Chapter 3

Placing Nostalgia: The Process of Returning and Remaking Home

By Allison Hui

> *When you embark on a journey, you have already arrived. The world you are going to is already in your head. You have already walked in it, eaten in it; you have already made friends; a lover is already waiting. (Brand 2001, 115)*

Nostalgia is often understood as an inability to go back, a sickness from being unable to return. Though temporally this may be the case, as the past cannot be revisited, affects such as nostalgia are linked to material spaces, and can have enduring relationships with space. Like Stewart (1988), I see nostalgia as "a cultural practice, not a given content; its forms, meanings, and effects shift with the context—it depends on where the speaker stands in the landscape of the present" (227). Space then is referred to by nostalgia (one is sick from being unable to return *somewhere*) and affects people's practices of nostalgia. Similarly, nostalgia is temporal both because it gestures to the past and because it changes as people engage with it over time. This suggests that the space and time from which people evoke nostalgia are as important as the space and time nostalgia evokes. The contexts of practising nostalgia, however, change. People can move and travel a significant amount, and this alters their relationships with, and enactments of, nostalgia. This chapter thus seeks to set nostalgia in motion, examining changing and mobile engagements with nostalgia in the context of visits to previous or second homes.

A focus on homes is an apropos starting point for discussions of nostalgia. The term *nostalgia* itself comes from the Greek root *nostos,* "return home," and speaks not only to an excessive and sentimental desire for the past but also "the state of being homesick" (Nostalgia). Furthermore, the experience of leaving home is one shared by many. For some, leaving home is a seasonal experience, with second homes or vacation homes serving as seasonal residences that are perpetually left and revisited. For others, leaving home is marked by permanence, as when people emigrate and reside in new countries for indeterminate or fixed periods of time. The affects resulting from these departures can vary significantly, as is evident when comparing voluntary and forced departures. Focusing specifically on nostalgia, then, this chapter uses return-home mobilities[i] to consider the different relationships nostalgia can have with space and place.

Despite a continuing interest in issues related to home, little has been written about the process of returning home. The return-home mobilities of those with second homes or previous

homes have remained largely outside the sphere of tourism studies (Bell and Ward 2000) and have received limited attention as means of maintaining transnational communities (Duval 2004, 2005; Long 2004), preparing for retirement (Williams and Hall 2000; Casado-Diaz 2004), or encouraging return migrations (Ghosh 2000; Potter, Conway, and Phillips 2005). Conceptually, the physical mobilities of people to previously visited spaces are challenging because they are marked solely by neither the exceptionality or "other" that is often seen to ground tourism nor the familiarity of spaces of permanent residence. They lie between the familiar and unfamiliar, and, as this chapter will show, it is in the negotiation of these two facets that mobilities of return demonstrate a unique relationship with place and affect.

 Narratives from the travel memoirs of people who have returned to previous or second homes will be used to illustrate one process through which nostalgia might be created and recreated. The larger project from which this chapter draws involved the analysis of five memoirs written since the late twentieth century (Blaise and Mukherjee 1977; Chiang 1977; MacGregor 2002; Phillips 1990; Gable and Gable 2005) and additional supportive texts (Bainbridge 2002; Gordon 1989, 2006; Liu 2005; MacGregor 2005). These memoirs were sampled theoretically for their extended and diverse discussions of returns to previous or second homes. Though literary journeys are themselves constructed, and the privileged position of these authors is unrepresentative of many return experiences, this did not hinder the project's discussion of the theoretical relationships between spaces, places, and practices. In this way, the memoirs were valuable in providing framings of spaces and places, which were then used as foils for alternative framings of these concepts.

 This chapter, and the project it emerges from, is concerned then with relationships between space, place, the material, and the virtual as they interweave and overlap in practice. Using the concepts of material spaces, virtual places, and affects, I argue that nostalgia emerges from and is shaped by particular relationships between space and place. The next section uses an art installation entitled *Linked* to introduce these themes, which I subsequently develop.

Linked: Visiting Homes That Are Not There

Most of those who have visited the installation space since 1999 first encounter what appears to be unremarkable: it is a road like many others, which links the East End of London with the M11 that heads north to Cambridge. At one time, however, there was no road, and in its place were the homes of four hundred families. Since July 2003, visitors to this stretch of road have been able to sense some of what is absent, thanks to Graeme Miller's sound installation *Linked*.

 Linked is "a landmark in sound—an invisible artwork—a walk" (*Linked*). Participants borrow a transmitter and a map from one of several pick-up locations and then walk some or all of the three-mile route, along which "20 transmitters continually broadcast hidden voices, recorded testimonies and rekindled memories of those who once lived and worked where the motorway now runs" (*Linked*). Thanks to *Linked*, a world of sound and memory speaking from the past is superimposed upon the material world. *Linked* documents what is not there anymore and voices the nostalgic absence of homes that cannot be revisited or reclaimed. The homes that people speak of are lost places, marked now only by the constant sound waves that whisper of the past even, as Miller (2008) acknowledges, when no one is listening.

 Linked is situated in a material space but invites people to visit in order to see what is not there. Participants travel not to the physical homes of the past but to places of memory—the memory of those who once lived where they can live no more (see Davidson in this volume).

The place participants experience through their walking and looking is very different from the place described by voices in the transmitters. The places evoked by audio presences make the material absences of the space jarring. As this chapter will show, it is this gap between the immaterial and the material that can breed and feed nostalgia.

As *Linked* illustrates, homesickness and nostalgia can be experienced in many different ways. For the four hundred families who were displaced, visiting *Linked* is a moment of return that is compared to and weighed up against previous experiences in their homes. For other visitors, the original homes are unfamiliar, a mystery, and accessible only through descriptions and recollections. This chapter concentrates upon people who have first-hand experiences of the places being pined for, but it is important to note that complex manifestations of nostalgia are produced. Though only some participants in *Linked* have first-hand experience of the destroyed home, both groups can share in feelings of loss and sickness for these homes and the past in which they existed. Creating these different feelings of loss is, I argue, the result of distinct processes of interacting with space and place, two concepts that are outlined in the next section.

From Materiality to Immateriality: Space, Place, and Affect

When considering *Linked*, it is quite obvious that a significant difference exists between the materially present M11 link road and the immaterial place that is described on the audio feed. This distinction between material space and immaterial place, however, could have been identified even before the homes were destroyed. In order to speak more precisely about how materialities and immaterialities relate, this section defines place, space, and affect, as well as how people's practices and interactions link them.

Following Hetherington (1997), I identify place as an immaterial entity arising from the placing, ordering, and representing of material objects (192). That is, place results from the process of interacting in material surroundings. Places themselves, however, are virtual in Shields's sense of being "real idealizations" that are immaterial but not abstract (2003, 28–29).[ii] The homes described in *Linked*, for example, are virtual because they do not have a material existence but are nonetheless specific, and therefore unlike abstract generalizations of home. While virtualities are not material, they can be actualized into concrete forms through activities such as drawing pictures (see Dorow and Dogu in this volume). This framing of place is contrasted by an understanding of space as material forms and geographic locations in and with which people undertake the process of placing.

To understand this distinction between space and place, consider the space of a house—a physical built structure that might be appropriately labelled with a street address, denoting its mapped location. Space and place are distinct, and thus the space of the house does not become a place of "home" until people have gone through the process of placing and ordering furniture and other objects. Moving and arranging desks and examining tables within the house could result in a place of "office" or "clinic," whereas placing instead couches, beds, pictures, and personal mementoes could result in a place of "home." Though constituted through interactions with material objects, this place of home is immaterial and can travel with people to different spaces in the mental images and memories that result from placing objects in the house. In addition to being independently mobile of the house, the spatialized limits of a place of home need not correspond to the spatial limits of a house (Gough 2007). That is, the place of home could include the street or neighbourhood in which the house is situated, and sometimes the place of home can encompass an entire country. Though certainly differing scales of home come

with unique issues in terms of what type of material interactions can create them, the importance of interactions with materialities remains.

Since this understanding of place is based upon people doing things, practices can be seen to tie space and place together. Practices are embodied activities performed by people, and these occur in and transform spaces. Practices, however, also create places—it is by doing things with things that people make the relationships that compose place. People's practices of creating place are interactive—with both living and nonliving materialities—and continuous. Though often practices in one space create a place associated with that space, this is not always the case. People can inhabit one location, such as a dentist's office, and interact with the memories of an unrelated place, like a beach, just as surely as they can actively order and create the place of the office.

Spaces and places thus have a flexible relationship that is dependent upon the practices of people. While there may be a strong probability that some spaces will be transformed by people into certain types of places, this relationship is not deterministic. As noted above, houses are most often arranged into homes, but they are also sometimes offices. There is no linear relationship between houses and homes, so one house can be more than one home. Space and place are thus independent entities yet are in constant relationship thanks to the practices of people.

It is important to note that this distinction between space and place differs from those used by other authors. Tuan has also articulated differences between space and place, but for him space is more abstract than place, and is distinguished by having no significance in itself. Whereas place is made concrete for Tuan (1977) through meanings attached to it, space concerns more abstract potentials for movement, as experienced through distances, areas, and relative locations. Other authors are often less clear about the distinction they make between space and place, although many such as McDowell (1999) and Davis (2005) make implicit distinctions between space, which is geographic and can be mapped, and place, which involves something more, such as interactions of power or socio-cultural ideas that change over time.

Having established a distinction between space and place, it is now possible to consider where affect fits in. Within Hetherington's understanding of place, an emphasis upon material interactions is important precisely because of what it contributes to understanding affects, or emotions and meanings. Though human geographers have tended to see place as subjective assessments of space and the attachment that arises from giving space meaning (Williams and Patterson 1996 in Kaltenborn 1997, 176), Hetherington (1997) notes that this definition fails to incorporate an understanding of the material objects involved (187). By considering place instead as something constituted in the placing, ordering, and representing of material objects, Hetherington emphasizes the interactive and embodied process of creating. He argues that

> rather than taking a place as a site that stands for something, that has intrinsic or mythic meaning because of its supposed fixity in space, we should think of places as relation, as existing in similitude: places as *being in the process of being placed in relation to* rather than being there. (1997, 187–88)[iii]

As a result, affects and subjective assessments are seen to come from, and feed back into, the process of placing and ordering. Assessments of safety that might be attached to the place of home, for example, emerge not through an abstract process of attributing meaning, but through the materially based process wherein people interact in their homes. It is through locking doors and returning to find the house still secured that the place of home becomes enacted as safe. Affect then is a product of this process. Within this conceptualization, places do not produce

affective attachment—rather, people do, through their practices. The cultural practice of nostalgia that Stewart refers to is thus intertwined with the process of placing.

Though Hetherington's formulation of place provides an interesting starting point, thinking about return-home mobilities reveals areas in which the relationships between spaces, places, and affect need more development. There is a difference, for example, in the temporality of affects. The difference between placing "home" as temporally present and placing "nostalgia" as pointing to the past needs to be addressed. If places are "in the process of being placed in relation to" (Hetherington 1997, 188), then understanding the temporality of affects requires a consideration of this process over time. Additionally, Hetherington does not examine what happens to places when people leave the spaces in which they were created. People may, for instance, move houses but retain a sense of them as virtual homes. The process of creating and interacting with place and nostalgia is mobile, and the following sections articulate three separate types of placing to account for the movement of people and the temporality of affects.

Material Placing and Virtual Placing

Turning to the case of return-home mobilities, I argue that people's mobilities necessitate more nuanced understandings of practices of placing and nostalgia. While the three types of placing I outline below build upon the process detailed in the previous section, they also complicate understandings of how placing and nostalgia articulate over time and space. In return-home mobilities, there are particular patterns of interaction with space and place. People start out in a house, where they arrange a virtual place of home. They then leave the space of the house but continue to have access to the place of home. Later they can return to the house, and upon doing so they may find that its materiality and the place that can be enacted in it are quite different. These different interactions correspond to three types of placing: material placing, virtual placing, and re-placing. By identifying the shifts between these types of placing, I show how nostalgia emerges and is negotiated through specific types of placing, namely virtual placing and re-placing. This section starts then by addressing the first phase in return-home mobilities: material placing.

Before places can move, they must be created, and this initial phase, outlined in the previous section, can be understood as material placing. People undertake a period of placing while they are physically present at one location, interacting with the co-present materialities of that space. As Hetherington suggests, through this process they create the virtual place of home and the various affects that accompany it. During material placing, then, people interact in a house and create a place of home and affects attached to it.

Following this phase, which could last a month or many years, people leave their house, and this travel marks the beginning of a period of virtual placing. Having left the space of the house, it is no longer possible to undertake a material process of placing home. People continue, however, to interact with their former home and to compare it to other spaces and places. Placing therefore continues, but rather than arranging materialities, people arrange their immaterial home in relation to other materialities or places. This acknowledgment of virtual placing suggests that places remain present and continue to change after leaving the space they are attached to. A former home can, for instance, be deemed more treasured, more convenient, or more confined once it is compared to subsequent homes. This phase thus both builds upon and departs from Hetherington's work to suggest that once a place is created, people can still order and compare it

with other places and spaces, even though they may not be physically co-present with its materiality.

It is in this phase of virtual placing that the present affects of placing can become transformed into the longing past of nostalgia. People are no longer interacting with materials to create relationships to place, and they may find that the affects connected to home recede into the past. These affects can still be accessed but retain no immediacy, as they cannot be directly evoked through the process of material placing. The present experience of material placing, which continues in other spaces, becomes contrasted with the past experience of material practices linked to a former house. In this way, connections between nostalgia and the past are the result of not just temporal separation, but also physical separation, which halts the process of materially arranging relationships to space.

Recognition of this phase of virtual placing creates room not only for considering what happens when people leave familiar spaces, but also for considering how virtual or imaginative travel (Urry 2000, 66) might contribute to the practice of creating place. In preparation for tourism, for example, people can spend a significant period of time interacting with guidebooks, websites, and other resources that allow them to imagine and construct relationships with the space they are planning to visit. Though these interactions do not involve practices in the space of their destination, they do involve material interactions with books and images that can begin to create a virtual place of their destination even before they depart.

Many visitors to *Linked* have this kind of indirect link to the material houses of former residents. Though they were never in or around these houses, hearing about them can be part of a process of virtual placing. By comparing the virtual place of residents' former homes with the materiality of the link road, visitors can recognize a nostalgia that exists for residents. Indeed, those interacting with *Linked* can experience their own nostalgia by creating relationships between the loss of these particular homes and similar losses of homes and landscapes to roads and motorways elsewhere. As noted earlier, this type of nostalgia is different from that of residents who were familiar with the space before *Linked*. Different types of nostalgia can emerge, then, through different processes of placing. Though material placing is the first phase featured in this discussion of returning home, it need not always come first, and this emphasis is solely the result of choosing to follow people who return home after periods of absence.

Re-placing and the Virtual Gaze

Having first materially placed and then virtually placed a second or former home, people can be left with a significant desire to physically return home. Such a return to the space of the virtual home marks the beginning of the third phase—one of re-placing. Having returned to where the place was first created, people can begin the process of placing again, establishing relationships with material objects and surroundings. Unlike the first visit, however, the return involves interactions with not only the materialities of the location, but also with the virtualities of the place that was previously created there.

Though placing is primarily about interactions with materialities for Hetherington, it cannot be limited in this way when people are already familiar with a space. I suggest instead that return trips involve re-placing, which also interacts with pre-existing virtualities of place and affect. In this way, the practice of placing at a former home is not just about relating materialities to each other, but also about relating them to the affects, memories, and places carried from previous experiences there.

This relationship between experiences of return and previous interactions is discussed at length in Chiang's memoir (1977). Chiang is an author and artist who was born and lived in China for many years before political issues led him to flee the country in 1933. His absence was originally intended to be short, but a series of events, including the Sino-Japanese War, the Second World War, and the spread of McCarthyism, prevented his return. As a result, he spent many years in the United Kingdom and the United States, where he eventually became a citizen. *China Revisited, After Forty-Two Years* (1977) includes a brief discussion of Chiang's departure from China and his time away, and then gives a detailed log of his travel and experiences upon return. In this memoir, Chiang recognizes the inevitability of comparing the places he knew in the past and the spaces he encounters during his trip:

> My thirty years of life in China before 1933 as well as my personal experiences as the head civil servant of three big counties put me into a rather different category as a visitor to the present-day China. I would undoubtedly compare what I could see now in China with what I knew of her before 1933. (54)

Unlike other visitors, Chiang observes changes within spaces, comparing the current state of China with the virtual place he carries with him. Confronted by new built spaces and new experiences, as well as new understandings gained from the spaces and mobilities he has experienced since his departure, Chiang must rearrange and reorder the place of China that he has carried with him during his absence. Chiang's practices during his return thus help to enunciate a revised understanding of the place of China by adding layers of meaning and memories from his new experiences there.

This process of re-placing is made possible by a period of absence from a space, and is therefore distinct from the placing that can occur in one space over time. When people maintain consistent contact with a material space, interactions with place can be continuous, and incremental changes to the virtuality of place can be regularly incorporated. After departing for a significant length of time, however, these kinds of interactions are put on hold. As a result, upon their return to a former house, people are faced with the task of creating relationships among the material space, its contents, and the memories and affects that were created during previous interactions there.

The comparisons and negotiations of change that are involved in re-placing hold similarities to Perniola's conception of transit. Rather than discussing movement or travel, Perniola focuses on transit, a concept that attempts to avoid binaries, dualisms, and teleological thinking by invoking movement that goes from the same to the same (Verdicchio in Perniola 2001, 18). Perniola (2001) does not take this sameness to imply equality, and suggests that transit involves the introduction of difference, which is seen to be not an inherent characteristic of things, but a property of transit itself (47–48). Transit introduces differences between similar spaces. For memoir authors, leaving previous houses introduces difference that they incorporate into their experiences of home upon return. These patterns of mobility are transitions from the same to the same, in that certain spaces are still/always known as home places, and yet they are unequal because the transit itself affects whether they are former or current homes. So whereas Perniola frames this in terms of difference that emerges in transit and must be reincorporated, I focus upon different types of placing that become the markers of difference and the focus of reincorporation. Travel disrupts material co-presence and thereby introduces a difference between material placing and virtual placing. When material placing is again possible upon return, the virtual place must be incorporated into re-placings.

People "re-place" places, then, by rearranging and reordering material objects to represent a space and experiences in it anew. This process may be uncomfortable, as the material form of a space can contradict memories of it. Especially if someone returns hoping to find that little has changed, the process of re-placing and rearranging knowledge about a space can be quite stressful.

Though re-placing is not only about material interactions, it does mark the importance of material co-presence. People often continue to interact with the place of previous or second homes through photographs, television, newspaper stories, and conversations with those left behind, but these practices all remain mediated means of virtual placing. As such, they lack sensuous elements that would be attainable through first-hand experience. The opportunity to interact in a personal, embodied way with the space and materiality of a second home or previous home can therefore be very appealing. Duval (2005) notes that despite improvements in communications technology, physical return is still seen as the best way of keeping track of the changes in one's homeland (255). Similarly, returnees to Vietnam have spoken of the desire to reconnect with space and relocate places on their return:

> Memories of former houses, streets, fields, and trees became specific experiences with normal dimensions again. Certain smells were associated with a specific fruit. Space being relocated in place was not just a set of distant images, stories, or disembodied voices but encompassed specific sensory experiences, histories and relationships. (Long 2004, 88)

Returning thus allows migrants to reconnect with the particularities of important spaces and places, and this reconnection can involve anticipating and comparing the memories and experiences of many senses.

Chiang (1977) notes a similar desire to personally engage with changes within his homeland. In the prologue to his memoir, he speaks of how engaging with change is a central focus of his return:

> I was so anxious and curious to learn about these great changes that I read whatever accounts I could get hold of in the daily papers and also in books written by people who had recently made visits to China. But a Chinese popular saying, "Seeing once is better than hearing about it a hundred times," kept telling me that I must go to see the changes myself. (13–14)

Returning, then, is an important opportunity for sensuous material engagement with spaces, and second-hand accounts from friends or the media cannot substitute for this material engagement. At the same time, however, being able to "see the changes," as Chiang phrases it, depends on attention being directed not only to the present materialities, but also to the seemingly absent virtualities—to the places that are not materially there. It is in the comparison between these material and virtual gazes that change exists.

In summary, re-placing involves both the immaterial and the material, and is predicated upon a prior period of placing and subsequent travel. Travel away from a space prevents material interactions with place, and so another episode of travel is necessary to return and reconvene with the materiality of space. Such travel can be highly valued because it makes memories "specific experiences … again" (Long 2004, 88). With material co-presence, however, comes a need to address changes, and re-placing involves integrating remembered places and revisited spaces into new understandings of place. In the next section, these dynamics of re-placing are examined in more detail, drawing upon Chiang's stories of returning to China.

Re-placing China

These interactions between remembered places and revisited spaces are evident in Chiang's narrative of return. During his return to China, Chiang is always accompanied by guides from the Chinese Travel Service, who facilitate all his trips to tourist attractions, as well as locating and arranging meetings with former friends he wishes to see. With the help of the CTS guides, Chiang actively searches out familiar spaces along his journey, so that he can return to re-experience places that are entrenched in his memory.

One location Chiang revisits is Lu Mountain, a well-loved and oft-frequented retreat from his past (1977, 133). An entire chapter is devoted to Chiang's return to this space after a long separation: "Though I have been to Lu Mountain again and again and stayed on it over six months since [the age of eleven], it had been more than forty-two years since I saw it last" (134). While spending two days visiting both beautiful locations that he frequented in the past and those he knew only through paintings, Chiang recalls and interacts with his memories of the place. At Han-p'o-kou he stands,

> facing the gap between two mountain slopes with the wide expanse of Lake P'o-yang in the far distance. This was where I had watched the sunrise with my father more than sixty years ago. My father's love for me and his training to make me a painter filled my heart with poignant feeling. I grieved that he was no longer here to join his long-wandering son who had come back to see his beloved mountain. (135)

In this situation, the experience of re-placing becomes invested with nostalgia and grief because, though the materiality of the mountain remains, his father is no longer present. The virtual place of Han-p'o-kou is composed of relationships among a mountain, a sunrise, a father, and a son. The re-placing, however, involves the material presence of only three of these four elements, and thus Chiang negotiates grief at the absence of his father.

On other parts of the mountain, Chiang encounters the absence of not only former companions, but also former materialities. He visits the site of a famous waterfall that was represented in paintings, and finds "only a tiny trickle of water coming down through the thickets" (138). Though the water no longer resembled its famous representation, Chiang notes that "a stone bridge was still there as I remembered it" (138). Visiting Lu Mountain thus becomes an exercise in which Chiang interacts with places made in the past and creates new understandings of place that incorporate altered materialities and experiences.

When in his home city of Kiukang, Chiang similarly tries to revisit places linked to important memories, but finds in several cases that the passage of time has made this impossible. Speaking about the city, Chiang (1977) states:

> Every inch reminded me of something, yet everything looked so different from what I had known before. I insisted on being taken to where my old home had been, but there was no trace of it, or of my old official residence, for both had been destroyed by the Japanese invaders in 1938. I gazed at the stones on the road and the walls of the new houses, and could find no thought or words to describe my feelings. Everything told me that my past had gone forever. (130)

The lack of material similarities between the space he encounters and the place of his memory mark for Chiang a significant break, which he re-places as the gap between the irretrievable past and the present.

The role of the present materiality of spaces is central to Chiang's varied experiences of return. The material things Chiang encounters affect his assessments of the change between

virtual places and material spaces, as well as the emotions that arise in this process of re-placing. Sometimes, as with the stone bridge on Lu Mountain, remaining material elements help to signal that the space he is presently occupying is indeed the same space where his virtual place was created. With his former house, however, Chiang returns to find no trace of its materiality. In this instance the connection between the place and space, between his past and the present, remains virtual.

This marks another connection between placing and re-placing. If it is the interactions with materiality that identify placing, then the return or repetition involved in *re*-placing can take place only if there is some consistent materiality with which to engage. It is this consistent materiality that creates a link between the placing of the present and of the past. The materiality acts as an anchor for the virtual places, and connects the places created in different temporal periods. When no materiality can be found in common, as with Chiang's failed attempt to detect anything recognizable in the location of his former home, the link between the place created through present interactions and the place of memories is never actualized. Thus the place of his former home and the present location of his former house remain unconnected, marking the gap between the past and present.

Entering a "Home That Is No Longer Standing"

Though the absence of Chiang's former home convinces him that his past is lost, in other cases the disjuncture between past and present can be less apparent. Sometimes, the materiality of a space remains similar enough that re-placing can easily forge links between the present space and the virtual places created in the past. When this occurs, the sickness of separation can be tempered by a sense of reunion and joy.

This is apparent in MacGregor's (2005) story of returning to the site of his grandparents' former home in Algonquin Park in central Canada. A Canadian journalist, MacGregor shares stories of his interactions with summer homes in both *Escape: In Search of the Natural Soul of Canada* (2002) and *The Weekender: A Cottage Journal* (2005). After the death of his father and sister, MacGregor returns with his mother and cousin in order to reflect upon the loss of family members and their past summers spent together:

> *We cannot enter a log home that is no longer standing, but we enter, easily and happily*, the sounds that stand guard for us, waiting: the wind and the water, the sound of this lake on this point—a voice that belongs nowhere else.…
>
> My mother sits on a large stone and watches Don and I dive from the high rocks much as we dove in the '50s and '60s, *the splash the same, the whoop the same, the footholds getting back out the same*, only slippery from disuse.
>
> I wander off and find, back of where the outhouse once stood, a rusted old straight pipe that once carried the exhaust from our coal-oil-driven washing machine out the porch door. I cart it back and we stand and marvel at it, *each hearing again* the heavy burp of the machine in full throttle, the memory bittersweet in that it speaks to us of summers lost, but reminds, as well, of the rule that forbade swimming when the washing machine was on because no one, we were told, would ever hear our cries for help if we got in trouble. (MacGregor 2005, 120–21, emphasis added)

Being in the space again, these visitors actively experience it both as it is and as it was—engaging with the space in such a way that they can re-place the boundaries of the log home, the experience and role of water and swimming, and even the connection of objects to sounds and rules that defined the place of this home. MacGregor re-places the sounds and sensations as being the same, things heard again, and relates them not only to each other, but also to his memories and the place he knew as a child. The visitors create relationships to the place and interactions of the past that are both bittersweet and a source of happiness. The affective ties MacGregor has maintained with this cottage place during his absence are reorganized in light of the loss of family members and his return to the space, which confirms that though time has moved on, in some ways the space remains unchanged.

Attempts to revisit familiar spaces in order to get in touch with places from the past can thus invoke a multitude of emotions and outcomes as the similarities or discrepancies between intangible places and the reality of present spaces become apparent. These experiences are practices that rearrange and reorder previous understandings of space, creating new layers of memories and a sense of how the places of past experience are set apart from, but also related to, places of current interactions.

Nostalgia, *Saudade,* and Hope

Within the process of placing, travel, and re-placing that this chapter has discussed, nostalgia can be identified with the longing for material placing. It is not that virtual interactions with the place of home are lacking, for the virtual place is mobile and can travel anywhere in the form of personal memories. The withdrawal and sickness occurs because people are separated spatially from the materiality used in practices of placing, and thus must end their temporal period of material placing. Through physical travel and the passage of time, both the process of placing and the virtual place of home itself become imbued with a sense of loss and homesickness.

While some definitions of nostalgia take the lost time or state to be irrecoverable, a consideration of cases of return-home mobilities, when people do in fact return to where they created virtual places, reveals that in a limited sense one can return home again. As Brand (2001) suggests, some people set out on journeys having "already arrived" (115), for they know the worlds to which they are headed, and these virtual places precede and accompany them. Those who return to the birthplace of the virtual places they carry with them may find opportunities for re-placing, for relating and forging new relationships not only with the materiality, but also with the nostalgic absence of virtual places. Through re-placing people negotiate the gaps between familiar places and somewhat unfamiliar spaces, in the process layering new affects on top of old ones. Returning to such spaces can lead to joy at the discovery that little has changed, or disappointment and a sense that the place of home is irrecoverable.

Given this possibility of return, the type of nostalgia present in return-home mobilities is more akin to the untranslatable Portuguese term *saudade*. Where nostalgia involves longing, *saudade* also incorporates a hope that the object of longing might return (Feldmann 2007). *Saudade* thus infects nostalgia with the cure that Vallee (in this volume) discusses, treating the sickness of nostalgia with the hope that one will be able to return home.

Those who leave willingly from vacation homes or previous homes are often able to keep nostalgia and hope closely linked, since the possibility of a later return remains. MacGregor (2002), for example, has become familiar with a yearly ritual wherein the longing for his second home is always rewarded by eventual return. For Chiang, what was hoped to be a short absence

became extended by circumstances beyond his control. His nostalgia and hope of returning likely changed many times as the possibility of return became more or less plausible. Eventually, Chiang (1977) is able to "fulfil [his] great longing to see [his] home cities" (119), but he finds some spaces forever changed.

      While these memoir writers are able to link nostalgia and hope, for others, the circumstances of departure can make *saudade* or hope difficult to sustain. The families whose houses were destroyed in the building of the M11 link road have no hope that the materiality of their houses will ever return. Yet even if they cannot return home, they can still return, along with many others, to the space where their houses were. Like Chiang, visitors to *Linked* are unable to find the materiality of the neighbourhoods that were destroyed, but they visit nonetheless, in order to interact with maps and transmitters and to gaze upon the virtual places they can't see. This ability to return to spaces does not make up for the inability to return to lost places; however, it is still important because it points to a politics of not only departure, but also return.

      In this way, the circumstances of leaving home are undoubtedly important for subsequent interactions with the place and affects of home. Stories of return-home mobilities have demonstrated that virtual places of home can remain present and active in people's interactions. Just as homes can travel with people, so too do they change with people, becoming places of nostalgia and adapting to changing possibilities of hope for a return. Whether or not materiality remains during people's absence, however, has a significant effect by shaping the possibilities for hope, and for interactions upon their return.

      The dynamics of affects such as nostalgia, then, are significantly shaped by the possibility of hope and a return home. Nostalgia can be fostered both because home spaces no longer exist—as with *Linked*, Kapetanovo (Davidson in this volume), and the German Democratic Republic (Winkler in this volume)—and because they are presently inaccessible, perhaps owing to the global political situations that long prevented Chiang's return. Depending on its relationship to hope and return, nostalgia can be practised in different ways.

      Separating out phases of material placing, virtual placing, and re-placing offers an opportunity to consider interactions between places and affects over time, and within personal histories of physical travel. Basing this exploration on Hetherington's formulation of place both emphasizes and reinforces the link between people's material and immaterial interactions, and offers the challenge of thinking about place and affects as not static states or entities but rather mobile processes that are practised over and over again. People can return home through imaginative mobilities to their places of memory, and these imaginative mobilities are unhindered by financial resources or temporal constraints. Nonetheless, the hope or enactment of return travel can remain important, as sensuous material interactions create different relationships to place and different affects than virtual ones. If, or when, people do undertake a physical return to engage with the nostalgic absence of home, their process of placing and re-placing, enacting and re-enacting nostalgia, continues.

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Notes

[i] The term "mobilities" highlights that people can return home both through physical travel and by other means, including imaginative and communicative mobilities (Urry 2007).

[ii] This usage differs from Deleuze's understanding of the virtual, which includes a sense of unrealized potentialities (Deleuze and Parnet 2006, 112–15).

[iii] Here Hetherington articulates an understanding of how places are defined relationally, which he has used in other work to consider heterotopias and the relationship between marginal sites, marginal groups, and identity (1993, 1998).