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**Finding One Place in Another:  
Post/Phenomenology, Memory and *Déjà Vu***

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### **Abstract**

Inspired by something that occurred to me during a walking holiday in Scotland, this article identifies a new dimension to place memory: namely, the way in which we can be unexpectedly reminded of one place in another that is, on first inspection, very different. Reflecting on this phenomenon *vis-à-vis* my own long-distance walks through landscapes that are strikingly different in visual terms has led me to propose (similar to Hayden Lorimer) that topographical features such as slope, camber and terrain are key to such embodied memories and help explain why they are, on occasion, transportable. Such a proposition speaks both to the specificity and generic qualities of topographical place. This thesis is then used as the springboard for a dialogue with the post-phenomenological approaches to landscape developed by John Wylie and others regarding the existential (im)possibility of there being any ‘coincidence’ between ‘self and world’. My counter-argument proceeds via an exploration of different models of memory - in particular, Henri Bergson’s work on ‘habit memory’ and *déjà-vu* - which helps explain our fleeting sensations of familiarity and belonging to particular locations. By this means, the notional indifference of the landscape (as construed by the post-phenomenologists) is *emplaced*. These conclusions return the discussion to wider debates in cultural geography about what we stand to lose, and exclude, through the move from phenomenological to post-phenomenological frameworks.

### **Keywords**

Phenomenology, post-phenomenology, landscape, place, memory, place-memory, temporality, *déjà-vu*.

## Introduction

In April 2019, a friend and I began walking one of Scotland's national trails, The Speyside Way, which runs from the town of Buckie on the North-East coast (60 miles north-west of Aberdeen) to Aviemore, in the Cairngorms. This was but the latest of a great many long-distance walks made in Scotland over the years, beginning with the iconic West Highland Way in 1996. As was the case this year, these expeditions have mostly taken place in the Easter vacation, originally as part of a larger group of friends but more recently just the two of us. It was, however, already four years since our last long -distance walk, and over a decade since we were making up our own routes and climbing mountains on a regular basis. We nevertheless knew it to be an easy, low-level walk that would take us to a part of Scotland very unlike the west coast where I now live and with which we are much more familiar.

The discussion which follows opens with an anecdote that reflects upon some passing remarks exchanged between my friend and myself on this three-day trek, with the objective of contributing to what has emerged as one of the thorniest theoretical debates in cultural geography: namely, what John Wylie has styled the 'coincidence'- or not - of 'self and world' (Wylie, 2009, p.275) in any attempt to understand the relationship between human subjects and the landscape. It should be noted immediately, however, that my own investigations have shifted the grounds of this debate through their focus on the instrumental, rather than the incidental or consequential, role that *memory* (of different kinds)<sup>1</sup> plays in our ability to presence, or re-presence, our relationship with specific locations. Such a starting point necessarily aligns my project with the existential, 'subject-centred' phenomenology that post-phenomenology has rejected. Indeed, my chief concern is with the ways in which the complex, often conflicting, workings of memory can deliver the human subject a profound, if fleeting, 'ownership' of topographical place via a reflex of embodied familiarity while simultaneously interfering with our capacity to 'feel' ourselves back into locations we once knew well. In this regard, the article speaks to at least two decades-worth of innovative work on the

geographies of memory, the full gamut of which cannot be cited here for reasons of space but which includes many ground-breaking articles (e.g., Hoelscher and Alderman, 2004) and edited collections (e.g., Jones and Garde-Hansen, 2012).

This desire to acknowledge the possibility of a fragile, if contradictory, relationship between self and world against the odds also speaks to Mitch Rose's (2010) exchange with Wylie following the publication of the 'The Geographies of Love' (Wylie, 2009). In his response, Rose counters Wylie's disavowal of the signifying potential of a cluster of memorial benches on a Cornish cliff with the redemptive, if paradoxical, concept of the 'presence of absence' that has long been important for those scholars working on the geographies of loss and mourning (see, for example, Maddrell, 2013; 2016). Neither Rose nor myself subscribe to there being any pre-existing or enduring connection between self and world, but we do remain invested in it as an elusive, transient possibility - what Rose, following Derrida, refers to elsewhere as a 'dreams of presence' (Rose, 2006). However, the fact that in my case this is concomitant with the re-instatement of an intentional subject (through my focus on memory) means that what follows cannot be seen as a direct argument with Wylie's texts as such; his reasoning, and mine, are bound by different grounding principles (as he himself acknowledges in his response to Rose (Wylie, 2010, p.146)). Nevertheless, as a springboard for my own reflections, Wylie's series of articles (Wylie, 2009; 2016; 2017a; 2017b; 2018) on the theme of landscape, absence and not-belonging have proven invaluable.

Wylie is not, of course, alone in advocating a post-phenomenological conceptualisation of the landscape and, throughout the article, I invoke some of the other geographers who have aligned themselves with this position and with whom Wylie is in dialogue (e.g., Paul Harrison, 2007 and Jessica Dubow, 2011). However, in the space available, a focus on Wylie's work has enabled me to grapple in some detail with the reasoning, and sometimes the narrative strategies, that ineluctably lead him to a disavowal of there being any necessary relation between self and world. On this point it is interesting to observe that, in his exchange with Rose, Wylie himself acknowledges that he has

possibly ‘reached a certain endgame conceptually’ (Wylie, 2009, p.145) and it can, indeed, be argued that the very tightness of the logic that informs the post-phenomenological standpoint *vis-a-vis* landscape has become the obstacle in and of itself. In the domain of post-phenomenology, as for posthumanist approaches more widely, the principal actor that has been squeezed out is, of course, the *a priori* subject whose messy, mediating consciousness leaks the very impurities - affects, sentiments, reminiscences and ideologies - that those determined to move beyond androcentrism seek to exclude. The thesis that I advance here - which presented itself to me before I had begun to engage with Wylie’s work in detail - seeks to loosen the knot of post-phenomenological reasoning by allowing the intentionality of the subject to creep back into the frame in order to raise some questions about what we may have lost by crossing the line between phenomenology and post-phenomenology (see Ash and Simpson 2014 for an overview of this transition): not least the concomitant role played by the phenomenology of memory (Casey, 2000) and the phenomenology of the imagination (Bachelard, 1971).

Another point of divergence between myself and Wylie’s work is that my theorising engages with the concept of place as well as that of landscape. This was necessary, in part, because of my recourse to the work of Edward Casey (2000) and Dylan Trigg (2012) which is specifically on the phenomenologies of *place memory*. However, with reference back to the panel discussion, ‘Landscape, Mobility, Practice’, published in this journal (Merriman et al., 2008), I feel there are enough markers of landscape in the topographical places, and situated practices, that I am interested in for my observations to speak to Wylie’s work on landscape *per se*. Further, the unfolding of my argument in the later sections of this paper has led me to propose that the sort of transient relationality I am interested in effectively *converts* landscape *into* place (*vis-a-vis* the way in which the terms have typically been distinguished and defined (e.g., Cresswell, 2014; Wylie, 2007)). In this scenario, memory arguably functions as a means of *emplacement* via a dynamic not dissimilar to that proposed by geographers such as David Matless (2016 [1998]) who have conceptualised landscape-space in terms of practice. As Peter Merriman observes at the end of *Driving Spaces* (Merriman,

2007, p. 218), even the most anodyne and generic spaces - such as the motorway and its infrastructures - quickly become 'placed' through habitual use, and, of course, memory (of different kinds) plays a crucial role in that process. Similarly, the multi-sensory, embodied encounters with the landscape that were a feature of our Speyside walk - the negotiation of gates, duckboards, overhanging branches, firing ranges, diversions and impromptu tea-stops - regularly interrupted its 'views' and emplaced the adventure as a sequence of discrete and memorable events. In the course of my discussion I have thus deployed the composite noun, *landscape-place*, to signal those landscapes which have the potential to become *emplaced* via the memory acts I describe.

Needless to say, the short piece of reflective writing capturing my walk is not presented as conclusive empirical evidence in support of my thesis but rather as an example of the sort of landscape encounter that might provoke the revelations I am interested in. This anecdote is followed by a staged argument, in three sub-sections, which follows the journey I pursued in my quest to answer a very simple question: namely, how can one place sometimes remind of another to which it bears little obvious resemblance - and why should this matter? The ensuing discussion begins with a close reading of Wylie's work and the challenges his post-phenomenological standpoint has laid down, followed by analysis which progressively seeks to loosen the logic of that position: first, by entering into dialogue with Hayden Lorimer's work on the embodied subject's familiarity with certain topographies (Lorimer, 2009); second, by adding into the equation the work of Casey (2000) and Dylan Trigg (2012) on place memory and the phenomenology of the imagination; and, third, by reflecting on the significance of the *temporalities* of place memory: in particular, its transience and ephemerality, vis-à-vis Bergson's work on 'habit memory and *déjà-vu* (Bergson, 2000).

### **Conversations on the Speyside Way**

Because we are limited to four nights away on this occasion, our plan is to walk half the route and return to complete it next Easter. Each day averages 12-13 miles and, compared

to most of our other long distance walks it promises to be easy walking. This is also a region of Scotland that neither of us is familiar with, and on first inspection, I'm shocked by to see how unlike west-coast Scotland it is. Beyond Aviemore, the landscape grows increasingly flat and the large fields of arable crops, along with the neat stone villages are things I associate more with English landscapes. My first impressions, therefore, are ambiguous and perplexed and, in my heart, I'm preparing for disappointment.

As soon as we begin walking the next day, however, interest and curiosity in this new landscape quickly replaces my initial resistance. Walking east along the North Sea coast - as far as the mouth of the magnificent Moray Firth - is an entirely novel experience, especially since it takes in a number of towns, villages and harbors that have seen better days. However, once we turn inland after lunch, the nature of the walking becomes instantly more familiar. In the manner of most long distance routes, paths, tracks and roads have been stitched together to afford the walker a pleasant ramble through a variety of landscape horizons - river, forest, plain and hill - interspersed with natural and man-made 'things of interest'. It is, moreover, along this stretch that my friend and I begin making the sort of observations that are to become the leitmotif of the walk: a sentence which invariably begins 'this reminds me of . . . '.

*What* we are reminded of, not surprisingly, are places we've encountered on previous walks, but the connection is often far from an obvious one. Cued in, as I am, to the slippages between perception and memory on account of my recent research, I observe that the phrase 'this reminds me of' is often followed by the qualifier '*even though it's nothing like it*'. Something has happened in the cognitive process to make a connection that is visceral yet obscure, and often singularly at odds with anything we have actually *seen* in the landscape. Six months on, my friend and I have struggled to remember the specific moments in the walk when these spontaneous memory-events occurred, so numerous were they; however, I have a distinct recollection of such a moment as we wound our way along a forest

path, and she, as we plodded along the long, flat stretch of disused railway line on the final day. Both were unremarkable places in and of themselves but, as will hopefully become clear in the discussion that follows, this is possibly one of the clues to their familiarity in these moments of re-encounter.

### **Self-World Relations which ‘Never Last’**

John Wylie’s work on landscape is principally concerned with phenomenological encounters focused entirely on the present, unsullied by memories of any kind. This is captured vividly in ‘Landscape, absence and the geographies of love’ (2009) which opens with an account of Wylie’s initial encounter with the sea upon arrival at Mullion Cove in Cornwall:

It was if for a minute I’d been granted an untarnished perception of things. Or as if my look had been washed clean, disinfected, or that it was precisely no longer a look and all things could be unfiltered, unaffected by it . . . for a minute, things were coloured fresh and new. Everything was visible, everything was *only* visible.

But . . . these sorts of moments can never last. Or more truthfully, they never came to pass. An instant of unreflective presence and directly given phenomenality: it beckons and falters in the selfsame gesture . . . For a minute I thought I could see the sea-in-itself, unhued by any perception of mine or anyone else. But I was wrong. (Wylie, 2009, p. 276).

There is much that can be ‘read out’ from these lines in terms of Wylie’s understanding of the phenomenological process, but the elements that are of particular significance for my argument here is Wylie’s distrust of the encounter on account of its transience as well as the suspicion that such events are ‘always already’ shaped by schema and ideology. While Wylie is clearly sympathetic to the idea that landscape can, on occasion - and for a fleeting interval of time - compel the human subject to suspend the contaminating ‘structures of intelligibility or ideal types’ (2009, p. 276), this

can only ever be temporary and this - in contrast to my own hypothesis - is immediately deemed a problem.

Further, there is an acknowledgement that the forces which facilitate this interval are aesthetic and thus imprinted with their own ideology. What stops the author in his tracks (and causes him to temporally suspend his learned practice of the gaze (Wylie, 2007, pp.55-93) is the sheer splendor of what he has encountered (a reflex that is, of course, in line with much Romantic theorising on the picturesque and the sublime (see Weiskel, 2019)). Conversely, banal or unattractive views - similarly beheld from a distance - are grist to Wylie's thesis *vis-à-vis* the ideological and phenomenological 'vanishing point' inherent in all perspectival landscape which 'configures it . . . as a space of not-belonging' (Wylie, 2018, p.11). The latter is illustrated in Wylie's reflections on the alienating experience of his bus journeys home to Ireland: 'There is something about watching the landscape through the windows of a bus, something that feels forlorn and even wretched . . . it always tended to grey away, and become even more inaccessible and indistinct as I travelled along it' (Wylie, 2018, p.12). What these polarised accounts would seem to add up to, then, is an acknowledgement that while spectacular landscapes can, in the manner of the Romantic sublime, stun us into a rapprochement that temporarily dissolves the boundaries of self and world, the unremarkable ones leave the integrity of both the perceiver and the perceived solidly intact and estranged. Neither, of course, corresponds exactly to the Heideggerian notion of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 2011) that informs Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty, 2002), but the sublime mechanisms at work in the Cornish landscape may be seen as a gateway to something similar.

For me, however, the more significant distinction between the two landscape encounters Wylie describes is the temporality by which they are inscribed and how this relates to his suspicion of instantaneous impressions in general. While the dreary landscape as seen from the bus unfolds *slowly* to the eyes of the traveler at the same time as retaining its perspectival distance (one of the distinctive features of automotive travel) (see Pearce, 2016, p.83), the stunning seascape of Mullion

Cove bursts ‘into view’ in an instant (‘Sometimes you’ll turn a corner and a view will surprise you, but we ran right up to this one . . . And now before us the mass of the sea in particular was a previously unseen and unthinkable electric blue’ (Wylie, 2009, p.275)). Significantly, it is the transience of this brief moment of ‘untrammelled perception’ which is construed as a mark of its failure. As stated in the first extract, for Wylie ‘these sorts of moments *can never last*’ and their very fleetingness is regarded as concomitant with their ‘illusion’, ‘enchantment’ (Wylie, 2009, p.276 [my italics]) and, by implication, deception: ‘Something always takes their place, displaces and alienates them’ (Wylie, 2009, p. 276). Yet exactly *why* the transience of this moment of connection with the landscape - and the opportunity it provides to experience, if only for a nanosecond, a ‘co-incidence of self and world’ (Wylie, 2009, p.275) - should be regarded as treacherous is not immediately clear. Upon closer inspection, however, it may be seen to be written into the *narrativisation* of the event which turns swiftly from Wylie’s rapturous encounter with the seascape to his first glimpse of the memorial benches ‘dotted here, and there’ (Wylie, 2009, p.276) on the hillside. For Wylie, the ‘geographies of love’ represented by these benches are bound up in a poststructuralist signifying system of displacement whose signature is absence and loss rather than presence and the ‘continuing bonds’ that many bereaved people appear to find in such memorials (see Klass, Silverman and Nickman, 1996; Maddrell, 2013; 2016; and Rose, 2010, cited above). Once the benches, and their signifying chain, have been glimpsed the author’s embrace of, and by, the landscape evaporates.

Towards the end of the article, Wylie invokes Jacques Derrida’s critique of Merleau-Ponty (Derrida, 2005) to philosophically ground his profound melancholy at the sight of the benches ‘slipping away’ with an ‘untethered quality’ (Wylie, 2009, p. 280), invoking, in particular, the provisionality seen to be implicit in Merleau-Ponty’s characterisation of the ‘co-incidence of subject and object . . . self and landscape’ (Wylie, 2009, p. 283). For Wylie, following Derrida (as well as fellow geographers such as Paul Harrison (2007)) the fact that access to any such moment-of-being is only ever ‘imminent, always-yet-to-arrive’ (Wylie, 2009, p. 283) is its fatal Achilles Heel, and this enables him to explain the troubling ephemerality of his more affirmative landscape encounters in

terms of their existential temporal liquidity: ‘something is always *already* displacing the moment from both without and within’ (Wylie, 2009, p. 276 [italics in original]). As will emerge in the discussion that follows, this conclusion is in signal contrast for the thesis I am pursuing here wherein the transience of our unexpected place-encounters may paradoxically be understood as integral to their success *even if* realised as a temporal potentiality rather than a bounded event.

As well as his concern with the existential impossibility of achieving a connection with the landscape, Wylie, along with other post-phenomenological geographers (see Ash and Simpson, 2014), has come to object to the conceit in principle on political and ethical grounds. Across his publications, he thus argues for the undesirability of keeping phenomenological explorations of emotively charged concepts such as ‘home’ and ‘belonging’ separate from the ideologies by which they have been socially and culturally inscribed. Indeed, in his most recent articles, Wylie resists even the more ‘processual’ accounts of how human (and animal) subjects interact with their environments (such as Tim Ingold’s work on ‘the ongoing rhythms of everyday practice and performance’ (Ingold, 2000, p. 201; cited Wylie, 2007, p.161)) on the grounds that these modified, mobilised, descriptions of ‘dwelling’ still risk an exclusionary essentialism (Wylie, 2016, p. 413). To this end, Wylie (following Harrison, 2007) draws upon Emmanuel Levinas’s work (citing the latter’s declaration: ‘one’s attachment to place . . . is the very splitting of humanity into natives and strangers’ (Levinas, 1999, p. 232; cited Wylie, 2016 p.414)) and warns against the alienating forces of nostalgia: ‘homeland is always a place of desired return, thus it is never where one at present dwells, it always instead somewhere distant’ (Wylie ,2016, p. 414). Similarly, in ‘Landscape as Not Belonging’ (2018), his critique of phenomenological accounts of ‘dwelling’ and ‘belonging’ pushes beyond their problematic ideological associations to insist that ‘not belonging’, rather than belonging, is the human subject’s foundational ‘lived and existential condition’(Wylie, 2018, p. 190): ‘For every invocation of landscape as a marker of belonging and identity, or of land and life vitally entwined, there is also always something out of reach, something we cannot dwell upon’ (Wylie, 2018, p.191).

While I have sympathy for the political anxieties that have fuelled Wylie's determination to reject the possibility of ever 'owning' or 'belonging to' a landscape, I remain unconvinced that such a draconian philosophical move is either necessary or desirable. As Wylie himself acknowledges (Wylie, 2007), the work of Ingold (e.g., 2000; 2016) - and various cultural geographers and mobilities scholars - such as (but not exclusively) Adey, 2009; Bissell, 2013; 2018; Cresswell, 2003, 2006; Edensor, 2011, 2014; Lorimer, 2009, 2014; Matless, 2016, Merriman, 2007, 2012; Thrift, 2008 - has radically disarticulated the notion of the body-subject's habitation of the lifeworld from essentialist and sedentary connotations, with their varied focus on movement, practice, process, performance and the non-representational pointing, instead, to the vast amount of *effort* required to establish, and maintain, a sense of belonging or 'at-homeness'. In other words, I would argue that Wylie's own observation that 'for every invocation of landscape as a marker of belonging or identity' (Wylie, 2018, p.191) there is its opposite, is reason to permit at least the *desire for*, or need of, a phenomenological experience of being 'at-home' to persist. What is missing here is arguably a recognition that the very transitoriness of those moments of 'belonging' - or the 'coincidence of self and world' (Wylie, 2009, p.275) - may be embraced as a valued existential moment of temporary rest to which both human and non-human species aspire (cf. Rose, 2006) precisely because *they know it will not last*. With reference back to my own anecdote, it is also interesting to observe that, rather than indulge nostalgia, my schematic and ideological response to the landscape of the north-east threatens alienation ('*this* Scotland is not *my* Scotland'), whereas my bodily immersion in the new environment's often generic features gradually enfolds me back into something recognized and loved. The further twist to this distinction, however, is that this nascent sense of familiarity does not have its roots in Speyside but elsewhere.

### **Topographical Memory**

When I first began reflecting on what the conversation between myself and my friend on the Speyside Way added up to, I was - not surprisingly - drawn to explanations which focused on the primacy of our embodied relationship to the landscape. Not only could the experience be made sense of according to the core principles of Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology and Casey's work on place memory (see below), but the role of topography in the stimulation of memories of alternate locations also speaks directly to Hayden Lorimer's work: in particular, his theory of how the body becomes attuned to certain terrain(s) (see especially his short essay on 'Surfaces and Slopes' (2009)). It seemed to me, even before I discovered Lorimer's essay, that the features of our walk - or, rather, the *walking* - that had most likely triggered our memories of previous expeditions were to be found in the morphology of the landscape through which we passed: the slopes, bends, aspects and camber of the tracks beneath our feet, as well as those indices which mark particular *moments in time*: light, lighting, atmospheres, and times of day or night (see Edensor, 2017). These often imperceptible sensory encounters would seem to do more to return us to previous locations and events than the visual landscape which, as Wylie (2007) has argued, is relentlessly overdetermined by a host of cultural schemas and 'ways of seeing'. In other words, our feet may apprehend something familiar as we round a bend or crest the top of a hill even though the *view* to which it gives rise bears little relation to that other landscape. This certainly helps to explain why my friend and I were so frequently reminded of our former long-distance walks in the Western Highlands in the quite different terrain of Speyside.

For Lorimer, likewise - reflecting upon the way his long-distance runner's feet have compiled an 'atlas of remembered surfaces' (Lorimer, 2009, p. 83) - the material 'lie of the land' is the key to the palimpsest of body memory:

It's possible to imagine such knowledge amassed and compile as an atlas of memories. Surfaces and slopes might be indexed by region, country and continent, but just as easily categorized according to land-use or the patterns and lines left by a lifetime of interloping. As

much as there might be stretches of country than can induce in me a powerful yen or sense of belonging, there are too, unnumbered surfaces, forms, textures and gradients to which I have become deeply attached and with which on revisiting I find a real rapport. Less scenic, more sensed. (Lorimer, 2009, p.83)

While Lorimer's essay uses this and other accounts of the runner's intimate, sensory relationships with a 'medley of terrains' (Lorimer, 2009, p. 83) to explore the similarly dynamic exchange between the body *and mind* while moving through a landscape,<sup>2</sup> my own interest lies with the way in which the material properties associated with one location may be transposed onto another. Although this is nowhere spelled out, it would appear that Lorimer's 'atlas of memories' (ibid.) is generically coded rather than geographically mapped - 'here sodden and lacklustre, there jarring and shocking' (Lorimer, 2009, p. 83) - with the implication that *multiple instances* of slope and terrain are grouped together in the author's memory bank: a move that speaks directly to my own thesis *vis-à-vis* the potential *transportability* of landscape-place. Indeed, in my own anecdote, it is *foot-fall*, more than anything else, that is the prompt to memory. Further, the sensations involved can be quite unremarkable: the crunch of stones pivoting beneath your boots as you stride out on a forestry track or the drumming vibration through the soles and into the legs as you the plod along a disused railway track.

### **Emplacing the Landscape through the Past**

I turn now to the work of Edward Casey and Dylan Trigg whose work on place - itself indebted to Merleau-Ponty, Henri Bergson and Edward Husserl - has helped me better understand the tensions at work between the different orders of memory and, in the process, complicate the notion that 'finding one place in another' is simply an effect of the sort of body memories discussed above.

In contrast with the work of many other phenomenologists and post-phenomenologists, for Casey there can be no place without place memory: the thesis that sits at the very heart of his landmark study, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (2000 [1987]). In part, place memory matters to Casey because of its purported ‘authenticity’ when set in opposition to *secondary memory* or *recollection* (see Note 1). Indeed, for Casey, our ability to (re)inhabit the past through our (re)immersion in place is *evidence* of the mechanism of ‘primary’ or ‘habit’ memory as conceptualised by Bergson:

We can be moved back into this place as much as, and sometimes more than, into the time in which the remembered event occurred. Rather than thinking of remembering as a form of re-experiencing the past per se, we might conceive of it as an activity of re-implacing: re-experiencing past place . . . Our remembering/remembered bodies are ineluctably place-bound; they are bound to be in a place, whether this place be a common or a special one.  
(Casey, 2000, pp.201-2)

The implications of this observation - that the body’s return to places with which it was once familiar - is one of the surest ways of re-encountering the past, underpins the work of a great many cultural geographers who are invested, in their different ways, in the reparative role place can play in the dislocations of everyday life (for example Owain Jones’s (2017) work on our adult relationship to childhood or Avril Maddrell's on the practices of bereavement and memorialisation (Maddrell, 2009, 2013, 2016)). Of course such memory-acts, in the guise of nostalgia, are also indicative of what Wylie regards as an ideologically suspect ‘shared . . . commitment to the mutual entanglement of humans and the lands they inhabit’ (Wylie, 2018, p. 188). As I have observed previously (Pearce, 2019, pp. 68-73), there is certainly a tendency to both essentialism and sedentarism in some of Casey’s descriptions of how place memory works: an implicit focus on our enduring bonds with *particular* localities as well as the *unifying* properties of both place and memory (see Casey, 2000, p.

202). Elsewhere, however, his phenomenological approach to the workings of memory means that he also recognises the plastic, and inherently mobile, qualities of both place and memory in ways that speak to the notion of transportable place that I am proposing here: ‘But the lived body is at the same time a moving body. Even if it is its own place, it also moves from place to place’ (Casey, 2000, p. 196). For although Casey’s scenario has been drawn to illustrate how the concept of place memory includes what Tim Edensor has designated ‘extended place’ (Edensor, 2014, p. 165) (i.e., the pathways, roads and railways, we occupy when we are ourselves on the move), it also, indirectly, serves to disarticulate place memory from fixed locations and to hint at the possibility of the moving body transporting its memories from one place to another.

Trigg, meanwhile, has further complicated the relationship between place and memory through his accounts of how visits to once familiar places can *fail* and become, instead, disquieting and uncanny encounters (Trigg, 2012). By recognising the role that both secondary memory and what Gaston Bachelard (1971) has styled the ‘phenomenology of the imagination’ play in our experience of place, he exposes the fragility as well as the potency of body memory. In particular, he draws attention to the way in which the *visuality* of memories, reduced to their ‘essence’ through the catalyst of the imagination, can be at odds with our haptic knowledge of place, past and present. To illustrate this point, Trigg uses the personal anecdote of revisiting his family home as an adult; while his first impression is one of complete disorientation - superficially, the rooms are unrecognisable - he discovers that, if he closes his eyes, the space quickly becomes familiar and he is able to think himself back into his childhood past quite easily (Trigg, 2012, p.213). Crucially, however, Trigg also goes on to *defend* the role the imagination plays in the preservation of such place memories:

Far from bringing the destruction of either memory or selfhood, the achievement involving the imagination is to keep the memory of place alive. In and through time, memories are re-

worked, reconstituted, and reconfigured to suit the constantly changing self that exists temporally. This relationship between the flux of time and the work of the imagination points to the significance preservation plays in our experience of places. (Trigg, 2012, p.67)

The implication here is that while Casey's model of place memory may account for some of the ways in which we (re)experience place, it will not account for all of them. Further, although on some occasions the intrusion of secondary memories, or those distilled by the imagination, may negatively intrude upon embodied memory processes described by myself and Lorimer (see Pearce, 2019, pp.247-57 for a literary-textual illustration of this), the latter may also function as a stepping stone to a reverie that is vivid and fulfilling in its own right. Trigg's analysis does, nevertheless, further highlight the fact that the (re)habitation of place is a precarious business, not least because these different orders of memory, are constantly interfering with one another with the consequence that the subject's sensation of 'belonging' is likely to be short-lived.

This returns us to my conversation with Wylie with which this paper opened. We are both agreed, it seems, that any 'co-incidence of self and world' (Wylie, 2009, p.275) we experience is ephemeral; the issue which separates us is whether this renders the encounter illusory and hence 'meaningless'. However, once a Bergsonian model of memory is introduced into the equation (as is the case for both Casey and Trigg) it becomes clear that our sense of connection with particular locations is unlikely to be limited to the instant of the encounter but predicated, instead, upon our experience of that place - *or, one that it reminds us of* - in the past. While this reflex may also be the trigger for uncomfortable secondary memories, the layering of one moment in time upon another nevertheless secures the ontological significance of the event for the subject involved. The past place reverberates in the present one.

### **Place Memory as *Déjà-Vu***

Thus far, my argument has rested upon the twin propositions that one place can remind us another for reasons that are not immediately obvious and that memory (of different kinds) is the key catalyst in this process. In addition, and in response to the work of Wylie and other post-phenomenologists on the provisionality of all human-landscape encounters, I have paid particular attention to the temporalities that attend the sort of place memories captured in my anecdote; in particular the way in which their ephemerality is combined with a powerful sense of (re)presencing. By way of conclusion, I wish to explore this seeming paradox some more: why does an event that is so transitory give rise to such vivid associations, and how might this counter the post-phenomenological proposition that any co-incidence of self and world is illusory because such ‘moments can never last’ (Wylie, 2009, p. 276)? To this end, I begin with a reprise of Bergson’s work on the mechanisms which inform primary or habit memory and how this may, in turn, be used to explain the phenomenon of *déjà-vu* (Bergson, 2000).

For Bergson, the defining characteristics of habit memory - upon which Casey’s place memory also turns - is that the past is recalled through the reflex of *necessity* and (future) use rather than superficial similarity: ‘Thousands and thousands of memories may be evoked by resemblance, but the memory that tends to reappear is the one which resembles the perception in a particular way, the one that may illuminate and direct the action in preparation’ (Bergson 2000, p.56). In the context of any exploration of geographical place and mobility this may, of course, be seen to map quite literally onto the decisions that inform our orientation in new environments. In addition, Bergson also offers an explanation for why this order of memory, routed through the body by dint of necessity, is re-enacted so vividly: namely, on account of the way in which perceptions and memories are laid down simultaneously in consciousness: ‘Step by step, as [a] perception is created, it is profiled in memory’ (Bergson, 2000, p. 47). In other words, ‘memories’ of this kind are essentially *perceptions* waiting to be re-activated as and when the occasion requires.

Such reasoning is compelling when brought to bear upon the transportable place scenarios I have been exploring in this article. Framed thus, the reason why our apprehensions of ‘one place in

another' are so powerful is because they have been called upon by the body's spatial orientation system 'to illuminate and direct the action in preparation' (Bergson, 2000, p.56) as our sensorium likens a new location to one it has encountered elsewhere. For Bergson, the simultaneous storage of perceptions and/as memories also accounts for the phenomenon of 'false-recognition' or *deja-vu* (see Pearce 2016, pp.15-18; 2019, pp.61-4). Precisely because of the way in which perceptions and memories are filed next to one another in consciousness, 'like a shadow next to a body' (Bergson, 2000, p. 47), so it is possible to confuse a perception that is unfolding in the present moment for one which happened formerly - giving rise to the uncanny, and somewhat, unnerving sensation of appearing to know what is going to happen next. Referring this idea back to the notion of transportable place, another speculation thus emerges: namely, that *some* of our experiences of being transported back to past locations and events may be being confused with *new* 'memories' that are being laid down in the present - but presumably in contexts that echo an encounter in the past.

For my argument here, however, the wider significance of Bergson's theorising around the processes of habit memory and *déjà-vu* is that it helps to explain the sheer *vividness* and intensity with which one place can be mapped onto another as we travel about the world, as well as the *spontaneous and involuntary* nature of these chance moments of re-discovery. With reference back to the scenario described in my anecdote, I have been repeatedly struck by how visceral (re)encounters with past locations of this kind are typically marked by *suddenness and surprise*: indeed, their 'success' would appear to depend upon it. In this respect, it also confirms that there is a category difference between the epiphanic moment of place memory and the steady accretion of everyday habits and routines (such as commuting) which serve to bind us to a place over time (see Bissell, 2018; also Seamon, 2016, 2018). This distinction is also implicit in my anecdote: although this walking holiday may, on the one hand, be seen to reprise a very familiar set of mobile practices for myself and my friend, the incidents of transportable place presented themselves to us with the surprise and wonder of an epiphany or, indeed, a *déjà vu*.

The further significance of the *déjà-vu* experience is the lingering impression it leaves upon the subject's consciousness; here and gone in an instant, it nevertheless bears the hallmark of a *memorable event*. Profoundly disorientating, and yet at the same time potentially healing in its capacity to return us to another place and time, the *déjà-vu* is thus a mechanism akin to that which informs the place memories I describe in my anecdote. Through a set of connections that it is impossible to pin down, I am suddenly parachuted back into a time and place I know I knew formerly but struggle to specify. Moreover, for that moment, I am fully 'there' and 'here'; 'co-incident with *this* world precisely because it resembles one I knew before. My sense of belonging, or ownership, thus depends upon an act of recognition and remembrance rather than one of existential 'co-incidence of self and world' (Wylie, 2009, p. 275). And, because of this, the fact the moment of recollection will not last matters not at all.

## **Conclusion**

When my friend and I were walking the Speyside Way two years' ago I had no idea that our chance remarks about the unfolding horizons through which we passed would lead me into a debate about the benefits and limitations of phenomenological and post-phenomenal approaches to landscape and place. Although, in the course of my recent work on memory and mobility (Pearce 2018, 2019), I had already reflected upon the significance of repeated actions and recursive movement in sedimenting, and memorialising, intimate relationships (see also Maddrell, 2016, and the formative work of Merleau-Ponty, 2002 [1962]; Lefebvre, (1991); Seamon, 2016 [1979]), my focus was very much upon the practices concerned rather than the environments in which they took place. Following Merriman (2004) and others I had also challenged Augé's concept of the 'non-place' (Augé, 2009) with the implication that a seemingly banal location may become 'special' on account of its associations accrued over time. This reasoning was the first step towards the thesis I have developed here since it established the role of the body, and body memory, in the transformation of anonymous or generic spaces into familiar places. Indeed, in my recent book (Pearce, 2019), I use the

instance of an elderly couple whose relationship has come to be defined by their regular visits to a local shopping mall to illustrate this; there is nothing in that space that is unique or personal to them - but their repeated use of it, over time, renders it homely and familiar (see also Simonsen's Heideggerian account of similar practices (Simonsen,2012, p.19)). Although here I did not go on to explore *why* the (ephemeral) temporality of such events should be of significance in the recovery of this sort of place memory, I had nevertheless established that the resemblance of one place to another need only be approximate for them to be activated and for feelings of familiarity to be gratified. Further - and following the reasoning of Bergson (2000) and Trigg (2012) - it may also be argued that it is the disorientating *slippages* the body/memory registers between one place and another that stimulates the memory in the first place.

The thesis I have presented here builds upon this earlier work through its acknowledgement of the role embodied movement plays in establishing relationships between human (and non-human) animals and their environments and, in line with Lorimer's (2009) work, identifies topographical links between similar terrains as key to this. In this regard, it may be situated within recent scholarship that has focused its phenomenological investigations on the human subject *as a body* rather than a consciousness even though this arguably still depends upon the notion of an intentional subject (i.e., the very problem that post-phenomenologists such as Harrison and Wylie have with certain applications of Merleau-Ponty's work as well as Ingold's 'dwelling perspective' (Wylie, 2007, p.158)). However, as Kirsten Simonsen has argued, it is difficult, if not impossible, to engage with lived experience - either as an object of study or a methodological practice (including first-person phenomenological descriptive practice) without focusing, at least some of the time, on intercorporeity from the subject-perspective (Simonsen, 2012, p.12).

As we have seen, such recourse to a subject-perspective was a move Trigg (2012) also felt necessary in any understanding of the complex, often disconcerting ways in which we encounter (past) place, including the *rhythm* of familiar and alienating experiences that hold the possibility of relationally and non-relationality in tension (see also Harrison on the 'incessant importance of the

non-relational' (2007, p. 590)). This said, there can be no disguising the fact that the self-world interaction I have explored here is predicated upon an intentional subject with a store of transcendental as well as embodied memories: further, I have posited the continual 'threat' of interruption posed by secondary memory and the shape-shifting imagination as key to explaining why those place memories which *begin* with body are both so short-lived *and* so vivid.

This returns me to some concluding thoughts on the temporality of the instant, which is where my dialogue with Wylie's work began. As soon I started reading Wylie's compelling body of work on landscape, I found my interest piqued by the 'despair' his self-world encounters describe and, while accepting the intellectual and political argument that inform this, struggled to reconcile his reflections with my own experience of familiar landscape-places. This divergence (of emotion as much as of idea) returned me to the reasoning underpinning my earlier work on mobile and recursive place-making but also caused me to remain mindful of all those other, alienating place encounters which frustrate, or repel, any attempt at relationship and to recognise how central fugitive temporality is to both relational *and* non-relational modelling of self-world encounters. As my discussion here has sought to demonstrate, a paradox thus emerges whereby the fleeting nature of any attempt to secure a relational connection with the lifeworld may be seen to both deny and affirm its possibility - the latter feeding the sort of 'dreams of presence' that Rose (2010) has invoked in his conversations with Wylie (Wylie, 2010). By focusing on the mechanisms of memory (as outlined by Bergson) that impose this sort of ephemerality upon those fragile moments of encounter I have therefore been able to argue for their simultaneous ontological plentitude *and* provisionality, with the former being a (counter-intuitive) effect of the latter. Indeed, the further 'trick' of time at work here is the way in which a moment tends to *linger* if it is experienced as a shock or a surprise. This is the temporal vibration that leaves us musing over a *déjà-vu* for minutes, if not hours, after it occurs, and by extension helps explain why the sort of unexpected and/or uncanny place encounters Trigg (2012) describes stays with us. In other words, these are moments with an afterlife that resonates, thus compensating for the brevity of the originating experience. It is this reasoning that has

enabled me to resist Wylie's hopelessness in the face of self-world encounters that 'can never last' (Wylie, 2000, p.275) and to posit, instead, that they can, and will, survive in the jumble of the dynamic, contested modes of memory which converge at such moments. Therefore, while I concede that the reinstatement of an intentional subject upon which my work is predicated will be a proverbial step too far for those scholars philosophically and ethically committed themselves to what Jessica Dubow (2011) has dubbed 'negative phenomenology' there are others, like myself, for whom the 'old ways' (Macfarlane, 2012) and 'past ways' will continue to beckon.

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### **Notes**

1 My focus here is on Husserl's distinction between 'primary' and 'secondary memory' (or 'recollection') (Husserl, 2002) and the development of these terms in the work of Henri Bergson (notably, his category of 'habit memory' (2000), a variant of primary memory) as well as Casey's (2000) work on 'place memory' which builds on Merleau-Ponty's identification of this concept (Merleau-Ponty, 2002).

2 Lorimer focuses specifically on the 'altered states of conscious' that running in strenuous terrains gives rise to. This relates interestingly with my own work on the altered states of consciousness associated with driving (see Pearce, 2016, 156-201).

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