest Williams. London: Routledge & Keegan Paul Ltd., 1962.
- Mugerauer, Robert. "Language and the Emergence of Environment." In *Dwelling. Place and Environment*, edited by David Seamon and Mugerauer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Norris, Kathleen. *Dakota: A Spiritual Geography*. 1st ed. Mariner Books, 2001.
- Polanyi, Michael. *The Tacit Dimension*. London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1967.
- Polt, Richard F. H. *Heidegger: An Introduction*. Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1999.

- Proust, Marcel. *Remembrance of Things Past*. Translated by C.K. Scott Moncrieff and T. Kilmartin. New York: Random House, 1981.
- Relph, Edward. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion, 1976.
- Relph, Edward. "Geographical Experiences." In *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, edited by David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.
- Ricoeur, Paul. "Life in Quest of a Narrative." In *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, edited by David Wood. Annotated edition. Routledge, 1992.
- . "Narrative Identity." In *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, edited by David Wood. New York: Routledge, 1991.
- . *Time and Narrative, Volume 3*. University Of Chicago Press, 1990.
- . Paul. *Oneself as Another*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992.
- Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*. Translated by H. E Barnes. New York: Washington Square Press; Pocket Books, 1992.
- Violish, Francis. "Towards Revealing the Sense of Place: An Intuitive 'Reading' of Four Dalmation Towns." In *Dwelling, Place, and Environment: Towards a Phenomenology of Person and World*, edited by David Seamon and Robert Mugerauer. New York: Columbia University Press, 1985.