

Making a Scene and Dwelling in Place: Exhaustion at the Edges of Modes of Place-Making

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Imag(in)ing Place

This essay had its genesis in a deliberate misreading of a conference call for papers. I had been working on what I called “place-making imagination” when I was told about a conference asking for papers on “Imaging Place.” Only two letters separated what I was doing from what was required – Imaging Place easily becomes “Imagining Place” and hypostatizes into “Place-Making Imagination.” Imagination produces images, I thought, and is comprised of them, and so the misreading is slight at best. I should be able to make things fit easily enough.

But that slight adjustment hides something more interesting. This small addition, this interruption into imaging, may suggest more than is immediately apparent. “In,” as a preposition, suggests a move toward the center, a move “inward.” If we are in the room, we are bounded by the walls; if we are part of the “in” group, we are not, at least, on the outs; if we are “in love” we are perhaps dominated and infused by love. But “in” as a prefix, that’s different—it is “in”discreet, “in”temperate and possibly even “in”hospitable. In other words, while the preposition “in” moves inward, the prefix “in” negates, even moves outward. “Intemperate” suggests a move away from a civilized and balanced center. “Interminable” suggests a move beyond temporal boundaries, if not outside one’s patience. In, in short, inscribes a tension. Inserted into a word, we don’t quite know whether it is intentional, a verbal interloper, or even at all interesting. But there could hardly be a better word to start with, when place is concerned.

Is this all just word play? After Derrida, how can it “just” be word play anymore, and anyway, why is play such a bad thing? And yet, the word play always moves us toward something else, something that allows a little light to shine in, if that does not suggest a little too much metaphysics of presence. It is worth remembering that the play is serious. “A man’s maturity,” as Nietzsche said in *Beyond Good and Evil*, “that is to have rediscovered the seriousness he possessed as a child at play.” This little word play, this slippage

between “image” and “imagine” provides a starting point for thinking about place, how we understand it, how (or whether) it matters, and perhaps most importantly, what happens at the edges of incommensurable modes of place-making.

The image has a long history, of course. We might, following Aristotle in *De Anima*, equate it with the “phantasm,” the ability to apprehend an immediate sensory experience and make a mental representation of it. For Aristotle, a phantasm based on sensation is something humans share with animals, while a phantasm based on reason is imagination. We might, of course, follow Augustine (in the latter half of *On the Trinity*, among other places) and connect the image with the source of all images, the “*imago Dei*,” the image of God stamped on us. The image, then, classically, is a “phantasia.” Now, of course, we think of “fantasy” very differently, as a delusion or an alternative to reality. Imagination, on the other hand, is a resolutely human characteristic, a specific kind of image production. It enables us to assemble given contents of the mind into something new and makes available what is not yet present, and to do so in a manner that is not just inferential (the way one might expect the coming of a friend by an SMS sent ahead). We might also think of image and imagination as two sides of a coin, or more accurately, as the external and internal aspects of representation. The philosophical tradition running through Aristotle and Augustine, of course, doesn’t make this distinction: if the image is the “phantasy” and the imagination is a uniquely human characteristic, we have a difference of kind, not of degree.

So, far from merely seeing image and imagination as extensions of each other, related as product and mental faculty, there is good reason to see them as separate. At the very least, they are classically assigned to different beings with different capabilities. The point here is not to work out in any exhaustive way the Aristotelian understanding of the soul but rather to open the door to the possibility that what is usually taken as an obvious extension, between image and imagination, might in fact exist in some tension.

Image, imagine. Linked by the presence and absence of “in.” Phantasy and imagination. Perhaps this is just playing with binary oppositions. But there will be more binaries to consider before we are done. Umberto Eco once said of the movie *Casa-blanca* that, “the clichés were having a ball” (Eco). The movie succeeded, in other words, not because it

avoided clichés but because it reveled in them. Perhaps the same can be true of binaries, those discredited products of Cartesian thought. In what follows, I want to explore two modes of place-making, one which we might refer to as “dwelling,” that is, the memory and desire of imagination, and the other which will be the “scene,” that is, the exchange and interplay of image. Instead of denying binaries, I want to make the tension between the two productive.

Dwelling and the Rural

Much place-talk in the latter part of the 20th century relies on Heidegger’s later work on dwelling (Heidegger 1971; Casey 1993). It is worth noting, then, that scenes and dwellings start from very different places, when it comes to place. Dwelling, I will argue, is rooted in a conception of place as rural, while scenes are rooted in a conception of place as urban. This does not mean that there cannot be dwellings in urban areas, or scenes in rural areas, but rather that these two modes of place-making rely on assumptions about what place is, and what place ought to be, which have their roots in the rural/urban distinction. A significant amount of recent writing on place has often had the hint of building, finding, losing or yearning for home, that is, it follows what I am calling a rural mode of place-making. To see how this mode of place-making works, it is worth thinking about Heidegger’s understanding of dwelling.

Heidegger inquires about dwelling in a number of places, notably, in “Building Dwelling Thinking” and “The Question Concerning Technology” (Heidegger 1971, 1977). Dwelling is integrally tied to building, in the sense that true building is an expression of dwelling. True building does not enframe space instrumentally but allows a set of possibilities to be manifest. To build a bridge across a river, for instance, is different from damming the river. The dam turns the river into “standing reserve,” that is, electric power (in this case) that is abstract and can be used in any way one sees fit. At the same time, our mode of dwelling is reduced to power-users, that is, to pure instrumentality. The bridge, on the other hand, allows human settlement to collect on either side. The river is not reduced to one use but continues to be a river in the broadest sense.

Dwelling as place-making tends to proceed from some established and intelligible senses of dwelling, such as home, region, locale, tribe or nation. While

“dwelling” has clear ontological connotations, it is expressed through existing forms of spatial arrangements such as region or nation because these have a history of standing in for place. Imagining place as dwelling usually means imagining place as home, region, nation and so forth and equating identity with those bounded and rooted spaces. These dwelling spaces are like Heidegger’s bridge over the river, in that they make a set of possibilities available and resist turning place into standing reserve. A region, for instance, establishes a set of customs and practices and in doing so suggests options. Freedom comes not in the lack of conditioning elements, but in the presence of a structure in which the possibilities of dwelling can be brought into existence.

Jean-François Lyotard offers an elegy to dwelling in his essay “*Domus* and the Megalopolis” (Lyotard 1988). The *domus*, or the domestic space, is characterized for him by rhythm and stories. Rhythm is wisdom and also service, which is “given and returned without any contract.” It is also “a community of work,” which is rooted in stories, because the common work of the *domus* is the *domus* itself, that is, the repetition of its own stories through work, through the domestication of time. The *domus* is where memory is located, both in narratives and “in the body’s mannerisms.” And, the *domus* “gives the untameable a chance to appear” (196), although in fact “[t]he undominated, the untamed, in early times concealed in the *domus*, is unleashed in the *homo politicus* and *economicus*...” (197).

What disrupts the *domus*, in Lyotard’s view? The megalopolis. The megalopolis is not merely city-space, but it is:

Much more complete, much more capable of programming, of neutralizing the event and storing it, of mediating what happens, of conserving what has happened. Including, of course, and first of all, the untameable, the uncontrolled domestic remainder. End of tragedy, flexibility, permissiveness. The control is no longer territorialized or historicized. It is computerized. (198-199)

In other words, it is not cityspace that threatens the *domus*, but the “monad” of techno-science. The untameable is neglected. The need for “writing, childhood, [and] pain” disappear. Lyotard is almost sarcastic about the result of the death of the *domus*:

To think consists in contributing to the amelioration of the big monad. It is that which is obsessively demanded of us. You must think in a communicable way. Make culture. ... To success is to process. Improve performances. It’s a domestication, if you will, but with no *domus*. A physics with no god-nature. An economy in which everything is taken, nothing received. And so necessarily, an illiteracy. The respect and lack of respect of severe and serene reading of the text, of writing with regard to language, this vast and still unexplored house, the indispensable comings and goings in the maze of its inhabited, always deserted rooms—the big monad doesn’t give a damn about all this. It just goes and builds. Promotion. (199-200)

This is the price, for Lyotard, of the megalopolis, of techno-science. But his elegy is more mournful than angry. “Domesticity is over, and probably it never existed, except as a dream of the old child awakening and destroying it on awakening” (201). The loss of this particular type of dwelling is not complete; the *domus* can represent the loss as tragedy. But the *domus* is more likely to be pressed into service by the big monad—Nazi Germany did just that. The issue is, what must one do, under these conditions? Lyotard’s answer: “at least in the ghetto we shall go on. As far as it is possible. Thinking, writing, is, in our sense, to bear witness for the secret timbre ... Let us at least bear witness, and again, and for no-one, to thinking as disaster, nomadism, difference, and redundancy” (203).

What we have is almost a romantic impulse and from the most unexpected of writers. But perhaps the real question is, is he right about the corrosive effect of place-making within techno-science? If he is, then a great many digital projects must necessarily undermine place-making, even in their effort to create or represent it. I think, though, that Lyotard’s account is somewhat premature, in the sense that he proceeds solely from a Heideggerian understanding of place. The story can be told in other words, starting from the failure of the *domus*—starting from the concept of the scene.

Scenes and the Urban

The scene is something that, in one way or another, a host of theorists have tried to unpack. Arguably, the scene is built into early expressions of modernity in writers such as Baudelaire, Proust and

Wilde. Scenes are not merely sociological entities, nor are they just the result of the will of the individual actor. They are not mobs or crowds; indeed, scenes don't necessarily point to large gatherings at all, although they do seem to require spatial proximity, whether material or virtual. As with most terms (e.g., place, space, text), we have both colloquial and technical senses, and the first bears the trace of the second. We have "street scenes," which are not the same as the "jazz scene" or the "gay scene." Scenes are not merely social groups organized around charismatic figures (are churches which have charismatic preachers scenes?), although there may be charismatic figures involved (surely Studio 54 was a scene and one which had its share of charismatic figures such as Andy Warhol and Bianca Jagger).

The scene, it should be noted, is a visual term that has its roots in painting. Scenes are framed. They bear the narrative traces and visual logic that have come down through landscape painting. There are internal frames for scenes—ways of telling who's in and who's out, and more importantly, what space is bounded for territorialization and reterritorialization to occur. Scenes bear stable markers—some are quite stable (e.g., Miami Beach's club scene) since the nature of the scene requires spatial markers.

The connection to the landscape bears some thought. Lyotard contrasts landscape with place, finding it wanting:

Infinity: inexhaustible resources are required if there is to be any landscape. 'A palace is not worth living in if you know its every room,' writes Lampedusa. A burrow is like that palace: habitable because it is uninhabitable.

The opposite of a place. If place is cognate with destination... Landscape as a place without a destiny. (Lyotard 183)

Landscape, then, is a scene, in Lyotard's sense, the opposite of place. But perhaps he is too hasty in his dismissal and too inclined to work with a single sense of place. Perhaps it is too narrow to identify place only with destination, as he does—we shall see presently about this. It is clear, though, that the conventional nature of landscape, rooted as it is in pictorial forms traceable to the Renaissance, suggests a very different sense of place, if it is one at all, than dwelling. Its boundedness is based in the view, the arrangement of features to produce a pleasing,

"picturesque" view, rather than the aspects of the self uncovered in dwelling.

There are other sources for the concept of the scene. Children and others "make a scene" in public, sometimes embarrassing those who know them. We have scenes in movies and plays; indeed, this is where the term comes from. "Scene" was the theatre itself, the stage and the building, before it became what was on the stage. Later, this connection became apparent with the term "mise-en-scène," or the staging of a play. The scene eventually becomes indistinguishable from its place, but perhaps more importantly, it makes available a set of possibilities.

It is tempting to see the scene as something quaint, hopeful, from another era. We use it when we think about the Beats or the jazz "scene" in the '50s and '60s, perhaps more than we might use it for a current phenomenon (gamers, for instance, might not call what they do a "scene," even though we will use the term here for them). More important than its sense of anachronism, though, is its mode of operation. Alan Blum has a "grammar" of the scene as a social phenomenon. This grammar has several characteristics. The scene is regular (there is meaningful recurrence), extensive (it is both apart from and part of the city), mortal (that is, temporally limited), collective (having a sense of solidarity), theatrical (engaging in social ceremony), transgressive (always in danger of exposure to "polite" society) and prone to spectacle without being reducible to it. Blum describes the effect of this as follows:

The scene's fusion of art and commodity, of pleasure and function, reaffirms the two sided nature of its engagement, as both a way of doing business and as an exciting departure from the routines of doing business, making pleasure functional and functional relations pleasurable. In this way, the scene imitates the economy of the city through its functional methods of association and classification while *at the very same time* travestying this functionality by investing togetherness with the excitement of its contagiousness. The scene—never a community in the sense of finality—is a work in progress where being with or among others is a constantly evolving open question that brings to view the intimacy of social life as an unending problem to solve. (188)

Blum's analysis draws on Gadamer, Arendt and others, which may seem to place him in the Heide-

ggerian tradition. In fact, though, the scene that is described in textual terms is not just a variant on dwelling (which we will address momentarily). Its ephemerality and transgressive nature already differentiate it from the sense of place implied by dwelling and its resistance to the transcendental further suggests that the scene stands at a distance from hermeneutics. It facilitates association, and in doing so creates and maintains place while at all times teetering on the edge of parody. Scenes from the past (that is, scenes that existed in the past) are the easiest targets for parody (the *Austin Powers* movies traded on this constantly), as they require belief and commitment, while simultaneously requiring a knowing sensibility.

The scenic mode of place-making is the imaging of place (despite the fact that, ironically, Alan Blum's book in which he discusses the scene is titled *The Imaginative Structure of the City*). The scene is quintessentially an urban form of placemaking, which is not to say that other forms are not possible within city space (more on this later). But the scene does not depend on romantic references to nature or tradition, much less transcendence. It creates its place from the ground up, as an intensity in the Deleuzian sense, or according to a difference based on degree. Scenes become vital places both from a sense of shared purpose, identity, or interest among its members, but also from the sense of difference that this engenders with what exists outside its boundaries. A vocabulary takes shape, incorporating both internally generated elements as well as absorbing external forms that take on new definition or new significance (sometimes in opposition to their external senses). Importantly, though, this is not just a matter of the formation of a new community. Blum is clear that provisionality is central to the scene.

When thinking about place, it is perhaps noteworthy that theorists of intensities such as Deleuze and Guattari are more inclined to use auditory metaphors than visual ones, despite the fact that the idea of the "scene" is visually based. Deterritorialization and reterritorialization are described biologically in *A Thousand Plateaus* as established by an animal's movement and inscribed by its song or sound. Practice for them looks more like music than it does visual organization and they effectively tie time to space in this way. The scene, then, if we can imagine them thinking in these terms (and I don't

think it is too far to take the notion of "intensities" as scenic in some sense), moves from its visual traces to its auditory, perhaps more layered, biological manifestation.

Scenes, then, are shifting spaces of interaction. They shift because they are not defined in advance by a set of rules, but rather the rules emerge through the collective and individual actions by those engaged in the scene itself. Disengage from the scene even briefly, and it may take deliberate work to re-engage. If the gay scene exists in a particular place, entrée to the place either requires engagement with the shifting rules of the scene, or taking on the temporary status of the tourist or visitor. Some scenes can maintain this externally performative element (they are in some sense all internally performative, that is, a set of actions that bring about a reality, and further, they may also be performances as well). The external performativity, though, generally reinforces boundaries rather than making them permeable. Tourists who come to see a Gay Days parade are being entertained but they are not being asked back to the wrap party.

The parade itself may not, however, be a scene at all. It may be the performance of a scene, a re-packaging of the scene as commodity. And this is always the danger with this form of urban place-making. Its trade in signifiers means that it always risks commodification, that is, the situation in which trade is the end in itself. The problem with commodification is not the act of trade in itself, or even the implied desire, but the reductive instrumentality of all exchange. Where the scene is deliberate about creating the space in which intensities can occur, the corrupted form of the scene attempts to codify and market those intensities without ever turning the act of exchange back onto the desire that underlies the instrumentality of the exchange. I am relating the scene to the image, to imaging place and to the urban form of place-making. These are not equivalences but they are mutually supportive concepts. In other words, while there is nothing that necessarily makes a scene urban, in fact, scenes are more commonly urban, probably due to the compressed and layered forms of life that might be associated with the urban. This is significant as we turn to a second mode of place-making: one which engages imagination rather than imaging and one which is rooted in the rural (although likewise not necessitated by it) rather than the urban.

Imag(in)ing Place

Dwellings and scenes are not merely two modes or types of place-making and in some ways they resist and undermine each other. The dwelling, for Heidegger, is corrupted to the extent that the urban is allowed to flourish. He has several ways to dismiss the urban: in “The Origin of the Work of Art,” he is critical of a focus only on “utensils”; in “The Question Concerning Technology,” he notes the tendency to turn the rural into “standing reserve,” thus rendering it (and ourselves) aspects of instrumental reason. The scene, for Heidegger, would not be read as the playful creation of place, much less as deterritorializing and reterritorializing but, rather, as the exertion of abstract will and reason over reality. He would, in fact, see the scene as always having a memory of dwelling within it, since human existence can never become totally instrumental. To focus on the scene would be to focus on a corrupted form of place. The rural, then, is true place, of which the urban has only a dim memory. And imagination, the ability to use reason to assemble place, trumps the image, that which is exchanged, which tends toward commodification. Put another way, rural, imaginary place is arboreal, rooted in tradition, community and so forth. Heidegger would see such a version of place as superior to the rhizomatic scene. And, the aesthetic of dwelling tends toward some version (or parody) of transcendence, at the extreme illustrated by the fantasy places of Thomas Kinkade, Trisha Romance and other hyperromantic artists.

The scenic mode of place-making, on the other hand, resists what seems to be the nostalgia of the dwelling. The scenic form of place tends to see the dwelling as the mode of place appropriate for a forgotten age and one, furthermore, which tends to cover over difference. Place that is based on dwelling tends toward the static rather than the dynamic, the reactionary rather than the progressive, the apolitical rather than the politically engaged and the uncritical rather than the reflective. Scenic, urban place, on the other hand, does not dichotomize place into authentic and inauthentic but rather, coalesces into various forms of differential access, moving and interacting with the surrounding social space fluidly—or perhaps better, viscously, as the changes have some sticking power and are not totally in arbitrary flux—and known only through engagement with the scene. As with dwelling, there is a kind of hermeneutical circle involved in the scene.

In the case of dwelling, the circle exists between the parts and the whole; in the case of the scene, the circle exists between the inside and outside, as those engaged within the scene define the place by a set of actions that have unintended consequences and risk changing or disrupting the scene, even producing new scenes. The scene, after all, is necessarily temporally limited and its limitations come in part from the fact that they can become stale or, put another way, from their lacking in creative drive. They become this way, perhaps ironically, as they take on aspects of the ideal of dwelling—coherence, stability, predictability. Just as the scene is the corruption of dwelling, then, dwelling is the exhaustion of the scene, dynamism come to rest.

Despite the mutually resistant nature of these two modes of place-making (or perhaps more accurately, the sense that each serves as the limit, failure, corruption or exhaustion of the other), it is noteworthy that the scene and the dwelling are often inscribed onto each other. We can see a movement through modernism, from the civilized/wilderness distinction, to the city/country distinction, to the urban/rural distinction. That is, the function of the city initially was to hold back the onslaught of wilderness, to be a kind of island of civilization within the sea of barbarity. From there, as industrialism rose, the distinction shifted from civilization/wilderness to city/country, that is, between the site of production and the site of consumption to the site of resource extraction and the site of resource assembly, enhancement and use. Finally, the distinction moves to the urban and the rural, as the sites of production and consumption become blurred and as ways of understanding place start becoming less compartmentalized. With the spread of digital information, scenic place inevitably becomes inscribed on dwelling place as it becomes appropriated in the form of ritual, habitus and communal meaning. Of course, none of these categories are pure, nor is there a teleological or even sequential move here. In some sense they co-exist and their distinctions do not remain stable. As was mentioned earlier, the urban mode of place-making (the scene) may well be inscribed in either the city or the country and the same is true for the rural mode (dwelling). My point here, however, is to focus on the final distinction and map onto it the dwelling and the scene as modes of place-making in the rural and the urban.

If the scene and the dwelling serve as each other's corruption or exhaustion, how is it that these

two are written upon each other? Clearly, both the city and the country come already equipped with the urban and the rural, that is, the scene and the dwelling (or the image and imagination). It is more clearly seen in the city, as we try to find and construct modes of dwelling that echo the rural. On a larger scale, there is new urbanism, for instance, which imprints the rural onto the urban. For many, it functions as memory, for others as imagination, but perhaps it is more to the point to say that it functions as fantasy. In any case, while the imprint of the rural is clear, it did not begin with new urbanism. The suburb was an earlier imprint of the rural onto the urban, in terms of the imag(in)ing of place. It was evident in the names of streets, in the myriad references and nods to small town life, in the parks and green spaces. To have no reference to the rural was to be a failure as a city because dwelling could not be imagined without it.

And yet, the city was urban as well. It was the location of the scene. Its mode of place-making was not dwelling; even those places that presented dwelling as place-making within the city (for example, Ray Oldenburg's "great good places," the third spaces between the public and the private) must maintain that dwelling either by withdrawing from the urban space or by trading the rootedness of dwelling for the dynamic nature of the scene. The veneer of dwelling may continue, but those great good places may end up being little more than the consumable hook that brings people into specific kinds of scenes, if only to engage ironically in dwelling. Lifestyle stores such as Starbucks find themselves in this contradictory mode of place-making, at once attempting to provide both dwelling and scenic place. Their popularity attests to their success in navigating those contradictions, although it is notable that the dwelling-place, nature, always must include the pull of the new (a scene motif), sometimes awkwardly.

Art as the Fault-line of Scenes and Dwellings

There is another vector in this analysis: art. Heidegger says little about art and dwelling together but he does have a great deal to say about each of them separately. Art, we find in his "Origin of the Work of Art," is "real within an artwork." In German the word is "wirklichkeit," which is derived from "wirken" or "to work, to be active, to yield effects." Art shows a kind of reality that is not the same as that of "utensils," even if it is utensils (such

as the peasant's shoes that Van Gogh painted) that are being depicted. The point of art is to show the reality of those shoes.

The scene has its own mode of artistic place-making. Art, in this sense, is not just the expression of human creativity but is our mode of making place. Deleuze and Guattari's argument is that animals, too, have art (musicality), which establishes their territoriality and, more importantly, their *de/re*/territorialization. The biological mode of place-making is artistic and that includes the artistic engagement of animals. But humans have intensities of a particular sort and those human intensities can be thought of as scenic. Scenes do not strive for reality in Heidegger's sense. There is nothing real about urban scenes in their pure sense; rather, they are performance opportunities, staged stages. It is not that there is a different kind of art; there is a different mode of art. One could image artistic productions that emerge from dwelling as assembled scenes. One could, on the other hand, imagine scenes as comprising human history and tradition, as providing the stuff of memory and community, in short, as Heidegger's mode of dwelling. Each, in other words, could be assembled out of the other. Each could subsume the other artistically.

The necessity of the aesthetic can be seen in another feature of the intensity between the dwelling and the scene—the fact that the dwelling is not reducible to the private and the scene is not reducible to the public. The traditional opposition between private and public merely divides space based on concerns and commitments. Dwellings may in fact be found in large groups and manifest on the public stage, while scenes might be experienced on very intimate grounds. The issue here is not that we have another sense of the private and public, but rather, that the intensity between dwelling and scene cannot be reasoned out. Both of these describe a mode of place-making, both are necessary, each is the limit of the other and together they cannot be overcome in some dialectical *Aufhebung*. What is left is aesthetics, that is, the recognition that this tension must be the occasion for creation.

Imaging and imagining place: two modes, each the limit of the other, each the negation of the other, each pressing the other into service, together a potential site for the aesthetic. And yet, we do not have an easy recipe here for the production of art. There is risk in both imagination and image. Imagination can creep toward fantasy, and imaging can

creep toward commodification. The risk of dwelling is nostalgia or utopia, both fantasy places, and the risk of the scene is that the “next new thing” will be nothing but a consumable, tradable element. Fantasy and commodification are not merely names for things; they are modes of understanding things. They are well-scripted narratives that in most cases serve to obscure place by allowing it to become the same as other narratives of the same sort. When does dwelling turn into Celebration (Disney’s new urbanist project) and can our narrative about Celebration be made problematic and new? Only if we give up the idea that Celebration lies in a continuous tradition with all other desired dwellings, those which served to comfort and at the same time resist real difference. Celebration can be made new by making it a scene.

On the other hand, in Orlando there is a place called Church Street, which has been redeveloped several times over the past two decades, always in an attempt to make it a scene. That scene, however, has easily and quickly fallen into its corrupted form: the commodity. And as a commodity, it has failed to become a scene and therefore failed as a commodity, as well. This, too, needs to be made problematic and new and it will not happen merely by reasserting the logic of the scene. It will happen by trying to imagine what dwelling might look like in that place. Not as a nostalgic new urbanist project but as something else: as a place that does not assume that everything can be a standing reserve.

Another example: the mall. The mall, like the airport, has sometimes been seen as a non-place (Augé). But non-place is the failure of the scene and it is different from Edward Relph’s concept of “placelessness,” which is the failure of dwelling (Relph). The mall may well be a scene and this becomes obvious if one considers the different experiences of those of different ages in the mall. As a place of commercial activity, the mall stands as the antithesis of dwelling for those whose imagination begins with the rural. It is placelessness, in Relph’s sense, the loss (and in some cases, the mockery) of dwelling. The mall can also be a scene, however, to those who want it to be one: those who do not bear the cultural memory of the rural. For some, it lacks dwelling; for others, it is a scene or at least the promise of one. For some, the mall is merely the failure of dwelling, the opposite of fantasy; for others, the mall is the site of a scene, which at worst, can slide into commodification. The scenic nature always has

the potential to become a non-place, where signifiers become empty and where boredom sets in. The West Edmonton Mall in Edmonton, Alberta, is a provocative example of a place which is a simulacrum of dwelling (an entire small town is echoed within its walls, including entertainment (a water park, a skating rink, an amusement park), worship, commerce and habitation) and it is simultaneously a scene (or better, the site of shifting scenes), a place where social borders can be drawn based on activities or interests, in which signifiers can circulate, combine, transgress the accepted norms of society and finally exhaust themselves.

The idea that place-making exists in a tension between (at least) dwelling and the scene has significant implications for the production of art in a digital environment or using digital tools. On the face of it, one might think that the digital must necessarily undermine place-making. This is the implication I drew from Lyotard earlier. And yet, that would be to come down on the side of place-as-dwelling. My argument has been that artistic production is not just about representing place, or through the representation, creating place. It has been that the site for the creation of art must be at the edges of dwelling and scene, in the place where each is exhausted by the other, but then also finds ways of resisting the too-easy framing of place as either dwelling or scene. The uses of the digital in this way are significant. In this volume alone, we have (to mention a few) John Craig Freeman’s “Imaging Place” project, which (now) uses Second Life as a platform for representing places that are contested for some reason, and more importantly enables those who have spatial knowledge of a place to assemble it. The project brings together place-as-represented and place-as-experienced in a manner that enables both dwelling, as located in local memory, and scene, as located in shifting claims on space. Barry Mauer’s monument to lost data suggests the shifting scenic environment in which all data operates and has its being, but with the forms of memory we encode in monuments, and the mourning and recovery that this entails. Stephanie Tripp and Laura Sullivan write about the Pyramid in Memphis, a failed attempt to create a scene. They propose that a website be established which can counter the various existing proposals for the Pyramid on the part of civic or corporate leaders with an investigation of the peoples’ sense of the Pyramid, its history and its politics. In other words, they wish to hijack the aspirations on the part of

some to create another scene by counterposing the discourse on dwelling with the Pyramid. While parody is an ever-present possibility, so is the uncovering of the local understanding of those for whom this is more than just a commercial opportunity.

And there is, of course, Gregory Ulmer's creation of a chora adequate to digital context, and to digital poetics. His work is the touchstone for the projects I have mentioned, and others I have not, and it is worth noting the extent to which he explicitly works with a Heideggerian sense of place while at the same time destabilizing its conservative elements. Memory is central, but is a creative possibility ("potential triggers for epiphany"), as we now find ourselves "in images," and must find a new way (electracy) to both learn and create.

Every artistic place-making is also a risk. There is a chance that fantasy and commodification will take over. Indeed, more than a chance—perhaps an inevitability, and that may lead us to suspect that we should rely on existing versions of place, ones that have been tried and found true. But this, too, has risk—the risk of superficiality and banality. The places we think we know become the places we can no longer see. In the end, it is worth realizing that place is not (just) a text, at least not in the traditional sense of textuality. It does not yield its meaning either through a hermeneutics of trust or a hermeneutics of suspicion. The model of reading, as applied to place, has limits, and being emplaced must mean something more than decipherment. It must mean creation, and that requires both engagement with scenes and the inhabitation of dwellings.

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