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Epilogue: *Moving Places – Relations, Return and Belonging*

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Moving Places turns out to be about the mobility and immobility of concepts as much as places. Some terms that were previously assumed to inherently imply a spatial fixity (e.g. roots or home) turn out to be mobile, at least occasionally; a word that might have axiomatically implied mobility (e.g. nomads) turns out also to imply fixity in some cases; mobility itself often appears in these texts in a variety of guises, regularly simultaneously implying a return, lack of movement or a kind of fixed belonging, even in the process of movement. Across time, space and peoples, the chapters show how this idea of movement changes. However, this does not imply that places, people and things are somehow constantly in a state of flux making it impossible to hold anything in place long enough to say anything about it. On the contrary, many of the chapters describe or assert a fixity around which the changes circulate, something that generates continuity irrespective of whatever else might be changing.

To my mind, the contribution of this collection lies in its exploration of what is held in place (as it were) for long enough to understand the changes occurring around it. Here, I am using the term 'place' to refer to a location that is fixed by all the relations it involves. It might help to think of this metaphorically for a moment (but not for long; there is often too much use of metaphor in speaking of spatial arrangements). Imagine an object, for example a wooden box, suspended in the middle of a room with ropes that are tied around the box at one end and attached to hooks in the walls and ceiling at the other end. The box is held in place, in the middle of the room, by the ropes, and by the connection of the ropes to the hooks and the walls and ceiling; if the ropes are cut or moved, the location of the box changes. But not everything changes: the ropes are still ropes, and not steel rods; the box is still in the room

and not elsewhere. One could also imagine the box as being connected to a system of pulleys, so that it can be pulled up and down or along the ropes. In that case, there would be plenty of movement: a constant shift of location; but the relationship between the ropes, the box and the room remains the same. It would only substantially change if the box were cut free from the ropes and fell to the floor.

In short, a key element in understanding the relation between place, location, movement and people, is what stays the same as change occurs. This is often forgotten, even if it is straightforward in logical terms: in order to recognize an entity (a place, a people, an activity) as having changed, something about it has to stay the same; if everything changes, there would be no recognition of any relation between the previous entity and the later one. So, in answering the question of what determines the meaning of movement, for people and/or for places, which all the papers address in one way or another, the collection also identifies what stays the same. Most often, this is either something social, such as the form of kinship in which people engage, or something conceptual, such as a particular cosmology or cultural approach towards belonging and movement. The chapters do not always examine what causes the changes that are described. Often, these changes involved some kind of historical event that was either unexpected or not directly related to the peoples studied. However, they all examine how people engaged with these changes and made sense of them, for which the element that remains the same needs to be understood.

In almost half of the papers, the changes in question concern the historical and/or contemporary conditions of one or other part of former Yugoslavia (Repič, Kozorog, Spreizer, and Lofranco), and this provides an additional thread through the book. Former Yugoslavia has undergone a particular experience of relocation in recent years, a shift in both its own internal borders and its relations with the rest of the world. In that process, the relation between people and place changed in a range of ways, but not always with the expected

results. All of these changes affected the ability of people to move, as well as the meaning or relevance of that movement. The chapters show that the issue of what changes and what stays the same in that situation is not always self-evident. Lofranco's paper, which specifically looks at two districts of Sarajevo that were divided by the Dayton agreement, explores what happens when borders as well as people are moved from one location to another. In this case, the new local authorities' created new locations by changing those street names that reminded people of the old location and used names of locations in the part of the town that was now in the other political entity by to give a sense of the whole that had now been subdivided. Such efforts resulted in totally confusing the resident population: they, literally and metaphorically, no longer knew where they were.

Drawing on Appadurai, Lofranco argues that the new arrangements (which also involved many new restrictions on movement, as well as a change in the location of services) involved a shift in locality, a change in a sense of the quality of place. Judging from Lofranco's description of the confusion caused by the name changes, there also appears to have been a change in location in the more literal sense. Here, it is worth considering for a moment the difference in the concept of 'locality' on the one hand and 'location' on the other. Appadurai describes locality as being 'primarily relational and contextual rather than […] scalar or spatial' (Appadurai, 1995: 178). In this usage, locality is an abstraction describing a quality, rather than a word that relates to somewhere in particular. A sense of this distinction is understood from the difference between saying, 'That is a good locality' as opposed to 'That is a good location.' A good locality refers to the quality of what is described as being good; a good location draws attention to its spatial positioning. In the case of Lofranco's study, it seems that, in addition to the resulting abstract shifts in people's thinking from all these changes, the shift in location, in the more literal spatial sense of being somewhere in particular, was equally significant, at the very least in practical terms. Exclusion from

previously accessible municipal and public services and facilities is a simple example. In analytical terms, the difference is significant: the changes made in Sarajevo following the end of the conflict did not simply have an effect on people's imaginations or their understanding of what was going on, and the change in the street names was not only a matter of semiotic displacement: the changes altered where people were in the world, the value of that location and, in this case, it also meant that they regularly got lost trying to find their way from one side of their town to the other.

Repič's paper goes a bit further back historically to study the consequences of conflict for Slovenians who fled to Argentina as a result of the violence and war crimes that were committed during the period of the Second World War. Repič found that many Slovenians in Argentina built upon, developed and retained the story of oppression, and there was a great deal of social pressure for people to marry within the Slovenian ex-patriot community, rather than with other Argentinians. Here, the main tropes that Repič examines are moral outrage (the people were forcibly exiled because of atrocities enacted against them) and a kind of myth-making built upon the determination to retain Slovenian identity in the face of this terrible history, a kind of resistance to their disappearance, as a sign of defiance against what was done to them: a demonstration that they have survived.

At the same time, of course, Slovenia changed and, since the mid-1990s, when it was possible for them to return to visit their former homes (note that the break-up of former Yugoslavia increased the possibilities of movement for some people, even while it restricted those possibilities for others), the level of change has come as a surprise to some of those who made the return journey. Repič describes one woman's sense of shock when she returned: in addition to reliving her traumatic experiences from many years previously, she found that the place was also entirely different from her memories. She swore she would never return.

This woman's description strongly reminded me of Gertrude Stein's famous comment on seeing Oakland, California (where Stein grew up) after many years of absence: 'there is no *there* there,' she said (Stein, 1937: 298). Stein was, of course, playing with the semantics of the English word 'there'. 'There is' is a statement of something existing; it is an ontological statement. 'There' on its own refers to a specific location. Stein was effectively saying that Oakland was not there or, at least, it was no longer what she imagined it to be. Oakland was not what it was, or had become, after years of absence, in Stein's imagination and memory; it was now somewhere else, a different location.

Repič's chapter demonstrates this kind of entangled relationship between location, imagination, memory and movement that Stein captures somewhat more poetically. In Repič's case, the memory of Slovenia was kept alive by keeping alive a trauma. When one Slovenian returned to her home town after many years in Argentina, she relived the trauma and she also realized that the place which was her home was no longer there: there was no longer any 'there' there. She said she would never go back again and, in a way, that would be true whether or not she travelled to that place again: she could not return, because the place she remembered was no longer there or, in fact, anywhere, other than in her memory. In Stein's words, 'anyway what was the use of my having come from Oakland it was not natural to have come from there yes write about it if I like or anything if I like but not there, there is no there there' (*sic* Stein 1937: 298).

The implication here is that Stein was asserting that there were no 'natural roots' to which she could return, a place that was naturally hers. She could write about her memories, but those memories did not naturally map onto a 'there,' a physical existence in the landscape. Indeed, although the chapters in this book mentions many returns, this chapter showed that returns are not always what they seem, and may not always be possible, either.

Nataša Gregorič Bon's paper on the repetitive movements of expatriot Albanians back to what they regarded as their home town or their roots, but with no plan to ever return permanently, provides a different example of the possibilities of return. Compared with the experiences of the Slovenian refugees in Argentina, the expatriot Albanians faced much shorter distances to be travelled and far fewer years had passed between the departure and the return. Indeed, once you begin to take locations seriously in literal geographical terms, rather than only in metaphorical ones, the importance of distances in both space and time become apparent. It matters that the Albanians making these visits to Albania were based in neighbouring countries and were not located on the other side of the planet; and it matters that they began making these journeys relatively soon after they had migrated, rather than being forced to wait a few decades, as was the case for Repič's participants. The kinds of tensions and ghosts that the visitors from Argentina experienced were absent for Gregorič Bon's Albanian visitors. Yet there was also some overlap: in neither case was there a return as such. Gregorič Bon describes people's regular visits to Albania as a form of secular pilgrimage. Albania had become, like a pilgrim site, a special place to be visited in order to renew themselves, to remind themselves of their own values and principles, and of their commitment to certain notions of belonging and identification. Yet there is no plan to return there to live: this is not a situation of diaspora. As Gregorič Bon describes it, the expatriot Albanians were in the process of transforming their former homes into a cultural site, a talisman, a place that provides a material reality for ideals and a sense of belonging, which helps to keep them orientated in their new places elsewhere. While Repič's participants may have longed for a return and later realized that this was not possible, Gregorič Bon's participants were deliberately reconstructing the relation between their new locations and the places where they were born or grew up, redefining what it meant to be 'from' there, so that, again, there could be no return, just a pilgrimage to renew one's sense of being.

In contrast to any idea of return or the creation of cultural heritage in the place that was once home (i.e. a reconstruction of the past), Kozorog's paper on the jazz festival in a small town in Slovenia was about inventing something new, relocating the town to suit something different. The aim, Kozorog explains, was to add something of a cosmopolitan feel to the place, a way of uprooting the town from its 'tradition' and making something different that might attract the young people back to spend some time there. The most arresting part of this chapter for me was the tension between the local cleric who wanted to continue to ring the church bells while the open air jazz festival was underway: not only did a number of musicians incorporate the church bells into the music they were playing, but one Bosnian performer replied to the (Christian) bells by imitating a (Muslim) imam's call to prayer, thus filling the air with a key symbolic element of the tension between territories in this place. It would be hard to think of a more effective way to perform the spatial politics of the region. This one small example shows the importance of sound in creating locations and places; it is not only the land itself and people's movements across it and relations with it that makes a difference (Feld, 2012).

Alenka Janko Spreizer's chapter on the Slovenian Roma took a different position again. Unlike the other pieces on Slovenia, this told a small history rather than a large one, the story of Tončka, a powerful older Roma woman who sorted out her own relationship with movement, place and homes. The setting of the chapter was a process of sedentarization of the Slovenian Roma, but the story centred on Tončka and the way she shaped how she related to place and location. The most intriguing element of this piece in my reading of it was the way Janko Spreizer makes clear that there is no contradiction between belonging to a place and constantly being on the move: the Roma that she looked at selected particular locations for building their house because it was a part of the territory across and through which they travelled: the house they built was located in their place, as it were. The assumption that if

you live in a tent and travel around regularly you are axiomatically a placeless nomad is an incorrect perception that is probably based on the fact that most of us live in states that require an address in order to be a proper citizen.

In that sense, Janko Spreizer's chapter is an excellent ethnographic example of how the political infrastructure within which people live can deeply affect their understanding of the relationship between people and location. Drawing on the concepts of 'place' and 'space' can create confusion in other literature on Roma; it might be better to draw on 'location' and 'belonging' instead. Location is one way of identifying the value of being somewhere in particular, but it must be defined by something other than itself: location is not a thing, it is coordinates; it answers a 'where' question rather than a 'who' or 'what' question. Thus the value of a location is dependent upon the scale used to identify it: if a group of Roma define a location as lying within their territory of movement, there is no difficulty in seeing that location as being part of the 'place' where they belong. That is different from what the state, or others, might say, but there is no contradiction in the logic used to identify their place.

The other element in Janko Spreizer's chapter that slightly jarred unexamined assumptions was her comment that many of the Roma she met hated living in tents and constantly being shoved off one piece of land and made to move on to another. Having the legitimate right to put their feet on a piece of the earth without someone moving them on was highly desired. This is hardly surprising: who would like to be constantly shooed away from places? The implication here is that the process of sedentarization that Janko Spreizer describes was not necessarily a destruction of whatever one might understand Roma 'culture' to be. Indeed, the implication of this chapter is that being in tents or not being in tents did not have a great effect on who these Roma felt they were, nor what they were. Being in tents or not being in tents fundamentally affected *where* they were, and that mattered because it changed their relationship with the people who had never been in tents.

Salazar's chapter adds another element to the question of changes in the way people move and the effects of that on their sense of themselves. He shows how, in the Indonesian archipelago, a form of movement known as *merantau* has historically changed in both practice and significance, affecting both patterns of movement and ideas about locality. At the same time, what remain are kinship ties, which are, Salazar argues, the key to a sense of belonging amongst these people: people belong where their kin ties are located. The intriguing element of this is that Salazar's material encourages the reader to ponder over what it is, in the end, that constitutes 'change' in terms of places and movement: if the core principle that informs a group of people's sense of belonging remains the same, even if everything else about the activity of movement and relation to place changes, what kind of change does it constitute? This is tricky. As Salazar notes, *merantau* began to involve movement of women as well as men in recent years, a shift that must indicate some kind of significant social change as well. It is difficult to imagine that this does not also involve a conceptual change, which is an intriguing thought, given that Salazar's material shows that social relations, in the form of kinship ties, remain steady.

The question of the relationship between movement, citizenship and the state receives an airing in Thomas Fillitz's historical study of changes in the politics of citizenship in the Ivory Coast following independence. The article demonstrates the importance of how a state defines the relationship between people and territory in shaping people's experience of movement. As Fillitz shows, initially the Ivory Coast government defined neighbouring peoples in the region as 'brothers'. The government had no concept of migration in relation to the country, so people could move freely and, indeed, many did. Eventually, after competition for land developed in the area, claims for autochthonous rights to the land increased, and the policy changed, so that people from neighbouring areas were now defined as 'foreigners' and many were expelled. The political process of redefining people as 'foreigners' in order to

protect certain material interests is not new, of course: Abner Cohen described another African example, Nigeria, many years ago (Cohen, 1969), and Anne Stoler described a similar process in terms of race politics and relations between white colonisers and the colonised for the former Dutch East Indies (Stoler, 1991). Yet Fillitz makes a crucial, and often forgotten, point: governments create migrants, and also the undesirability of mobility, by defining what counts as a citizen (Anderson, 2013).

Pirjo Kristiina Virtanen's chapter on the Amazonian Manchineri people, who mostly live in the Manchineri reserve, with a few living in two local urban areas, provides yet another, and different, example of the interplay between people and place. The reserve is another form of location: here, the government guarantees the connection between a group of people and a certain location, so that the place becomes simultaneously a cultural heritage site and 'home' for the people who live there. A rather more extreme example of how governments get involved in defining small, circumscribed spaces as belonging to certain people is the refugee camp studied by Liisa Malkki many years ago (Malkki, 1992), and the contrast between a reserve and a refugee camp helps to draw out the politics of the enclosing of small spaces. While the reserve is a place that contains people who are defined as inherently belonging to a given territory, the refugee camp is there to contain people who explicitly do *not* 'belong' to the territory in which they find themselves: they have fled from somewhere else. As Malkki describes it, the idea of the refugee camp is that it is meant to be temporary; the people contained by it will eventually 'go home,' will return to their 'homeland'. In the process, the refugee camp acts to create an inherent link between a location and a people, a concept of 'rootedness' which, Malkki argues, underlies the whole concept of the nation-state. Similar principles inform the creation of reserves, except that, in that case, there is an assertion of absolute connection between the land and the people, which is often claimed by the people themselves, especially when there is a perceived threat to their

right to be on that land. The Manchineri are clearly happy to live in this reserve, given that the vast majority of them do so; yet the political definition of it *as* a reserve gives it a particular political relation to the state. In that sense, the location is not quite what it was when the Manchineri simply lived there without any government definition of the location, even though neither the people nor the place have moved.

In this context, Virtanen's analysis of Manchineri myths and cosmologies as they relate to the understanding of the meaning of place and people, combined with the subjects' drawings to map out their location region, makes for interesting reading. Virtanen suggests that there is a combination of embodied, relational understanding of persons, interlaced with an experiential and relational understanding of place for the Manchineri. The central home place (in this case, the reserve) orientates the Manchineri's understandings of other places. Using this material, Virtanen analyses the effects of moving between the reserve and urban centres, as young Manchineri are increasingly doing. A couple of the maps showed that the people who drew them were not only basing the maps on their experience of moving between the local urban centres and the reserve, but also on what they knew of a much wider geographical space (e.g. the whole of Latin America, or the whole world, even), as they had been told about it. The interplay between embodied experience, cosmology, and knowledge practices (e.g. knowledge of cartographic principles and having seen maps of the world before) came together in very interesting ways in Virtanen's material.

The issue of knowledge gained through moving between places also came up in Lulle's chapter on the repeated movements of work migrants between Latvia and Guernsey. Lulle focuses on the acquisition of skills as a result of this regular activity. As people move from one place to another and back again, they find ways to cope with their new situations, they grow more confident, and they adapt their previous activities and ways of doing things with the new situation. Lulle's ethnographic skill draws out the multiple motivations that

people have for moving, reminding readers that the habit of border authorities to classify travellers according to one overriding motivation for crossing borders misses a great deal of what is going on. The Latvians who go to Guernsey are as motivated by curiosity and a desire to explore the world as they are by the desire to earn money for families at home. This is a simple and obvious point (once Lulle has made it), but it is also highly important in counteracting multiple assumptions that result from migration and travel statistics. One could push this thought even further and ask what the difference is between a tourist and a seasonal labour migrant, in conditions where a large part of the motivation for travel of the seasonal labour migrant is curiosity and a desire to learn.

In the case of the Latvians who come and go from Guernsey, the skills developed always included becoming adept at successfully negotiating the regulations governing travel to, and work on, Guernsey. Repeated travel to the same place and through the same regulations gives people skills that they would not otherwise have. This clearly changed these people's form of engagement with their spatial locations; what is slightly less clear is if it changed anything about their sense of being Latvian. That in itself is intriguing, for it points to the lack of relevance of such a question in these conditions: where people are moving to and fro repeatedly, the issue of how that relates to nationalist discourses that draw upon ideas about rootedness or fixity to a particular territory become more or less irrelevant, at least in terms of that activity and of the perspective of the people involved in it. For them, it is a matter of acquiring the appropriate skills to deal with the practical issues.

In conclusion, this collection offers a rich source of material and analysis to think otherwise about movement and what it may imply for the places, people and activities they involve. The collection as a whole adds ethnographic depth to issues that are all too often discussed in abstract, or in theory. This offers an understanding, from many different angles, that movement and change do not take away places, nor make them fluid, nor make them

simply, or only, a matter of imagination: on the contrary, both the materiality of places and their powerful ongoing significance for people's lives shines through all the chapters. The chapters also ask readers to question both their own concepts and their unexamined assumptions about the meaning of movement and the relation between people and places, and then think again about them, and that is a highly valuable contribution.

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