

## A view on place and performance

I interpret 'place' as having more import than material 'site' for inhabitants. Place becomes 'a perceived environment or geographical area with which individuals (or groups) believe they have a personal relationship; there is a psychological interaction between person and location.' (Mackey 2007a: 181) A performance of place, then, might demonstrate, inflect, respond to, interrogate or challenge the material and psychological construction of a particular locus and is interpreted as a series of performative operations as well as constructed performances. In using 'performative', I refer to the post-Butler interpretation of the term as 'conventional cultural behavior' (Taylor 2003: 6), suggesting that place can be created through the repetition of normative behaviours - in addition to a constructed, framed, developed 'performance' that might be created in and of that location. Whilst site-based performance may well be performed by 'visitors' (e.g. professional practitioners, students) I argue that a performance of place is enacted by inhabitants, therefore. It is more likely to comprise the reframing of a moment in an inhabitant's everyday than, for example, a devised performance in response to a site's mytho-geography.

The interpretation of performing place suggests a practice situated within the concepts, discourses and practices of applied and social theatre with its emphasis on community, citizenship and locations (Nicholson 2005) where matters of place might be of particular import to a group of people. Historical legacies of power and ownership, contemporary deterritorialisation and migrations, disillusionment or disengagement with locus or even, simply, the need to 'create place' in the absence of long-term attachments might all give cause for applied performances of place. It is such a range of practice that I have sought to identify, construct and evolve.

... A focus upon 'performance' in provisionally inhabited places responds to a growing emphasis on temporary place as iconic of our times. Place might be considered, now, as a meaningful waystation, as pause, or as momentary location, location, for example. This 'place' might be described as part of travelling up, across across and along (Ingold 2006, 2011), as a 'meeting' place (Massey 1997) or as a

as a site containing a gathering of stories-so-far (Massey 2005). Some commentators suggest humanity as immanently without longevity of place and deterritorialised, no longer tied to particular locations or communities (see, for example, Deleuze 1993 or Bauman 2007). I am interested in how, or to what extent, community-based performance practices can reconcile a form of transience with an affective response to place. Even if accepting place as most usually nomadic (and some would argue against this), we need not assume place as a waiting room for transient bystanders. Place might still be usefully affective retaining, for example, characteristics of belonging, familiarity and even to some extent security even if only inhabited non-permanently. With this interpretation, temporary place becomes, more, interspersed periods of affective dwelling. Of particular interest to me is the potential role of performance practices in bringing about a changed perception of such places when they are sites of dis-ease.

(Mackey, 2013: 46-48)