EDITED BY
ROBERT FREESTONE AND EDGAR LIU

Place and Placelessness Revisited

ROUTLEDGE RESEARCH IN PLANNING AND URBAN DESIGN

ROUTLEDGE

Place and Placelessness Revisited

Since its publication in 1976, Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness* has been an influential text in thinking about cities and city life across disciplines, including human geography, sociology, architecture, planning, and urban design. For four decades, ideas put forward by this seminal work have continued to spark debates, from the concept of placelessness itself, through how it plays out in our societies, to how city designers might respond to its challenge in practice.

Drawing on evidence from Australian, British, Japanese, and North and South American urban settings, *Place and Placelessness Revisited* is a collection of cutting edge empirical research and theoretical discussions of contemporary applications and interpretations of place and placelessness. It takes a multi-disciplinary approach, including contributions from the breadth of disciplines in the built environment—architecture, environmental psychology, geography, landscape architecture, planning, sociology, and urban design—in critically re-visiting placelessness in theory and its relevance for twenty-first century contexts.

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—Professor John Punter, Cardiff University

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Edited by
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and Edgar Liu

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Foreword

I first encountered Edward Relph's *Place and Placelessness* in my second year as an undergraduate at University College London on a course called Humanistic Geography in 1985. It was undoubtedly one of two or three books that made me interested in the subject I was studying, and eventually led to me becoming a geographer who focused on issues of place and mobility. It stood out from many seemingly more urgent and applied texts I had been reading in other courses, by drawing my attention to a core idea that seemed integral to what it is to be human. To my twenty-year-old brain, this seemed simultaneously more important (conceptually central) and less immediately relevant (it wasn't going to help us figure out any immediately pressing problem). It was written in such a way that it was both philosophical and accessible. Its central concepts of place, placelessness, authenticity, and existential insider and outsider made me think. The more time I spent thinking, the more I became engaged with both the discipline and the world around me.

It was immediately apparent to me at the time, as someone who was also being exposed to work on cultural politics, that the book was not without some shortcomings. The places and landscapes that seemed to most concern Relph were mass-produced ones, such as large tracts of identical houses or the post-modern simulations of theme parks. These were also the very kinds of places and landscapes that people appeared actually to want. They were popular among people who did not have the resources to invest in notions of authenticity. I could not help but wonder, for instance, if the working-class areas of British northern cities, marked by extensively replicated terraced houses all looking pretty much the same, might be condemned as placeless. There seemed to be an element of elitism in such judgments.

Forty years after it was published, it certainly seems to be the case that Relph's book was prophetic on a number of counts. *Place and Placelessness* foreshadowed the later arrival of the idea of 'non-place,' developed by the French anthropologist Marc Augé. It also prefigured the contemporary obsessions with places such as airports, theme parks, gated communities, heritage parks, McMansions, and the so-called 'clone towns' in Britain with High Streets all containing the exact same lines of chain stores. All of these,

at one time or another, have become news items across the world as concerned citizens (not just geographers or academics) expressed an interest in the kinds of places we want to live in in the 21st century. At the same time we have seen cottage industries of television programs, books, agencies, and real estate companies telling us how to not be placeless—how to create individual and authentic places and lifestyles in the face of the homogenizing force of globalized consumer capitalism. Needless to say, this effort to sell us authenticity is deeply ironic. In this sense, Relph's book was prophetic and far-sighted.

There are few books, in other words, that deserve the kind of celebration that this text represents as much as *Place and Placelessness*. Reading the diverse array of essays in this volume makes it clear that Relph's foundational work still informs heterogeneous research projects conducted across the world by scholars in many disciplines and from different generations. Most monographs slip unnoticed into peaceful obscurity—but not *Place and Placelessness*. This timely and welcome revisiting is testimony to that.

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Revisiting Place and Placelessness

Edgar Liu and Robert Freestone

Introduction

Since its publication in 1976, Ted Relph's *Place and Placelessness* has been an influential text in thinking about cities and city life across a number of disciplines, including human geography (Relph's own disciplinary background), sociology, architecture, planning and urban design. For four decades, ideas put forward by this seminal work have continued to inform discussion and spark many debates, from the concept of placelessness itself through how it plays out in our societies to how city designers might respond to its challenge in practice. Relph's book—the idea and its possibilities—transformed how 'place' as a subject is researched and understood. There are now broader recognitions of the complexities of place and placelessness as theoretical concepts and their importance to livability and quality of life.

The Concept of Place

The concept of place has been the focus of research within the disciplines of the built environment for many decades. Despite this centrality, it remains a restless if not contentious concept. As Cresswell (2004: 1–2) explains, "place is everywhere" and is "a word that seems to speak for itself," and therefore most people understand and perceive places in divergent ways, although a spatial connotation persists. This spatial dimension is reflected in the many definitions of the term, including in specialized reference books such as *The Dictionary of Human Geography*, which defines place as simply "a portion of geographic space" (Duncan 2000: 582). Within the social sciences, there is growing recognition of the role(s) humans play in shaping places and, as such, places are more generally defined as "spaces which people have made meaningful" (Cresswell 2004: 7) and are thus increasingly conceptualized as social constructs.

Cresswell (2004: 8) describes the spatial quality of places as their materiality (see also Agnew 1987); to him, places are bounded and non-contiguous with "space between them," although the boundaries of places are often not well defined. As such, places can come to describe spaces of differing scales and sizes, from those as big as nations to those as small as

the corner of a room. Places may also be understood as pauses in time rather than an unchanging reality, an understanding highlighted in the works of Massey (1995) and Tuan (1977). There is thus a temporality of places (Cresswell 2008).

Recent conceptualizations of place have explored perceptions beyond spatiality and temporality. As Tuan (1977: 18) notes, "an object or place achieves concrete reality when our experience of it is total, that is, through all the senses as well as with the active and reflective mind." Sepe (2013a: 111) for one argues that a place may consist of five sensory stimuli—visual, audio, scent, taste and tactility—each influenced by "local, religious and political identities" as well as "other cultural motivations." Such multi-sensory approaches to the understanding of place depart from the traditionally visually orientated discussions, despite early warnings about treating places as "little more than frozen scenes of human activities" (Pred 1984: 279).

At the broader, philosophical level, approaches taken in the studies of place can be categorized into at least two perspectives: phenomenological and epistemological. A phenomenological approach to place focusses on its being (e.g. Relph 1976; Tuan 1977), while an epistemological one concentrates on the origin of the concept and the theory of place (e.g. Casey 1996; Sack 1997). Both continue to feature prominently in contemporary place research, though the epistemological approach appears to be more widely adapted within the social sciences, especially since the cultural turn of the 1990s (Kearns and Moon 2002; Cresswell 2004).

The Works of Relph

The ongoing theoretical debate on the concepts of place and placelessness finds early roots in a seminal collection of Relph's writings (1973; 1976; 1981; 1987). In his doctoral thesis, Relph (1973: 182–3) defined the concept of placelessness as "a weakening of the identity of place to the point where they not only look alike but feel alike and offer the same bland possibilities for experience." By his 1976 work, Relph had come to define placelessness as the casual eradication of distinctive places in the wake of the forces of modernization. These are many and profound, including mass communications, mass culture and technological transformations; centralized state power dictating standardized and impersonal planning, which lacked sensitivity to the particularities of locality and sought to imitate abstract a priori models of spatial organization; centralized 'big business' economic power pursuing mass production and risk minimization and, in the process, producing commodified places where economic efficiencies are privileged over lived experiences; and increased mobility, particularly of tourists, disrupting historic ties between people and place through asserting a culture of homogenization.

Relph (1976: 117) uses the term "placelessness" to describe the ubiquitous landscape resulting from these processes—"a flatscape, a meaningless

pattern of buildings." Placeless spaces are variously anonymous and exchangeable, substituting direct experience with an other-directedness of artefactual representation designed for outsiders. They substitute uniformity and standardization for diversity. There is formlessness and lack of human scale, impermanence and instability. This conceptualization of place and placelessness was deeply embedded in a broader paradigm-shifting theoretical position in human geography contesting positivistic approaches to the understanding of space as undermining the real meanings derived from human experience and interaction (Ley and Samuels 1978).

In Relph's early work, authenticity is an important dimension. For Relph (1976), authenticity of place is the result of "being lived-in," where the place serves as a symbolic or functional centre of life for both individuals and communities. An authentic sense of place derives from insideness, from a sense of belonging to a place and its community, but one that is not overly self-conscious. Relph raised the concern that inauthenticity—associated with kitsch and superficiality—had become prevalent in industrialized and mass societies.

Relph's (1981) later work on humanist geographies dwelt on the paradox of modern landscapes, which are dehumanizing precisely because they are excessively humanized, as they are almost entirely conceived and planned by humans to serve functional human needs, albeit only those that can be assessed in terms of efficiency or improved material conditions. Much of this critique is focused on modern suburban landscapes subject to 'hyper-planning,' encompassing every micro-detail and leaving no space for ambiguity, spontaneity, autonomy or human emotion.

While not without its own critics as a conceptual frame of reference, Relph's contributions helped trigger an ongoing theoretical debate on place and placelessness, drawing in contributions from a range of disciplinary perspectives. Notably, the French anthropologist Marc Augé (1995) proposed the distinction between solitary and collective contractual obligations as a frame to distinguish 'place' from 'non-place.' For Augé (1995), non-places are those spaces which cannot be defined as relational, historical or concerned with identity. Augé's explanation of non-place, accentuating the lack of social relations, is set apart from Relph's concept of placelessness, which emphasizes the lack of a sense of place as experienced by individuals (Kellerman 2006). The notion of non-place arguably carries less negative moral connotations than placelessness (Cresswell 2004).

Critiques of Place and Placelessness

Early appraisals of Relph's treatment came from the discipline of human geography, not least because it was billed as a geography text discussing mainly human places. The importance of the argument being made was well appreciated. Porteous (1978: 74–5) praised Relph's adaptation of a phenomenological approach, which provided a much-neglected "emotional

link between people and places" in many contemporary geographical studies. To Smith (1978: 117), the book was a greatly welcome contribution to geographical studies, and one destined to redirect the course of human geographic studies from "the detailed description of particular places and the development of spatial models for analyzing systems of places" to "writing about what places really are."

Conversely, contemporary critics also identified limitations. Smith himself (1978: 117) criticized Relph for going down a well-trodden path of criticizing suburbia—"I found the traditional condescension toward suburbia a little tedious"—rather than recognizing the existence of 'place' in the suburbs. Furthermore, he found the theoretical separation of "self-consciously and unself-consciously made places" difficult concepts to decipher, a separation that could have benefited from more unpacking (Smith 1978: 117). Despite its origins in human geography, Entrikin (1977: 423) noted that it is of "slightly less interest [. . .] to those geographers looking for an analysis of the concept of place and its role in geographic research." While he conceded "a provocative essay on the nature of place and on the increasing homogeneity of the contemporary landscape" and, through its phenomenological approach, a "counterbalance [to] the overemphasis of economic and spatial rationality in contemporary place-making," he felt it lacked a "balance between criticism and alternative courses of action" (Entrikin 1977: 424). Buttimer (1977) came to a similar conclusion. While very much a piece of human geographic study, she felt that the arguments were almost "exclusively anthropocentric" (Buttimer 1977: 623–4) and risked alienating physical geographers and believers of the value of non-humans in shaping and using places.

Regardless, since the 1970s, *Place and Placelessness* has come to be recognized as an influential, if not classic, text. It has been recognized as one of just 26 "key texts in human geography" (Hubbard et al. 2008) with its elaboration on "the continuing dissolutions of places and insideness in the world" (Seamon and Sowers 2008: 50) still relevant—and indeed influential—decades on. At the turn of the millennium, Gold (2000: 613–4) praised the book as "a text that challenged rather than supported dominant approaches to human-environment relations" and in the process became "one of a handful of texts that radically expanded the purview of geographical research on human-environmental relations." Stock (2000: 615) agrees and describes Relph's work as not just of "historical value" but opening up "many research directions that are yet to be explored."

Relph and Place Studies

The concept of placelessness has proven remarkably adaptable in different contexts. For Beatley (2004) it is the product of forces of globalization and sameness stifling sustainable modes of living; Birkeland (2008) also responds to the same challenge. Friedmann (2010) interprets it in *noir* terms

as capturing the ennui and dormant violence of a lifeless suburbia. Miles (2010) seizes it to similarly convey a deadening levelling of experience denoting the pervasive impact of consumption on post-industrial cities. As a metaphor for modern urban desolation and dislocation, it has informed literary and filmic readings (Seamon 2008; Stratton 2014). Interpretations of placelessness underpin more bespoke studies of landscape representations (DeBres and Sowers 2009) and the semiotics of newsstands (Iqani 2011).

Many other place-related concepts also found their origins, or at least their way, into Relph's 1976 book (Stock 2000). In his later work, he explored these ideas in greater detail. Here we mention just three—sense of place, insideness/outsideness, and place-making—all of which have infiltrated the thinking behind the discussions featured in this book.

Sense of Place

Of the many place-related discussions included in *Place and Placelessness*, those on people's sense of place have garnered the most subsequent attention from both Relph himself, as well as from other scholars with an interest in people–place relations. To Relph, a sense of place must be developed authentically through extended association (such as the place where one is born and bred), and is often articulated as a sense of identity with a place. In 1991, he defined sense of place as "an innate faculty, possessed in some degree by everyone, that connects us to the world," a learned awareness "that is used to grasp what the world is like and how it is changing" in terms of its environment, economy and politics (Relph 1991: 208). It is also varied depending on the individual and encompasses a diversity of sensory awareness spanning "sight, hearing, movement, touch, memory, imagination and anticipation" (Relph 2007: 19). It is perhaps this multi-faceted connection to everyday life that attracts many scholars to anoint sense of place as the epicentre for place studies. Contemporary interpretations of this include Massey's (1991) discussion of a global sense of place and, more recently, Manzo's (2008) consideration of displacement and the loss of a sense of place.

Manzo's work (2008) reflects on the increasing influences of globalization and mobilities in changing people's identity with places and how the concepts of place and placelessness can (and should) be reinterpreted in shifting and evolving global contexts. This harks back to Relph's (2007) discussion of sense of place and virtual realities, where developments in technologies have muddied the lines of the real and the virtual. He concedes that, more so than in the real world, the (re)creation of authenticity in the virtual world is difficult to achieve. Indeed, Perkins and Thorns (2012: 109–110) highlight that the advent of tele-transformations may have eroded traditional "formerly very close connections to place and local community" and bring up questions of trust, integrity, safety and security in increasingly blurred worlds. Merriman (2013: 200), however, warns of an over-generalization

of the impact of increased mobilities and the risk of overlooking "the diverse ways in which people inhabit these spaces and landscapes," including those in the virtual worlds.

Insideness/Outsideness

Inherently related to his discussions on sense of place is Relph's conceptualization of the qualities of insideness and outsideness. To Relph (1976: 71), a sense of insideness represents an unselfconscious connection to place:

> What appears from the outside to be homogenous and placeless, is from within closely differentiated into places the personalization of property, by association with local events and the development of local myths and by being lived in, all of which give a genuineness and authenticity to somewhere quite inauthentically created.

As such, to feel inside a place is a far more intimate association than simply having a sense of place, enabling a connection on a deeper level enriched by histories: "to be inside a place is to belong to it and to identify with it, and the more profoundly inside you are the stronger is this identity with the place" (Relph 1976: 49). This level of intimacy may also exist in places that may appear to be placeless to outsiders. For Relph, outsideness refers to the lack of identity with a place. While on paper insideness and outsideness are direct oppositions, as Relph (1976: 49) acknowledged, "the dualism of inside and outside is not quite as clear as it appears at first sight."

To this end, Relph (1976: 51–55) identified several different levels of insideness and outsideness, each of which contributes to an individual's sense of place and belonging:

- Existential outsideness: the weakest of all levels of identification with place, which Relph equates to a sense of not belonging, feelings of uninvolvement with and alienation from the place.
- Objective outsideness: a deep level of conscious disassociation to place deliberately adopted by people, for example, who may morally object to the activities that take place in these places.
- Incidental outsideness: when an unselfconscious disassociation with the place or the setting of the place is incidental to the activities that take place there, such as a transitory place.
- Vicarious insideness: in which a person may identify with the place vicariously without having visited at first hand, such as with an iconic place or a World Heritage site.
- Behavioural insideness: a level of identification involving a person having physically been in the place with a deliberate "attending to the appearance of that place" (Relph 1976: 53).

- Empathetic insideness: demanding a level of sympathy in the significance of the place, "much as a person might experience a holy place as sacred without necessarily believing in that particular religion" (Relph 1976: 54).
- Existential insideness: the highest level of identification with place, with a deep sense of belonging.

In more recent interpretations, however, these concepts are most commonly simplified into just a dualism of insideness and outsideness. Research into these two concepts has predominantly been concerned with people's attachments to their local environments in different settings (e.g. Rowles's 1980 discussion of ageing in a rural community, and Soini's 2004 discussion of rural Europe) and by different groups (e.g. Lim and Barton's 2010 discussion of children's sense of place in urban areas). Across other, non-built environment disciplines, insideness is sometimes equated to a sense of place attachment (e.g. Ponzetti's 2003 study on ageing in rural America) and more recently to the concept of belonging (e.g. Lefever's 2012 study on tertiary students' on campus life). In a similar vein, more recent explorations of outsideness are most commonly linked with discussions of social exclusion (Bonfanti 2012) or otherness (Min 2001), both of which highlight how certain socio-demographic groups are excluded from those who are identified as, or self-identify as, 'being inside.'

Place-making

In Chapter 5 of *Place and Placelessness*, Relph introduced the term place-making, by which he meant the process through which the identity of a place is derived. This process can emerge authentically and unselfconsciously through extended awareness, or be created deliberately for explicit purposes. More contemporary interpretations of place-making, however, most commonly take on the latter meaning—the conscious creation of places for diverse social ends and increasingly their fashioning for commerce and consumption. In the contest of urban regeneration, for example, place-making is often included as one critical element that drives the decision-making processes behind the visioning and implementation plans. As Palermo and Ponzini (2014: n.p.) explain:

> The regeneration of critical urban areas through the redesign of public space with the intense involvement of local communities seems to be the central focus of place-making according to some widespread practices in academic and professional circles.

The increasing popularity of place-making as an area of study has prompted such scholars as Palermo and Ponzini (2014) to call for its recognition as a field of study distinct from those of urban planning, urban

design and architecture. This is perhaps rather exciting for many professional place-makers who have created their own niche market but would also aggravate others as yet another simplistic interpretation of the concept of place and how it can be 'authentically' (re)created.

Since the early 2000s, place studies have become a veritable industry with many different enterprises and directions even beyond these concepts. Lewicka's (2011) survey of the academic 'place attachment' literature records a robust and popular field befitting the importance of place in human existence, somewhat short on theoretical precepts but not lacking diverse methodological innovation. Alongside this intellectual fascination with people–place relationships comes an applied engagement with the processes of 'place-making' with its own diverse threads including community building, sustainable design, public realm planning, public art, rights to the city and place branding. The diversity and momentum of discourse is such that Relph's contributions can be entirely forgotten (Gieseking and Mangold 2014). In that setting it seems timely to revisit 'place and placelessness.'

Beyond the Binary

The focus of this expedition is the very binary at the heart of Relph's original formulation in the 1970s. He has recalled that "in the early 1970s when I was writing *Place and Placelessness*, the world seemed to present itself as a series of quite clear oppositions" (Relph 2000: 617). The result was a sense of either/or dualisms: authentic/inauthentic, insideness/outsideness, place/placeless. The hegemony of this sort of conceptual thinking in both intellectual and experiential terms was subsequently destabilized (Cloke and Johnston 2005) with postmodern thought across the social sciences and humanities mounting one critical challenge. Into the 21st century, the forces and outcomes of globalization—notably people's increased mobility, technological change and enhanced engagement within diverse communities of association at different scales and in different ways—have all broken down simplistic categorizations of attachment, identity and authenticity.

Southworth and Ruggeri (2011: 501) criticize those like Relph in *Place and Placelessness* who apparently "see the world in dualities." They argue that:

> The dichotomy of place versus placelessness does not capture the complex and multifaceted contemporary city, which presents many degrees and shades of 'placeless,' whether urban, suburban, rural or natural, old or new. Traces of placeless can be seen everywhere, and designers need to become more sophisticated at dealing with this gradient of placeness.

Their concept of a multi-faceted gradient is a more compelling, realistic and nuanced conceptualization of place identity in the modern world than a

simple place/non-place dichotomy. These attributes need not be mutually exclusive and a more effective paradigm responsive to the complexities and contradictions of locality, globality, culture, experience and subjectivity recognizes the possibilities of their simultaneity. Better understandings of both place and placelessness today start not with their polarity but their hybridity.

Revisiting Place and Placelessness

Drawing on evidence from Australian urban settings and across the globe, this edited volume is a collection of cutting-edge empirical research and theoretical discussions of contemporary applications of place and placelessness. It takes a multi-disciplinary approach, including contributions from across the breadth of disciplines in the built environment—architecture, environmental psychology, geography, landscape architecture, planning, sociology, and urban design—in critically re-visiting place and placelessness in theory and in application in 21st century contexts. It also engages with other contemporary built environment discussions on people-place relations, belonging, and community. The intent is to convey the continuing relevance of notions of 'place and placelessness' when approached critically and adapted to diverse problem settings.

The project emerges from work of the People and Place Research Cluster in the Faculty of Built Environment at the University of New South Wales (UNSW Australia) in a joint initiative leveraging off an academic partnership with The Bartlett School of Planning at University College London and other international linkages. Most of the papers were presented at a symposium held in Sydney in early September 2014 on the theme 'Place and Placelessness in the 21st Century City' at which Relph was the keynote speaker.

This edited volume is split into four main parts, each with a set of essays that reflect on how the concepts of place and placelessness manifest respectively in terms of urban design theory, the personal experiences of places, urban policy and practice, and within a more critical and multicultural urbanism. These categorizations are not rigidly mutually exclusive and in reality the themes of design, experience, practice and critique surface in various ways in many chapters. The chapters are bookended by this introductory revisiting of place and placelessness, plus a short afterword by Relph himself. In his opening chapter, Relph reflects on how his earlier understandings of place and placelessness have changed since their 1970s beginnings, especially the paradox that is the similarities one finds amongst different distinctive places.

Place/lessness in Design

As discussed above, the majority of early interpretations of Relph's *Place and Placelessness* were largely limited to the field of human geography. This

work's influence on other built environment disciplines, however, cannot be casually overlooked. In this first section, four chapters from urban design, landscape architecture and city planning backgrounds, highlight issues in the contemporary role of these professions in the making of place.

In Chapter 2, Jon Lang responds to the common critique (including from Relph himself) that the professions of planners and urban landscape designers are some of the main professions responsible for the spread of placelessness. This is especially through the application of visually similar urban and landscape designs across disparate regions with little apparent link to the history of particular localities. Limitations often come from competing urban design paradigms that constrain the opportunities for personalization. The two dominant paradigms of recent decades—neoliberalism and new urbanism—also leave little room for collaborative design decisions that effectively incorporate end-user desires for shifting the use and identity of a place. While Lang concedes that if an authentic sense of place is to be achieved it is important to create a physical world that affords the 'behaviour settings' that constitute localities within specific cultures, users often find ways of adapting and personalizing their experiences of newly designed and built places even if they are look-alikes. Design alone does not make the place, but rather "the ways individuals inhabit it and make it their own" (Fay and Sellbach 2008: 247).

This discussion is continued in Chapter 3 by Lucy Montague, who argues that it is the urban designer's role to respond to various and sometimes conflicting interests in generating plans and proposals in the process of place-making. She proposes that urban design theory captures urban meaning, which is then reflected in the physical form of built environments. If form follows function, pattern mimics paradigm. While the end results may sometimes look placeless, they may in fact reflect changed (and changing) urban meanings. In the process, understandings of, and the context in which, concepts like placelessness as introduced by Relph must also have evolved over time. As such, while a newly designed 'place' may visually look placeless, it may in fact represent a paradigmatic shift within urban design theory as well as how its users identify with that place.

In his more recent works, Relph calls for new approaches to environmental designs that self-consciously respond to local structures of meaning, experience and physical form, with attention also paid to the variety of levels at which people experience place. These new approaches are explored by Linda Corkery and Gethin Davison respectively in Chapters 4 and 5. In Chapter 4, Corkery discusses the creating of places from a landscape architect's perspective. She argues that landscape architects design contemporary public environments by responding to local history, the physical reality of the sites and social context. This is cast as positive place-making centred on valuation of the public realm, a kind of urban acupuncture with no shortage of exemplars (e.g. Place Leaders Association 2008). Through two Sydney case studies of parks wrought from dispiriting brownfields sites in prime

waterfront locations where public access was previously denied, she demonstrates a contemporary interpretation of Relph's assertion on sense of place, that it cannot necessarily be designed or constructed but derived from within the human experience. The creation of urban public landscapes to enable recreation in previously inaccessible or placeless places may achieve just that, by giving meaning to them, no matter if the actual experiencing of that meaning is for just brief periods at a time or for a more permanent association.

In interpreting Relph's works, Arefi (1999: 184) argues that the main concerns with the consequences of placelessness since the publication of *Place and Placelessness* "reflect the ahistoric, aspatial aspects of the global economy on place." Such an emphasis on history places much value on "rootedness as the most natural, pristine, unmediated kind of people-place tie" (Arefi 1999: 183). While respecting and connecting to a place's history is important to the creating (or preserving) of a sense of place, an over-emphasis may lead to protectionism for the sake of preserving local histories. In Chapter 5, Davison explores the use of planning instruments in metropolitan Melbourne and how these are used to regulate the identity of places. He focuses especially on Relph's concept of insideness. Through the use of critical discourse analysis of planning texts, he reveals that, despite the protection of place 'character' now being of high priority in planning decision-making, disregard continues to be shown for the various ways in which places are known and experienced by 'insiders' in everyday life. In part, the protection of 'character' focuses predominantly on how the neighborhood, as a geographic place, should look visually when, as Relph has argued, a sense of place emerges from more than just what it looks like but how people identify with it. The current planning legislation that strongly favors the visual 'character' of a place thus overlooks other, equally if not more, important contributors of sense of place, especially in how people experience the built environment. As such, the fundamental significance of interrelating physical milieu and social space is underscored (Sepe 2013b).

Place/lessness in Experience

The four chapters in the first section establish that while design plays an important role in people's sense of place, it is how people relate to and experience place that really shape the identity of a place. This is the focus of the four chapters in this second section: people's experiences of places. In the first two contributions, John Tomaney and Hazel Easthope continue the exploration of the concept of 'insideness,' one (Chapter 6) from a more theoretical perspective, while the other (Chapter 7) is embedded in the realm of housing policy. In the other two chapters, Rachel Cogger and Kate Bishop tackle the different ways places can be experienced, one (Chapter 8) from a sensory perspective, and the other (Chapter 9) from the perspective of a specific demographic cohort—children and young people.