

PERFORMING PLACE 2 (INHABITATION)

One line of thought...

[I]nsofar as they 'work' at all places are still not-inconsiderable collective achievements. They are formed through a myriad of practices of quotidian negotiation and contestation; practices, moreover, through which the constituent 'identities' are also themselves continually moulded. Place, in other words does – as many argue – change us, not through some visceral belonging (some barely changing rootedness, as so many would have it) but through the *practising* of place, the negotiation of intersecting trajectories; place as an arena where negotiation is forced upon us. (Massey, 2005: 154)

Massey's theories of place are pertinent. Here she suggests, as others do (e.g. Tuan, 1977; Casey, 1993; de Certeau, 1984; Lefebvre, 1991, Thrift, 1999), that the undertaking of quotidian practices constructs place. It is this that I am suggesting as a useful way of thinking about performing place: the performative inhabitations (*pace* Judith Butler) that evolve and accumulate so that participants become increasingly familiar with the patterns of place.

The 'myriad practices' of the Caer Llan Trilogy were embodiments that consciously and unconsciously performed place. They provide an accretion of insider knowledges that result in a detailed, affectual (at least in this case) familiarity with the space, aiding in the transformation into a place or 'lived space'. ('Lived space' is taken from the work of Lefebvre (1991 {1974}) and, subsequently, Soja (1996; 1999). Cresswell argues that Lefebvre's socially produced space or 'lived space', 'in many ways, plays the same role as place' today (Cresswell, 2004: 10).) I am suggesting that the *intensity* and *heterogenous* quality of the quotidian practices at Caer Llan contributed to its swift transformation into place. This was facilitated by the multivalent use of the site: as a living and working space.

Where Caer Llan came to represent a particularly *densely* lived space was in this range and quantity of everyday practices, then. The DVD extracts in *Multivalent spaces* demonstrate 'work' taking place within the major area of daily routine and social activity – the bar/dining room. So, not only was this space used for its designated purpose (meals, drinking), it became the site of working activities also. The dining area was a usefully ordered, controlled, sympathetic environment for rehearsing a tightly ordered performance piece in CL1. The bar offered a relaxed discussion space *and* a source of inspiration for exercises to welcome the MA group in CL3. (Caer Llan is a house full of jigsaws; the owner makes them. It is easy to 'pass over' them. Here, participants paused to study the jigsaw as a potential site-resource for an exercise.) Later in CL3, the dartboard in the bar became the medium for creating a timeframe that was used by the sound group for an indoor, 'Caer Llan' soundscape.

The DVD extracts exemplify the intense and multiple usage of space as the extracts under [Eavesdropping](#) help demonstrate. Oliff's tour of the wasteland (last section of [Site 3/wasteland](#)) was accompanied by an underscoring of rehearsals in nearby sites; the sets of extracts of the bar/dining room demonstrate multiple site usage. In another clip entirely, Louise ([Dominic Interview](#)) refers to the 'level of detail' that she saw each time she returned to Caer Llan. All these suggest an intensity of experience in the inhabitation of this place. Ingold uses 'taskscape' (1993) to suggest a range of human tasks taking place within a landscape over a period of 'social time'. (This is part of an argument he pursues suggesting

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that: 'the dualism of culture and nature be replaced by the synergy of person and environment' (1992: 44).) I am suggesting that a useful way of thinking of dwelling at Caer Llan is as an unusually dense taskscape comprising a particularly taut and thick weaving of environment and heterogenous 'tasks'. Space became place through myriad, eclectic and multiple quotidian practices.

It is these performative inhabitations that offer an additional – and complementary - way of thinking about performing place. This sits alongside the framed, rehearsed and devised performance work outlined in [Performing Place 1](#) offering a duality to the performance of place.