

Daydreams of a There and Then: The Lived Experience of Resonant Place

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Abstract

The present essay offers a phenomenological examination of peoples' experiences of place memory, particularly a sort of daydreaming or dwelling that awakes the memory of a place in the event of daily life (Bachelard, 1958; Heidegger, 1971). I inquire: What is it about the experience of certain places that makes them significant to the point of daydreamy return? What features anchor a memory of place to our experience of the present? To ask these questions requires an orientation to the lived experience of resonant place. For the purposes of this piece, I delve into the lived experiences of three participants, illuminating three themes – resonant place as the origin of independence, the origin of agency and expertise, and as ruptured expectation – each described as unique structures of human experience.

Keywords: resonance, place, memory, independence, expectation

Introduction

I sought daydreamers because I wanted to ask them about the places they dream. Not the squishy chairs of the student union or their stance behind the till in an empty shop, but those places that resonate from deep in their memory, the source material with which they form their current lived-experiences. Gaston Bachelard theorizes daydreamers as tarrying minds, lingering within the constant memory of places that have protected and allowed them to experience daydreams previously. With each dreaming, they recall and reconstitute these past places into new daydreams, creating unbroken strands of resonance and repercussion, noting “In the resonance we hear the poem, in the reverberations we speak it, it is our own.” (Bachelard, 1958, p. 7). Resonance, then, is not a closed system of memory, a singular line between two points, but an iterative chain of lived-experiences, one leading backward and forward through innumerable places and times, and one with an undeniable impact on the now-lived world. Bachelard says, “we cover the universe with drawings we have lived” (1958, p. 33). For those who daydream, the here-and-now is superimposed with the there-and-then. The present is composed of newly shared and synthesized pasts and the countless unnoticed memories that stretch back and back and back.

It is in this phenomenon of intermingling memory and place that I am fascinated, particularly as places resound with and through one another, allowing habitants and users to experience distant

spacetimes in even the most familiar environments. I believe that we all move through the world with implicit notions of what places might (fail to) say about us as people and (dis)allow us to do, all of which are deeply tied to resonances (and dissonances) of other places already experienced and known, and the legibility of stories-so-far made material in these places (Massey, 2005). But place is not passive in its legibility – just as we shape and read the places in which we dwell, we are shaped in turn. I am interested in bringing these sensitivities to place to the forefront, first, and most germane to this study, by better understanding the experience of resonant places – those sites that recall some combination of past activity, form, or meaning (Montgomery, 1998), linking experiences across one's personal geography.

So, I went looking for daydreamers, to ask them about the pang of a resonant place – to better understand what it is like for the experience of one place to pluck at the strings of cognition, behavior, and affect as to recall mind and body to another entirely. But there's something difficult about finding daydreamers as they nestle toward these places of deep resonance. Perhaps it's in the very nature of daydreaming – a desire to be hidden, tucked away in some quiet spot where waking reveries can go unbothered. Perhaps it's that they so successfully depart the present to dwell somewhere out of sight. Either way, I set out to find a few – to ask them about the places that cut in line, the places they remember with barely a nudge, the resonances with which they compose the world.

Resonance & Resonant Place

The notion of resonance has recently experienced a bit of a renaissance, seemingly building from popular concepts of “vibes” as something that is intrinsically shared or felt without need for explanation. The term “resonates” is often used to describe something that has a deep emotional impact on someone. It can be used to describe a piece of art, a song, a speech, a personal experience, or even an idea. For example, someone might say that a particular movie “resonated with them” because it dealt with themes that were personally relevant to them. Or, someone might say that a particular leader “resonates with their audience” because they are able to connect with people on an emotional level. The increased usage of the term “resonates” reflects a growing desire for people to connect with each other on a deeper level. In a world that is often divided and polarized, people are looking for things that they can relate to and that make them feel less alone. The term “resonates” has become a way of expressing this desire for connection and meaning.

Building even past the concept of purely emotional resonance, I conceptualize the term perhaps archaically, as a sort of ontological and topological phenomena. For much of its existence, the term, as I hope to consider it, has been aptly illustrated by the workings of the inner ear. Anatomically, the inner ear plays an essential part in the cognition of sound, and in kinesthetic balance. As the various pressure waves of our environment, be they sonic, barometric, or hypnic, are funneled back into the labyrinthine tubes of the ear, our body vibrates along with them, however imperceptibly. In rhythmic accord with our environment, we generate nerve impulses through which we can come to understand our contexts, as affect and memory brush up alongside one another. In an altogether miniscule turn of bone and musculature, we witness the attunement of the body and its surrounding world. The body extends the world and the world extends the body. It is this resonance with which I begin to think about place. I draw

on Erlmann's (2010) discussion of resonance to consider several links between knowing and place, namely that resonance draws our attention to how the cognitive emerges from affective experience, rather than distinguishing between intellectual and affective senses. Secondly, resonance blurs the bounds of internal and external sensory experiences. Therefore, resonance is more than the flow of sensory stimuli and its effects on bodies, it is also a form of emplaced knowing (Erlmann, 2010).

The Study

In this curiosity, I sought to elicit the sharing of individuals' experiences with resonant places, such that they might be rendered thematically. Thus, I took a phenomenological approach in my interactions with participants, and later data generation and analysis. As a research methodology, phenomenology takes its philosophical roots from the work of Edmund Husserl with later refinement by Heidegger, Merleau-Ponty, and Gadamer, among others (Dibley et al., 2020). The method examines lived experience, describing and illuminating commonalities within a group of persons experiencing a certain human phenomenon, using demonstrative quotations and themes. Phenomenology employs subjective, first-hand knowledge as data to understand lived-experience, based on the assumption that experiences, objects, events, and places hold meaning only because we, as humans, co-construct that meaning (Dibley et al., 2020). It is this focus on seeing the full essence of experience that is at the heart of phenomenological inquiry. Moustakas suggests that research may be suited to the realm of phenomenology when it is important to understand complex, shared experiences of a given phenomenon, often in order to develop practices or policies (or, in my case, design) surrounding them (1994).

So I took a walk one cold, January morning – the type that wakes you up. In my particular blend of introversion, frugality, and continued nervousness about the state of the yet-emerging Delta variant, this was one of the first times that I left home without the excuse of work or procuring groceries, since the birth of my child. But I wandered out, through the streets and buildings of the mid-western university town that I called home.

My path was not straightforward. I moved between the campus, the shops, a few parks, the sites of city government, the fringes of suburbia; my feet and nose numb with cold by my return. I spiraled through the stacks of the library, explored pedestrian bridges that I'd often seen but never crossed, got lost in the labyrinth interiors of sprawling buildings. I witnessed all of the usual morning movements. Some were bustling: sudden flows from coffee shops as people grabbed a morning cup, streams of students on their way to early courses, the massing of traffic as deliveries were unloaded curbside, and the eventual unlocking of freshly stocked shops and cafes. Others were more sedentary, untucking from corners, or inoffensively self-centered on interior benches. Some of the early-risers you could tell had been at it for a time, finishing papers, mid-conversation on cell phones or video calls. This moment, too near the night, others had seemingly just risen.

Participants

In conceptualizing those who I wished to interview about resonance, I returned again and again to a particular struggle, the universality of the experience. Surely most everyone must have some

example of a naggingly resonant place, tunneling from their past to their present, that they might discuss at any given moment. How then was I to sample this vast population? Bachelard theorizes daydreamers as those who maintain apparent contact between the dream world, a world of layered resonances, and their current materiality, making them the ideal participants in an inquiry such as this (1958, p. 84).

But daydreamers can be rare, and that day the telltale signs of a tarrying mind were seldom found: the glazed eyes staring into the past, backward-leaning relaxation, slow deep breaths taking in soft remembered smells, ears unhearing, oblivious to the surrounding moment. Instead I found people of great focus, leaning into the world with degrees to attain, workdays to complete, sales to be made. But also, phones to attend to, food and drink to consume. For all of my questing I struggled to find many daydreamers.

In hours of searching I successfully identified just five. Always I found them where they were supposed to be doing something else: attending to a desk, looking after a child, finishing schoolwork – *Marie staring out across the park, lost in the leafless trees and the buzz of a passing plane. Foster awaiting a ringing phone, backdropped by a sculpture of amassed globes and key lit by a 40-foot display of 20th century American mass-market floor plans – Sears-Roebuck, kit homes, four-squares, and balloon-frames. Kayla, near an obscured side-door, beneath the graduate library stacks, basked in flickering fluorescents. Bruns sipping from a mug, the pool just beyond the open door of the rec-center office strangely silent. Celeste sitting near the entry of a residence hall, her planner nearing capacity. She is bubbly, yet solemnly serious, eager for forward progress.*¹ – instead, with the gentle urge of my opening inquiry, “you look as though you might be daydreaming, like you might be somewhere else, could I ask you a few questions?”, they dove into their pasts headfirst. By no means do these five people represent all that might be gleaned of resonant place. Rather, I borrow their narratives and their experiences to understand their sensitivities to, and the significance of, resonant places in their memories (Van Manen, 2016, p. 62).

Data Collection

With some sense that naming one’s daydream may intrude upon the essential safety of the resonant place, I identified myself as one researching the lived experience of resonant place and inquired about the dreamers’ interest and availability to participate in a brief interview. All five agreed outright. I began interviews simply by seeking a strand of resonance of any sort, perhaps unrelated to their current reverie, asking “can you tell me about a place you’ve been that immediately calls to mind another time or place in your life?” The daydreamers sat with me in the very places that I had encountered them, and they shared their stories, usually for around 20 minutes before concluding, typically a bit hurriedly. As noted, most were doing something else, and a sense of panic would creep into the conversation, as the dreamers now two activities (the interview and the daydreaming) removed from their supposed task began to imagine the potential repercussions of their tarrying. With consent, I recorded the interviews for later transcription (audio only), but I very intentionally avoided taking notes so as to remain as present as possible for the conversation.

¹ All names are pseudonyms.

Following their initial response, I would ask the daydreamers to give particular attention to the two places that they had linked through their narrative. I encouraged participants to narrate their experience, providing concrete details and contexts of their memories. To further encourage this narration, I asked rather open-ended follow-up questions such as “what happened next?” and “what was that like?” To build out a deeper and deeper sense of place, I also followed up with questions meant to tug at the threads of lifeworld existentials, exploring sensory details, perceptions of time and movement, as well as recollections of others who were present either in the moment of learning or who were strongly associated with the place (Van Manen, 2016). In moments of talk that elicited a feeling of “being pulled up short,” the sensation of standing on the edge of confusion in the face of something new and different to my own experiences, I slowed the narration and asked for clarification and elaboration of individuals’ phrasing and feeling. This embraced the phenomenological practice of bracketing pre-understandings while still engaging in the interview context (Dahlberg et al., 2008).

Interpretation

Opening the interpretive act, and keeping in mind that transcription is a representational process rife with researcher interpretation (Van Manen, 2016), I produced verbatim transcripts that centered the experience itself, rather than the speaker’s diction, intonation, or elaboration of their narrative. To achieve this, I focused my transcription process on talk, very limited non-verbal actions, and silences, without complex diacritics or self-emphasis as a dialogic participant. These transcripts read uninterrupted by stanza or line-by-line segmentation. They are meant to express a fullness of the story being told, without so much attention to how.

Further interpretation of the transcribed experiences occurred iteratively through two practices: reflection on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon, and description of the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting (Van Manen, 2016, p. 32). Put simply, a great deal of the analytic work occurred in the deep reading and re-reading, memoing, and writing around individuals’ description of lived-experience. The process of analysis was not one of coding or attempting to pick apart the decisions of language and storymaking engaged in by the individuals. To achieve the sort of sensitivity required, engaged as a listener, setting aside my expectations of resonant place, stretching myself to the stories offered, and attempting to reconcile them with one another. As described by Dibley et al., the phenomenological stance of analysis occurs as data is allowed to “simmer” en masse—a sort of slow, meditative dwelling in the experiences of others, such that themes, connections, and patterns “bubble up” in time (2020, p. 127). In these themes, connections, and patterns, I sought what Van Manen calls “the structures of experience,” those essential, and collectively recognizable aspects of emplaced learning (2016, p. 79): lived space, lived body, lived time, and lived human relation (2016, p. 101). I explored essential themes through the descriptive act of writing, synthesizing disparate experiences to recapture and reawaken these places of learning anew. Just as time was given to the initial reading and re-reading of interview data, I dwelt in my own descriptions as well as narratives, poetry, and fiction about learning. In this continued reflection I sought a singular, potential common meaning—a “fusion of horizons” between my own understanding and that of the participating individuals—always hoping to understand perhaps the kinds of places in which the act of learning is most richly felt, remembered, and lived (Dibley et al., 2020, p. 128).

Findings

It is in resonant places that we begin to see and feel ourselves fully in the world. We leave behind what is familiar and set out to find our own people, make our own decisions, adopt interests, and develop expertise. Resonant places are sometimes beautiful or intrinsically noteworthy, but shockingly often, they are ordinary and uncomfortable. The essentials of independence and ruptured expectation so associated with these places highlight the novelty of resonant place. When all that is familiar and expected fall away, leaving only our subjectivities and the strangeness of the world, we begin to understand our place a little bit better, and love the world all the more because of it. Malpas, building around Norberg-Schulz, conceives this dwelling, this resonant return as a discovery, noting, “to dwell is to have found oneself, to have found a proper sense of oneself...” (2012, p. 4). Returning to Bachelard’s notion of place as a sort of annotated self-history, a universe covered with lived-drawings (1958, p. 33), we might begin to understand resonant places as those that reveal a familiar, independent self, reiterated continuously into the present. Such places allow us to reflect on our own becoming, offering multiple points of perspective on who we are and how we interact in the world. In a sense, our recollection of resonant place creates a sort of origin myth, tracing our arrival at the current moment. In the following sections, I delve into descriptions of three participants’ lived experiences: Marie, Celeste, and Bruns. In telling their stories I hope to demonstrate this notion of love for the world as brought about by independence, agency, and ruptured expectation.

The Avocado Saddle and The Yellow Room: Resonant Place as Origin of Independence

Those places where we feel ourselves becoming more independent hold an important place in our memory. Perhaps this is the result of experiencing place that can be wholly our own, not chosen for us or dictated in its use by another. Perhaps it is the confidence of being without oversight, trusted to survive, to adapt to the challenges of everyday life, to do what is right. Independence is natural, healthy, and expected, yet it is composed of a series of significant, sometimes painful changes. We are born wholly vulnerable, clinging to the support of those who raise us. Then we crawl away, walk away, run away, grow away – stretching ties, and eventually individuating ourselves from our origins.

With the humming buzz of a distant propeller plane I return, first to that hike just a short way from home. Engulfed in the shade of the avocado orchard, the air quiet but for those few aircraft, then further, immediately back to the chaos of childhood. My home was loud, almost always. First thing in the morning the record player would be clicked on, arm and needle tracking the minutes and hours. The soundtrack backed up me and my two siblings in our constant squabble, and in the morning and afternoons the sound of Southern California traffic would roar to life beyond our walls. The street flooded with passing automobiles in their long commute. At some point my siblings would leave for school, while I would continue to tick off lap after lap of the record player.

My mother would send me out with a few words, “just go, have fun.” So I explored the yard and played in the avocado tree just outside the house. The thing was about as tall as our one-story ranch, and I knew every branch as high as I could possibly climb. But the best place of all was the saddle, perfectly situated about 6 feet off the ground, sweeping horizontally away from the trunk, with a gentle bend exactly like you see in equestrian gear. Here I could sit, and role play as a pioneer child, an adventurer on my trusted mount. The illusion was broken only occasionally by bugs tracing their way along the fissures of the branch’s bark. I would crush them for infringing on my imagined game, breaking the fantasy of my 17-hand horse. I could reach out and touch the leaves as if I were riding beneath them slowly. They were smooth and dark in my hands.

Mother would call me back inside for a nap and for the first time that day the record would scratch to a halt. I was left alone in a yellow room thick with the scent of Vicks vapor, so prevalent in the tight space that the humidifier had left little cheerio sized ringlets of condensation stained on the ceiling. The room was cool and dark after a morning in the Los Angeles sun. But mostly it was quiet. Laying down for my nap, I could always hear prop planes from the local airport buzzing overhead. That distant hum prompted a sudden fall into slumber.

In the afternoon the chaos would resume, drowning out any sound of those planes. The record player would blare back to life, the afternoon commuters would fill the streets, my siblings would return from school. Again exiled from the house, we would all play together. But my siblings were older than me and the confines of our yard, the perfection of the avocado saddle, were not enough for them. So we would all hop the fence and explore the neighboring orchard. A herd of trees simultaneously explored by an entire neighborhood of children. We climbed recklessly and unobserved, finding our way through the trees until we knew all of the best routes, the hand and footholds that would take us the highest, into the best views of the surrounding neighborhood. Those neighbor kids were most of my friends at the time, and I learned from them just what friendship was.

To this day, I can still spot avocado trees at a great distance. I can tell which ones would make for good climbing and even from the ground I can trace routes through their branches to the highest reachable point. And the sound of prop planes is one that is deeply meditative and calming to me. That sound makes me feel heavy, but in a comforting way, as though I am grounded and safe, peacefully awaiting sleep that is just moments away.

Marie

As with so many great narratives, independence requires that we cross a threshold (Campbell, 2008). The point of crossing, with all its significance, can form a strong resonant bond, an indelible linkage with place. Sometimes this crossing is a slow slipping away, a momentary glimpse of what it might be like in a time without that which has always been present. Marie’s mother would tip-toe from the yellow room so as not to disturb her napping. Marie was independent only insofar as being alone in a room. Sometimes the crossing is abrupt, a push out the door, her mother imploring her to explore the heights of the avocado trees, the extent of the

nearby orchards, urging her, bit by bit, further and further into the world, saying “Just go. Go. Have fun.”

Departing familiar authorities to explore theretofore unfamiliar independence, we move through spaces where institutions, be they familial, social, governmental, or otherwise, ebb and flow, sometimes exerting great power, sometimes almost none. But this independence does not necessitate solitude. Rather, part of this exploration of the world includes sharing it with others. We redefine previous relationships and establish new ones. We come to understand that there are others like us, and we move with them. We make decisions and test our own agency. We recognize that the world does not merely shape us, but we in turn have power to shape the world and ourselves.

Heidegger argues that dwelling is essential to our being-human. He writes that "man is the only being whose being consists in dwelling" (1971). In other words, dwelling is not something that we do; it is something that we are. Places of independence are important because they allow us to fully realize our *being-human*. They provide us with a space to grow and develop as individuals, to take responsibility for our own lives, and to build meaningful relationships with others.

Marie’s departures from her mother, be they short naps or longer excursions, allowed her the sense of freedom to make her own choices and to live on her own terms, safely severing the final familial link – father, siblings, mother. She was no longer simply living in the physical space of her childhood home; she was also creating a new dwelling for herself amongst the trees.

Sometimes this new dwelling beyond the threshold is a tender geography. Whatever new possibilities lie in independence, they come at the cost of stretching, aching rupture. They require, even for a moment, the discomfort of the unknown. In this strange world, we must unlearn and rethink that which we so confidently knew.

Exit Interlude: Resonant Place as Origin of Agency & Expertise

Emerging across a threshold of independence, we emerge into a newly autonomous sense of self. We become more and more aware, both of our ability to make decisions and of our particular knowledge of the world. In this, resonant place becomes a material signifier of the things we choose to do and the things we know deeply. Some of these knowledges and actions may be entirely menial, but it is not the profundity that is important, it is the degree to which they belong to us, the degree to which they can formulate a part of our selfhood. Our participation in the world is a choice; we are no longer mere taggers-along, bystanders in someone else’s story.

I live in a town that's dominated by traffic. People simultaneously talk about how amazing it is and desire to be there and avoid it for the sake of not being stuck in a car, queued up to get anywhere. There are soaring overpasses and buttressed highways all around me, and i have to take them to access all the things I need. Highways in particular take me back to a moment that was actually only a few years ago. I had gone home from university for the winter holiday. My hometown is similarly dominated by a single stretch of highway. You can't avoid it unless you're OK with taking pothole backstreets and being late for almost anything. This singular

stretch connects the old and new, spanning the shallow resacas between the rambling strip malls and the pre automobile old blocks sweeping across the bridge into Mexico. I remember being smack dab in the middle of this highway, smack dab in the middle of the car that we were in, both my parents and both of my younger siblings, aspiring for a nice family outing to the zoo. On one side of me was my younger sister, the sibling most close to me in age, on the other the one I call my baby brother, even though he's now too old to be called baby. My sister has panic attacks. We all know this; we've all experienced them. She had one that day. She was breathing heavily before she began screaming and attempting to open the door of the moving vehicle. More than anything I just remember heating up. It was already hot, and wedged in between my two siblings made things even hotter, but when her panic attack began I felt as though my blood was boiling. People say they felt as though they were melting, which always seems like an exaggeration, but I understood it then. I had to reach across her body to make sure she wasn't able to open the door. I snapped my gaze back and forth checking on my sister and my baby brother to make sure he was OK. All five of us must have been screaming at some point common though I don't think any of us heard one another. Eventually my voice broke through and I demanded that my dad get off the highway immediately before someone was hurt. I could tell that this hurt him. My parents had always been the voice of certainty, the ones that know what needed to be done. But I couldn't stand it anymore. Always telling me what I was supposed to be doing, or what they thought I was supposed to be doing. But it was so clear that this time their way was dangerous.

In the parking lot of a strip mall I climbed over my brother, unbuckled him, and pulled him from the car, all while my sister continued to scream, my father and mother shouting back at her to calm. There I stood in the parking lot sobbing with my little brother in my arms. My father was upset, said something about needing to get home to calm everything down. I told him I wasn't OK having my brother in the car as long as my sister was trying to open doors. This made him even more frustrated, and he peeled away in anger. As this was happening a man came out of the grocery store. I hate to label someone according to what they're wearing, but he looked like all the gang members that I had seen growing up. Well, he heard my sister screaming, through a glance my direction, and it was clear that he thought a girl was being kidnapped. He chased after the car screaming for it to stop. Bobbling along with my little brother, I ran after him to clarify the situation, to thank him for his concern, but assure him that everything was OK. He went back to his own car and drove off. I was eventually able to call my little brother and realized then that I had to figure out a way home. I couldn't possibly call my parents after what had just happened, I had probably contributed to the stress as much as anyone and I felt guilty, but at the same time I didn't want to see them, I didn't want to ask them for help. I took out my phone to look for friends from high school who might live nearby or be willing to drive out and pick us up. Not many options. Since finishing high school and leaving home most of the bridges of my adolescence had been burned. I left town without many friends left. Eventually, scrolling through every contact I had there was one name that seemed like maybe they would help. It called them and within 10 minutes they pulled into the strip mall and beckoned us into their car. They drove me and my brother

home where we found everyone calm and separated, recuperating after the events. I lied to my parents, telling them that my boss had called and needed me back early to work a few shifts. I didn't finish out the holiday break with my family but instead made my way back to university. Now when I go home they almost always build in some moment of escape like this, shortening my visits to the point that I spend perhaps more time on the highways than I do at home.

Celeste

At times, the intersection of agencies and knowledges within a particular place form the backbone of resonance. Celeste knew what needed to be done and brought it to bear. Defying the youthful deference to her parents, she asserted herself, establishing a moment of intense independence, but also a moment of what Heidegger might conceptualize as being free (2007). Celeste broke free of what had long felt a deterministic relationship with her family. She made a choice about her own experience in the world. Unlike compulsory sites, the very decision to be in a place is important. Celeste now chooses when she comes and goes from her family's home. She recalls the first time she felt agency in this choice, immediately after the incident in the car, but extends it to the present, noting "...even during Christmas break when I don't have school for like a month, I [go home] for like five days."

Sometimes place itself establishes the agency and expertise carried forward. In this, resonant places are sites of agentive learning. Marie still speaks of avocado trees with an immense amount of pride. "I can see them when no one else can, I can spot them." Even years removed from her play in the avocado orchards she retains a useful knowledge of the trees – what they look like, how the bugs move between the cracks in their bark, even planning routes through their branches. "[I] imagine where I would sit or how I would climb it. Even now I look at the trees and go 'oh that one has a little saddle shape' and even the way the branches grow out, it makes a good climbing tree." By spending time in a place, one very near her home, Marie developed knowledges that many others do not share, knowledges that she retains to this day. Stepping free of the authority and subsistence of others, we understand our own power and agency. Resonant places become so as they host this realization, sheltering us as we recognize our ability to know, define, and shape the world, to participate in the ways that we most desire.

The Lake of Tears: Resonant Place as Ruptured Expectation

Of course recognizing the absence of some long-felt authority and stepping into new self-sufficiency can be a lonely feeling, breaking the world as we think we know it to be to reveal something altogether unexpected. The first moments of independence can seem something of a loss, a nakedness, an unfamiliarity. At times this rupture occurs as a discontinuity from quotidian experience, from expectation built up of repeated performance. We move through the world establishing habit from a young age. Regimented routines and rituals organize our time and space for great efficiency. Disruption of these choreographies is often something as everyday as the habits themselves. Sometimes the rupture is itself a part of our routine, made distinct in its necessary strangeness. In the moment, these breaks from the norm might be inconvenient, even frustrating, but their novelty is also alluring. They lead us to inspect our world as it is, and to question the other possibilities for its existence.

Sometimes though, expectation is far more abstract, composed by reputation and supposition. We hear say of the way things are and assign objectivity to their assumed experience. Some things are good, or bad, or gross, or ideal – things that we have never encountered for ourselves. These generalizations can be useful, sure, and were likely downright necessary throughout much of history. Teaching people to recognize danger or favor particular features of their environment was preservational. Still, when we encounter the subject of such a generalization, full of nuance and complexity, our expectations are sure to be challenged, if not entirely shattered. Further, when generalizations are experienced as opposite their expectation, we find fertile ground for resonance.

When you grow up in a small enough town your social circles end up just as small. I had the same kids in my class for most of my adolescence. Every once in a while someone new would come and enmesh themselves with our little core group that had been there since the beginning. Still hanging out with that same group of people too. I went out to a lake with a few of them this past summer just to try to get out of the heat for a little while. It's kind of wild that I know everything about some of these people. We've seen each other grow up. I didn't think of it that way for a long time but now that we're all college students and I realized that I've known some of these people for like 80% of my life and theirs, it really struck me. There's no privacy in such a small community. Everyone seems to know everything about everyone else. This was all I knew. Most of my extended family lived no more than one or two towns away. Vacations meant driving north to any of the progressively larger cities, but I had never experienced anything other than the loud pride of my home state.

During when I was in 6th grade my school announced an application for a sponsored trip to a summer camp in New Hampshire. Something like 10 students would be chosen to fly into Boston and catch a bus out to the camp for two weeks. Everyone I knew applied, so i did 2. I was chosen to attend the camp and only then did my nerves really set in.

The travel was hectic and unlike anything I'd ever done before. Those driving vacations had always been listing, following the flow of my family as we would pile in and out of the car at a whim. But my 9 classmates and two chaperones were herded from point to point with a careful itinerary planned to the minute. Once we touchdown in Boston things slowed a bit as we crowded into a van and took to the wooded roads of western Massachusetts in Southern New Hampshire. Arriving at the camp I was immediately drawn to the lake, and escaping the attention of our handlers for just a moment I dipped a hand into its frigid cold waters.

That first day was terrifying for me. That's when it really set in just how far away I was from everything I had ever known. Most of my friends, my family, my stuff, all a few 1000 miles away, while i was here in this unfamiliar place full of unfamiliar kinds of people. Even the other students who had been selected to attend were not those who I was really closest to. My school had selected a number of 8th graders that I didn't really get to know that well, so it felt a bit lonely even with my peers. Still, we

stuck together for most of that first day, finding comfort and even a bit of familiarity, in watching one another discover this new world. And I have to admit splitting up that night after dinner to head to my cabin in which I knew no one at all, i got scared and i got homesick. I cried myself to sleep that night.

In the morning I didn't really have the chance to fall in line with my classmates comment the camp had organized our days so that we spent time with our cabins. The schedule was packed full of activities, it felt like every minute was accounted for. One of my bunk mates, a kid named Francisco, started telling me about his hometown at some point during our morning activities. His life before coming to camp had been so different from mine, but we still had so much in common. We enjoyed the same sports and a lot of the same movies. We talked throughout the day and I realized by dinner that I hadn't spent much time thinking about home comment at least not in the sad way that I had the night before.

For the rest of camp, Francisco and I were inseparable, and we made lots of other friends as well. He and I both really liked the lake and when the daily schedules became more flexible when we got to choose our own activities, Francisco and I ended up spending entire days on the Lakeshore, riding jet skis and swimming in that frigid water. When I arrived at camp I had been just an OK swimmer, that I learned from our counselors and some of my new friends, and with the nearly constant practice I left feeling more at home in the water than I did on the shore at times. It was funny because for his glued to my classmates as I was during that first day at camp, there were times that I forgot some of them were there. As far as I know they had something similar happened to them. They found their people, they found their favorite places around camp, and they found things that they really enjoyed doing. We didn't need to cling together because we discovered new ways to be ourselves. This made for a fun drive back to Boston, even as we were lamenting our departure.

I still seek out lakes and water. I've actually never had a job that didn't involve water in some way. I've worked around the resorts at a local beach town, I've been a lifeguard, even some of the other jobs that don't directly involve being in the water I found myself staring out the window all day at a lake or pond or pool. I'm not sure I'll ever have a job where I'm far from the water. It's comforting to me.

Bruns

Gadamer asserts that “every experience worthy of the name thwarts an expectation” (1960, p. 356). Who can argue that memory so often lingers in those moments when things are not as they should be; when things are not as we’ve been led to believe? As we seek patterns that might aid us in understanding the world, an interruption flourishes as unique, interesting, memorable. So too are the resonant places that break from the norm, and those that defy what we have come to expect.

Bruns recalls that his first night at summer camp he felt completely terrified, noting, “I was so far away from home, it was my first time ever going on a plane, and I just remember that I felt

alone.” Everything that he had known, the people, routines, and rhythms of daily life were suddenly supplanted. We all move through a single day with different expectations than those that mediate a week, a month, a season, a year, and so on. We attune ourselves to the rhythms of these scales, and hum along with some understanding of what we might expect from them in a given moment. We are familiar with our day-by-day patterns – who we are likely to encounter, and when, and where, the sounds and quality of light that will build out our perception, and so much more. But these understandings of time are not particularly memorable, they are habit. Resonance seems to take root in those moments that free us from habit, that require our attention because of their novelty. One aspect of Heidegger's concept of Dasein (there-being) is based on the idea that we should live our lives in accordance with our own unique potential and values, rather than being constrained by the expectations of others or by societal norms (2007). Apparent in Bruns' telling (and that of others, is the significance of these ruptured expectations.

Attending these reversals and unexpected moments is the pleasant memory of surprising sensation and interaction. Resonant places are marked by encounter, particularly the type that upsets our understanding of the world as it has been presented to us. Harkening back to our newfound agency and expertise, places in which we discover the world anew come to rest at the forefront of our memory. As such, detail of resonant places is not often steeped in the conventionally picturesque, but in the unrefined and the pungent.

The shocking, almost painful, cold of the water, the squelching lakebed that seemed to want to pull you under, and the drifting scent of pond scum from algae blooms in the hot sun. A slimy goo of tears and sweat. The waft of cow manure and diesel fuel. The daydreamers gave life to their memories in no uncertain terms and make clear that their resonances emerge from affective experience and an attunement to the world as they encountered it, not as they believed it ought to be or as it had been presented by others (Erlmann, 2010). So often the world as it is offers a pleasant surprise, a memorable unraveling of expectations.

Discussion

Daydreamers do not delve into resonant places necessarily in hopes of return, but rather to remain more fully themselves and to remember the world as they have learned to love it most. These places help us to hold on to who we truly are. Bruns find himself most alive still when he is near the water and has sought out homes and jobs that allow him that proximity. Marie longs for the relaxing sound of overhead propellers and the glinting leaf of an avocado tree. Celeste takes cues from the frequency of freeways to remember the life she is making for herself. Daydreamers understand themselves now because of the places they attend in their daydreams, sometimes with fond reminiscence, other times with anger, always in a state of becoming. Malpas theorizes upon this sort of dreamy dwelling, noting that it “is to stand in such a relation of attentiveness and responsiveness, of listening and of questioning, and this means that the question of dwelling is never a question that is ever settled or finally resolved. To dwell is to remain in a state in which what it is to dwell – and what it is to dwell *here*, in *this place* – is a question constantly put anew” (2012, p. 14).

When I went out seeking daydreamers, I searched high and low for those detached from the here and now, those only partially present. What I found were those better attuned with themselves

and the here and now, those sensitive to their own independence and agency, those ready to make choices according to their own authentic ways of being, those who could trace their unique selves across topologies, back and back and back.

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